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We're always looking for great stories to share. Has your company installed a noteworthy irrigation project, optimized efficiencies in your operation or volunteered in your local community? If so, we want to hear about it. Share your stories with Editor Christina Herrick at cherrick@northcoastmedia.net, and your business could appear in an upcoming issue of *Landscape Management*.



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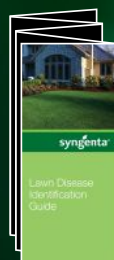
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Talking shop in the luxury suite

My yard was mowed, string-trimmed and blown off. The garden was watered. My well-deserved lazy Saturday afternoon was about to begin. I turned on DirecTV in my garage, sat down and put it on ESPN.

What do you know? It was the University of Southern California's spring football scrimmage broadcast nationwide. Normally, this would get a quick flip — Pac-12 football means very little to me, especially in the form of a scrimmage. But this time, I sat there and soaked it in. Because not even 24 hours earlier, that venue — the historic L.A. Coliseum, host site of the 1932 and 1984 Summer Olympics and Super Bowl I and VII — served as my office for the better part of a week.

Software company ServiceTitan invited me to attend their annual conference, known as Pantheon. I was there with six other journalists and 2,200 ServiceTitan software users. ServiceTitan is well known in the HVAC, plumbing and pest control industries but recently has made headlines in our industry when it acquired Aspire Software and FieldRoutes.

Ara Mahdessian, ServiceTitan CEO and co-founder, kicked off the event with a welcome to the crowd and some bold statistics. According to Mahdessian, ServiceTitan completed work in 95 percent of the zip codes in America last year. That accounted for 30 million jobs and generated \$25 billion in revenue. "The trades are elevating to new heights, and there are favorable trade winds," Mahdessian told the crowd. "The trades may not rank high on the glamour scale, but they rank high on necessity."

“Kuzoyan told me he sees the (lawn care and landscape) industry as a massive industry with a lot of potential to create a better way of doing things. He also added that they made a ‘big bet’ on Aspire because they saw it as the best-in-class player in the space.”

I don't know, from my sunny seat in the L.A. Coliseum and with a concert from Brad Paisley and a keynote speech from Magic Johnson still on the agenda, it felt pretty glamorous.

Appropriately, it was in the luxury suites at the Coliseum that I got a chance to discuss our industry with Vahe Kuzoyan, president and CEO of ServiceTitan.

I asked Kuzoyan to generalize his feelings on the landscape and lawn care industry. He told me he sees it as a massive industry with a lot of potential to create a better way of doing things. He also added that ServiceTitan made a “big bet” on Aspire because they saw it as the best-in-class player in the space. I asked how he foresaw ServiceTitan and Aspire coming together, and he told me there is a three-phase plan in the works.

“Phase one is do nothing. We bought Aspire because they're awesome; we don't intend on changing anything in the short term,” Kuzoyan said. “Phase two is, we have a suite of products and capabilities that Aspire doesn't have — a big chunk of our pro products. Phase two is to make

those products available to Aspire customers. Phase three is a more complete integration; we want Aspire to carve up their pieces of the puzzle and start mixing and matching. Things like intelligence, data products and everything else will all become unlocked to Aspire. We want to take all the investments we make into ServiceTitan, and eventually, flow it into our Aspire customers.”

Kuzoyan said this vision is not meant to be short-term, but a multi-year journey that creates access to all the technology they've been building for ServiceTitan, Aspire, FieldRoutes and “anyone else who joins the family.”

From there, we started discussing how artificial intelligence could create waves in the industry (see page 8 for more on this). We went from discussing lawn care and landscape to predicting the future. And it's already got me imagining what our next comic book-themed cover might look like.

Speaking of our comic book-themed cover, a shout-out to the team that created this month's “supercharged” illustration. As a longtime comic book fan myself, it was fun to work with illustrator Peter Krause and colorist Chris Sotomayor. Krause has penciled *Power of Shazam!* for DC Comics and *Irredeemable* for Boom Studios. Sotomayor's colors have appeared in popular Marvel comic titles like *Captain America*, *Avengers* and *The Incredible Hulk*. And now, they add *Landscape Management* to their super-powered credits. 

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See more great advice and complete answers from our Editorial Advisory Board in the online version of this feature at LandscapeManagement.net.

What role do you see electric equipment playing in the green industry's future?

"I'm excited by the possibilities of going electric. Fewer moving parts make maintenance easier in a labor environment short on small engine mechanics. And reducing the amount of fuel use cuts back on the impact of ever-changing fuel prices. That added stability is valuable in an industry that works on one-year or multiyear service contracts."



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"As stewards of the landscape, we all want efficient, powerful and sustainable tools for our trade. Electric equipment is not quite there yet but will be the future in the years and decades ahead."

"Eventually, gas-powered equipment will be no more. The only question is how quickly this transformation will happen."



"Like any other technological advancement, it's going to make an impact. It sure seems like that's where we're going. It's important for the owners and leaders of landscaping companies to be conducting low-risk experiments in this area."



"It will drive innovations for years to come, not just robotic, but clean energy tools and equipment, and other automated equipment. Collaborate with your clients and be a leader where you can make it work."



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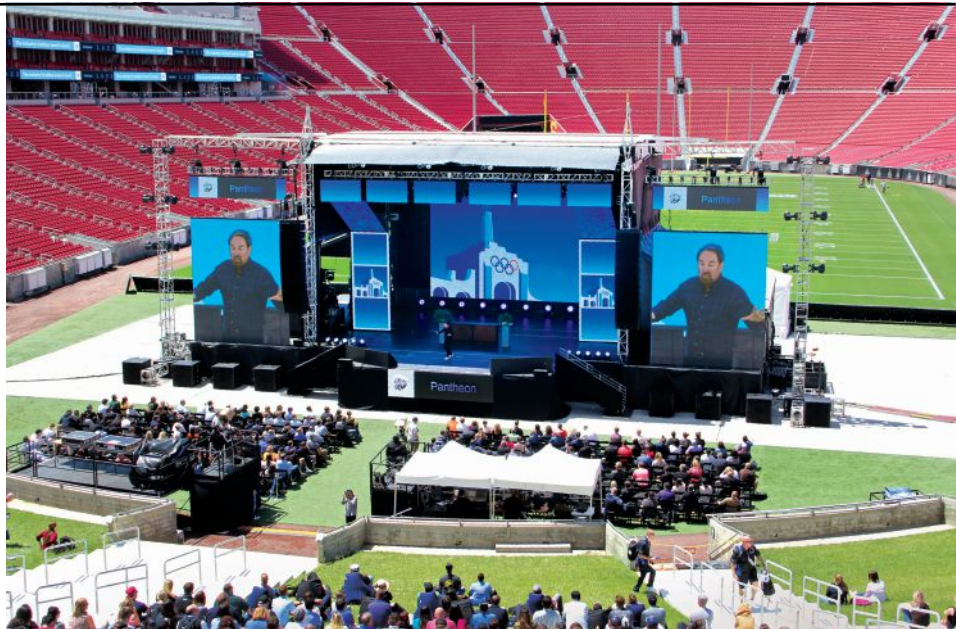
SERVICETITAN LAUNCHES ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

BY SETH JONES
LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Describing artificial intelligence (AI) as an “unstoppable force,” ServiceTitan, a cloud-based software platform for the trade industry that recently acquired both Aspire Software and FieldRoutes, announced the launch of Titan Intelligence AI last month at the company’s annual conference.



Los Angeles Lakers legend Magic Johnson was the keynote speaker at ServiceTitan’s Pantheon 2022.



About 2,200 ServiceTitan software users attended Pantheon 2022 at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

“Titan Intelligence is artificial intelligence unlocking the power of your data,” Vahe Kuzoyan, co-founder and president of ServiceTitan, told attendees at the 2022 Pantheon conference hosted by the company. “Artificial intelligence without integrity is scary, but artificial intelligence with integrity is exciting. We’ll be talking about this for the next decade; that’s how important it is.”


Utilizing a company’s own data, Titan Intelligence can enable lawn care and landscape companies the ability to optimize, automate and predict every aspect of its business. That could mean things like predicting when a customer will cancel service or when a member of a crew might leave for greener pastures.

Anmol Bhasin, chief technical officer of ServiceTitan, advised that other industries are already using AI to predict consumer behavior, like Spotify choosing new music for its customers, or Starbucks knowing exactly how their customers take their coffee.



“The trades are massive, critical and it’s growing ... and it’s comprised of the best group of people I know,” said Ara Mahdessian, CEO and co-founder of ServiceTitan.

“This is how we win. AI is an unstoppable force,” Bhasin told Pantheon attendees. “Those who embrace it will shape their future themselves. It will power you to achieve the extraordinary.”

Businesses on the ServiceTitan platform will have access to Titan Intelligence immediately. For more reporting from Pantheon 2022, which included Magic Johnson as the keynote speaker and a concert from Brad Paisley, visit [LandscapeManagement.net](https://www.landscapemanagement.net). 

Temp workers owed \$200K

Temporary landscaping workers will receive nearly \$200,000 in back wages following a U.S. Department of Labor investigation into New Jersey-based landscape company Turf Masters.

The violation is a result of Turf Masters instructing H-2B workers to falsely state they never worked overtime hours. The company now must pay 47 workers \$181,670 in back pay and an additional \$38,000 in civil penalties.

“Employers who flout the rules of the H-2B program harm workers and gain unfair economic advantages,” said Jeffrey Rogoff, a regional solicitor for the Department of Labor. “The U.S. Department of Labor will actively litigate such cases to achieve resolutions that ensure that applicants and

workers are properly paid and prevent future violations.”

Landscape biz owner pleads guilty

The U.S. District Attorney’s office for the District of Connecticut announced Timothy Draper, owner of T&M Lawn and Landscape in Bethel, Conn., pled guilty to one count of tax evasion. Draper also owns multiple rental properties in Connecticut.

The District Attorney’s office said Draper failed to deposit numerous checks generated from his landscaping and rental businesses into his business operating account, resulting in underreporting of approximately \$1.8 million on his tax returns from 2015 through 2017.

Draper will be sentenced in July. He faces a maximum term of imprisonment of five years.

Equip Expo, former GIE+EXPO, opens registration

Mark Oct. 18-21 down on the calendar. Those are the dates of the first-ever Equip Exposition. The event in Louisville will take place at the Kentucky Exposition Center. Hosted by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), Equip Expo is the rebranded name of the former GIE+EXPO, as some of the players of the former show have broken away to host their own unique conferences elsewhere.

“Equip Exposition is the experience of the year for the outdoor living, landscape and power equipment industry,” said Kris Kiser, president of OPEI. “Equip Expo is one trade show where you can test before you invest in new products, innovations and ideas for your business.”

Landscape Management is the official media partner of Equip Expo and will support the conference with media coverage as well as by hosting the conference’s educational seminars for the first time.



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Pros and experts share what the future holds for battery-powered and electric equipment in the green industry

**BY CHRISTINA HERRICK
LM EDITOR**



CHARGED!

The fate of gas-powered landscape equipment hangs in the balance of the governing bodies of states and municipalities. In October, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law a bill to phase out the sale of new gas-powered lawn equipment in the state by 2024. Residents of Lexington, Mass., and Washington, D.C., voted to phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers within city limits. Lawmakers in Illinois and New York also introduced bills to phase out the operation and sale of gas-powered leaf blowers.

Meanwhile, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are going all-in with additions to handheld battery-powered equipment and mower lines. This focus on electric equipment goes beyond machines used for landscape maintenance — Bobcat debuted its T7X all-electric compact track loader at CES, a technology-focused trade show, in January to rave reviews. Case announced it plans to introduce the CX15 electric mini-excavator in 2023, and Volvo said it plans to release its ECR25 electric compact excavator this year.

Landscape Management sat down with equipment manufacturers, industry advocates and landscaping professionals to take a look at the future of electric equipment in the green industry.

MEANWHILE ...

It's no secret that battery-powered equipment will play a big role in the future of the green industry.

Patrick Ericson, owner of EH&P Green, a full-service maintenance company for primarily residential clientele in Chesterfield, N.H., started his business last year with an eye on the future.

"I wouldn't be surprised if, in the next five to 10 years, you wouldn't be able to buy

any gas-powered lawn care equipment," he says, noting he doesn't see gas-powered equipment going away entirely. "It might still be out there, but it is so expensive just because of all the new emissions regulations that they'll come out with. I think there's definitely a change coming, and my hope is that we've gotten ahead of it."

Ericson says he saw a possibility to cut his emissions and serve clients willing to pay for battery-powered maintenance. EH&P Green uses a Mean Green 52-inch Vanquish stand-on mower and Ego handheld equipment and snowblower.

"We started with around 30 customers, and we ended the year at 45 accounts," he says. "We're hoping to double that this year. And we're on track, too."

What's happening in the U.S. is quite familiar for Pellenc, a battery-powered equipment manufacturer founded in France. Jeremy Berros, business development director for Pellenc North America, says more regulations and the increased cost of gas have prompted more landscape operations to consider battery-powered solutions.

"We have seen this transition happening for the last five to 10 years, depending on the country in Europe," he says.

Jack Easterly, product manager for Husqvarna, says one company around the Washington, D.C., area that preferred not to be named converted to around 50 550iBTX battery-powered backpack blowers to meet noise restrictions implemented in the area.

"We've seen customers thrilled to have a solution that is very close to their petrol performing products to use as a replacement in these restricted areas," he says.

Continued on page 12



JEREMY BERROS

ILLUSTRATION: PETER KRALUSE AND CHRIS SOTOMAYOR;
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Continued from page 11

NEXT BIG THING

Many OEMs say battery-recharging setups will be a focus in the future as more landscape companies opt for electric equipment. At GIE+EXPO 2021, Stihl debuted a prototype cabinet in a standard trailer with multiple charging units for repowering equipment on the go. Steve Wilcox, Stihl's manager of communications for battery equipment, says the company looks to boost performance, too.

"Our goal is lighter, more powerful, longer-lasting," he says. "That's what our customers demand. We have a

battery solution that will be available later in the year that speaks to those guidelines: lighter, more power, longer lifespan."

Berros says Pellenc's new technology for batteries will focus on professional-grade equipment for the green industry.

"Why do landscapers have to deal with something that's meant for residential use instead of professional use?" he says.



STEVE WILCOX

"Charging stations are going to be a big thing also. When you have just one or a couple of batteries to charge at home, it is not the same as when you have 50, maybe 100 batteries to handle."

Easterly says Husqvarna looks to exceed the performance of gas-powered equipment.



"The next big innovation that we look at — tool by tool — is reaching or exceeding gas-powered performance and also run times when you compare a battery's runtime to a fuel tank," he says.

Steve Wilcox with Stihl says pros can look for new equipment introductions this year that are lighter with more power.

Todd Zimmerman, vice president of product development for Positec USA, which manufactures Worx battery-powered equipment, says contractors may need to re-think how they approach property management.

"With the gas product, crews may start at the truck and work their way out," he says. "With the cordless, you may have to start all the way out and work your way back to the truck."

John Powers, director of product management for Echo, says the challenge the battery-powered manufacturers face with recharging setups is the diversity of end-user needs.



JOHN POWERS

"I don't think anybody knows what the perfect solution is going to be," he says. "There's a variety of usage situations out there. The needs of a crew that is in one location, for example, on a resort, (are) completely

Continued on page 14

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Continued from page 12
different from somebody that is servicing residential yards and is doing 50 plus yards per day. They're going to need different charging solutions."

Another challenge, Powers says, is the variety of truck and trailer setups landscape contractors deploy, including open trailers and enclosed vans, which makes offering one recharging solution for the industry problematic.

"The big two challenges right now — and they're related to each other — are charging and transportation," he says, noting he expects solutions to focus on the power available while the tool is in use.

BIG PLANS FOR BIG EQUIPMENT

"Other technologies being developed will have a lower environmental impact, lower cost of operation and provide performance and efficiency improvements," says Justin Odegaard, acceleration manager for the Bobcat Company.

Volvo said contractors could save up to 35 percent in maintenance with its electric compact excavator.



"As the future becomes the present, electric won't be the only means to achieve those same things."

Odegaard says the Bobcat's T7X all-electric compact track loader offers more power and more efficient equipment on the job site, along with operating costs approximately 90 percent lower than a diesel/hydraulic machine.

"By going to all-electric and eliminating the hydraulics, there's a big boost in efficiency, which allows us to run longer," he adds, saying he doesn't see standard compact equipment going away, noting, "You can still get your machine the way that you want it."

Continued on page 16

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NALP and AGZA: a partnership for the future

Recently the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) announced it joined forces with the American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA), an organization that provides education and certification in low-impact, clean technologies for landscape maintenance.

The two organizations announced the move to promote a responsible transition for the green industry to battery-powered and electric equipment.

"I hope that we can meet with policymakers, other groups that are pushing for these changes, and try to educate them on what the industry needs to effectively make this transition," says Andrew Bray, vice president of government affairs at NALP.

Daniel Mabe, founder and president of AGZA, says the organization's training and certification as well as a wealth of knowledge about battery-

powered equipment is a good resource for contractors considering making the transition. AGZA offers information on battery handling safety, workload and economic feasibility and battery and e-waste disposal, and more. AGZA also offers certification for green businesses in that transition.

"Through our Service Pro Certification, which is online and in-person, AGZA provides resources and unbiased information on which manufacturers can be trusted for durability and longevity," Mabe says. "We also provide charging infrastructure support and tips to extend the life of electric equipment."

Bray says NALP members can expect the relationship with AGZA to continue to grow, noting, "We're looking forward to opportunities for AGZA to be involved with educating the industry on how to make this transition."



ANDREW BRAY

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Continued from page 14

Lars Arnold, electromobility product manager for Volvo Construction Equipment, estimates that users of the company's electric excavator could see 35 percent savings in maintenance costs compared to diesel excavators.

Arnold says the company plans to introduce two more electric compact excavator models this year.



Lisa Greenwell, vice president of business operations for GreenSweep, says it's important for businesses to set expectations for battery-powered services with clients.

Volvo also plans to develop an app for fleet and machine management.

"I'd say in five to 10 years, all new Volvo compact excavator and wheel loader models will likely have an electric solution," he says. "We are also looking into the electrification of other machine types. Electrifying larger machines remains a challenge, but it's one we're actively seeking solutions to. Full-sized models will likely be a mix of diesel, hybrid and electric by the end of this decade." 📱

ORIGIN STORY

Pros offer advice to those considering battery-powered equipment

Contractors say it's best to start slow when adding equipment.

"I would start small with maybe a weed wacker, for instance, and just see how it helps your time become more efficient," says Josh Currivan, owner of Currivan Green Landscaping in Andover, Mass. Currivan Green Landscaping provides maintenance, snow/ice removal and design/build installation for mainly residential clients.

Currivan uses a mix of several equipment manufacturers, including Echo, Milwaukee Tool and DeWalt.

He's frequently chasing down chargers and batteries, so he encourages pros to stick to one manufacturer.

Jack Easterly, product manager for Husqvarna, suggests pros understand the job sites these tools will work on to get an idea of the runtimes needed.

"An example is the seasonality of blowers," he says. "Much more performance is required during

fall leaf cleanup than traditional commercial landscape maintenance."

Currivan says contractors need to understand the total cost of ownership of battery equipment, including the cost of battery replacement.

"How much is the battery replacement going to cost in two years? How much does it cost you to have two batteries on hand?" he says. "Do you

have the resources to charge that battery throughout the day?"

Daniel Mabe, founder and president of American Green Zone Alliance, agrees, saying pros also should think about the cost of owning the equipment over the tool's lifespan.

"Are the tools, batteries and chargers still going to be reliable and functioning three, four and five years after investments have been made?" he says. "Many tools and batteries will need to last three to four years to realize a return on investment. Expect some workload production differences between gas and electric and be willing to modify the overall approach to operations that lend to the successful outcomes of battery-electric maintenance practices."

Lisa Greenwell, vice president of business operations for GreenSweep in Silver Spring, Md., says it's also critical to discuss equipment performance and expectations for services and cost with your clients and your crew. GreenSweep provides maintenance and design/build services to an 80 percent commercial, 20 percent residential clientele.

"We were having conversations with customers before renewals," she says, noting GreenSweep identified customers outside the municipalities with blower bans who might be a fit for the low-noise services. "Having communication in that regard and setting the expectations of 'We can make that accommodation, but here's what we have to do on our end to cover the expense of making that adjustment for you.'"



JACK EASTERLY



LISA GREENWELL

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WEED AVENGERS

Experts share tips to stop tough turf foes

BY GEORGE KEGODE, PH.D. | CONTRIBUTOR

Nutsedge, clover, ground ivy and wild violet are four of the toughest weeds lawn care operators face each year. To help tame and conquer these turf foes, Eric Reasor, Ph.D., Southeast research scientist with PBI-Gordon; Dean Mosdell, technical manager for Syngenta; and Aaron Hathaway, technical services manager at Nufarm, share identification and management tips.

NUTSEDGE

What to look for:

- Nutsedge is a grass-like plant with sharp blades, triangular stems and underground nutlets. It thrives in areas that are less fertile, poorly drained and aerated. — ER
- Nutsedge tends to grow well in sunny areas that are excessively wet. — DM

How to control it:

- It is best to control nutsedge when plants are young using herbicides with sulfentrazone. Thereafter, postemergence herbicide applications with an ALS-inhibitor, e.g., halosulfuron, imazosulfuron or sulfosulfuron, provide good nutsedge control. — AH
- Postemergence applications of pyrimisulfan provide excellent control of nutsedge. — ER
- Sulfentrazone is safe to apply on cool-season turfgrass, trifloxysulfuron is safe to apply on warm-season turfgrass and halosulfuron is safe to use on both cool and warm-season turfgrass. — DM

Keep in mind:

- The key to managing nutsedge is eliminating underground nutlets. If moving soil around, make sure it does not contain nutlets. — DM

- Develop a program for nutsedge control instead of reacting to infestations. — AH
- Apply herbicides early and make multiple applications during the year. — ER

CLOVER

What to look for:

- A perennial plant that has three leaflets, a small white semicircle at the base of each leaflet and spreads by runners and stolons. — ER
- The predominant clover species is white clover, and it dominates poorly fertilized lawns. — DM
- Herbicides containing dicamba, triclopyr and fluroxypyr provide good control in cool-season grasses. — DM
- Apply dicamba, the most prevalent herbicide used, in the fall with follow-up applications in the spring. — ER
- Products with quinclorac and MCPP can provide good control of clover. — AH

Keep in mind:

- Improving lawn fertility helps control clover. — AH, ER
- For best control, apply herbicides in late summer and early fall. — DM

GROUND IVY

What to look for:

- Ground ivy is a creeping perennial plant that spreads by runners and stolons. It has square stems, circular leaves with wavy edges and a notch where the stem meets the leaf. — ER
- Ground ivy has purple flowers, a minty odor and can be found in shaded areas where turf is not heavy. — DM

How to control it:

- Using herbicides that contain triclopyr or fluroxypyr will provide good control. — AH

WILD CHILD
Wild violet, like ground ivy, can be found in shady areas. Both weeds have purple flowers, making it easy for LCOs to misidentify them.



- Fall applications of triclopyr are the best option, followed by fluroxypyr and combinations of these active ingredients with 2,4-D, dicamba and sulfentrazone provide good control of ground ivy. — ER

Keep in mind:

- Scouting for ground ivy is important as LCOs can mistake it for wild violet. — ER
- Having a good management program will make it easy to control ground ivy. — AH

WILD VIOLET


What to look for:

- Wild violet is part of a group of perennial and winter annual plants that are “escaped” ornamental plants. Plants have heart-shaped leaves with serrated edges and purple, blue or white flowers. — ER
- Plants have violet flowers, love shaded areas and have thick rhizomes. — DM

How to control it:

- Applying herbicides containing triclopyr or fluroxypyr is the best control option for wild violet. Mixtures that include 2,4-D, dicamba and sulfentrazone will improve control. — ER
- Postemergence herbicides spiked with triclopyr will provide excellent control of wild violet. — AH
- In addition to herbicides, reducing shade or planting shade-tolerant turfgrass species, e.g., fine fescue, will help control wild violet. — DM

Keep in mind:

- This weed is difficult to control. — DM
- Fall is the best time to control wild violet with herbicides, followed by repeat applications in the spring. — AH 

George Kegode, Ph.D., is a consultant and writer specializing in pest and weed management based in Missouri.

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The 411 on brown and large patch

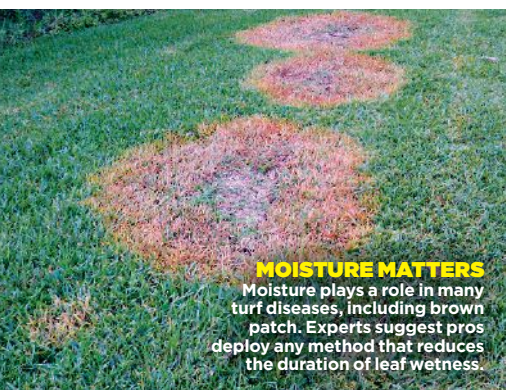
Despite sharing some commonalities, brown and large patch develop on different turfgrasses and require different treatment **BY CHRIS LEWIS | CONTRIBUTOR**

Although the same pathogen *Rhizoctonia solani* causes brown and large patch, the similarities of the diseases end there. After all, the pathogens affect different types of turfgrasses at different times of the year. For instance, brown patch infects cool-season turfgrass during the summer, while large patch develops on warm-season turfgrass in the fall, particularly once soil temperatures fall below 70 degrees F.

Tina Bond, Ph.D., technical service manager with FMC Global Specialty Solutions; Zac Reicher, Ph.D., green solutions team specialist for Bayer and Ian Rodriguez, Ph.D., Quali-Pro technical services manager, share the tools pros should consider to get a leg up on brown and summer patch.

PREVENT THROUGH CULTURAL CONTROLS

Experts recommend professionals follow appropriate agronomic practices, such as proper irrigation timing, correct mowing heights and adequate fertility.



MOISTURE MATTERS

Moisture plays a role in many turf diseases, including brown patch. Experts suggest pros deploy any method that reduces the duration of leaf wetness.

Bond also advises professionals to adjust irrigation cycles to run early in the morning rather than late afternoon or early evening to reduce turfgrass wetness. Enhancing drainage and decreasing thatch will also reduce infection.

If an area has a history of disease pressure and underlying moisture issues are simply out of professionals' control, they should consider preventive fungicide applications. Bond says, "They're very important in managing patch diseases, prior to development."

"For brown patch control, applications should be made when nighttime temperatures first appear consistently above 65 degrees F under high relative humidity with daytime temperatures consistently above 80 degrees F," Bond says of FMC's fungicides. "For large patch, applications should begin in the fall when soil temperatures drop below 70 degrees F."

As temperatures rise, the window of disease activity for brown and large patch tends to expand, says Reicher. Longer periods of conducive disease conditions will require additional fungicide applications and increased application rates.

"Consequently, it's increasingly important to enhance cultural condition — while also maximizing airflow and soil drainage and pruning trees to reduce shade — to favor turfgrass growth and discourage diseases," he says.

Experts also say moisture plays a role in many turf diseases. As a result, any method that helps reduce leaf wetness duration will help prevent either disease.



LARGE AND NOT IN CHARGE

Experts suggest two fungicide applications in the fall, four weeks apart, to treat large patch.

In addition, turf management professionals should avoid soluble nitrogen during periods of high disease pressure.


"Managing moisture goes a long way on these diseases," says Rodriguez. "If an underlying irrigation program or drainage issue isn't addressed, disease symptoms will likely reappear three to four weeks after a fungicide application."

FUNGICIDE CONTROLS

Bond recommends fluoxastrobin fungicides, as these products offer long-lasting brown and large patch control. LCOs can achieve efficient brown patch control while utilizing 28-day application intervals in higher cut turf, she says. Additionally, Rodriguez suggests utilizing strobilurin fungicides, such as azoxystrobin.

Experts say pros should apply fungicides — especially strobilurin fungicides such as trifloxystrobin and DMI fungicides such as triadimefon — every four to six weeks.

Meanwhile, LCOs should use these fungicides for large patch in lawns with regular outbreaks. Reicher recommends lawn care professionals use two fall applications, starting when the five-day average of 2-inch soil temperatures ranges between 72 and 75 degrees F, followed by a second application four weeks later.

"There are limited fungicides available for residential lawns, but DMI fungicides are still the most effective mode of action for large patch," Reicher says. "Complete control of large patch is difficult in especially problematic lawns, so an additional spring application at 50 percent green-up may be needed to increase control." 

Chris Lewis reports on turf in the U.S. and is based in Michigan.

FERTILE GROUND

How to choose the right seed for your project

Experts share their seed solutions BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR



There are dozens of questions a lawn care operator (LCO) should ask before choosing turf seed. What type of terrain is the project on? What is the soil like? What kind of seed will grow in your region of the country? What is the site used for? Experts say LCOs should seek to answer those questions, and several others, before choosing a type of seed to use for a project.

Jim Beveridge, owner of Yards Done Right in Westlake, Ohio; Jeremy Bigler, senior brand manager for Lebanon Turf; and Brad Farmer, business distribution manager for Pennington Seed, share tips for answering those questions and how to navigate the current seed supply chain issues.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

Bigler suggests considering the project's location, as your USDA plant hardiness zone could eliminate some choices right off the bat.

"Is there a lot of shade, or is it a relatively warm area, like the transition zone? Certain types of grasses do better in those warmer climates," he says. "Similarly, if you're looking for cool-season turf in New England, you'll want a turf that handles cold temperatures or recovers from the winter quicker."

Once Beveridge, whose company provides services for a 98 percent residential client base, gets his answers to those questions, he's ready to select the right seed for the job.

"The type of seeding project definitely reflects on our seed selection for most jobs," says Beveridge. "For instance, I

try to use a mix heavy in perennial ryegrass for quick germination and immediate coverage. For a sturdier drought-resistant all-purpose mix, it would be turf-type tall fescue."

Drought resistance is a highly coveted trait, even more so with water restrictions implemented in parts of the country. Depending on the project, other traits to look for include insect resistance, disease resistance and wear tolerance.

"When selecting a quality seed, we look for a seed that has tested well in national trials and something that is enhanced with endophytes, which give the seed more insect and diseases resistance," Beveridge says.

THE DROUGHT EFFECT

The seed industry isn't immune to supply chain problems, Bigler says. Droughts across the Western U.S. in 2021 — where most seed is grown — have put a strain on the supply.

"This past year's harvest has been probably one of the worst on record and definitely the worst of the last few decades," Bigler says. "That's put a real big crimp in the supply chain as far as availability of seed. So certain types of seed are not as available as others."

Logistics haven't helped the seed supply chain either. With most seed being grown out West, shipping to the rest of the country — specifically the East Coast — has taken longer, and as a result, prices have gone up significantly, according to Bigler.

LCOs must plan and place orders ahead of time to ensure they receive seed on time, he adds.



Jim Beveridge

IMPORTANCE OF APPLICATION

There's a wide range of ways to apply seed. LCOs have options as simple as hand seeding to ones as advanced as hydroseeding. Like choosing the type of seed, selecting an application method depends on the task at hand.


Beveridge prefers a mechanical broadcast spreader for larger areas and a drop spreader along flower beds and paved surfaces to reduce wasting seed in nontarget areas.

According to Farmer, mechanical seeding is the most common way he sees LCOs apply seed. Farmer also says, however, that hydroseeding has been on the rise.

"It protects the seed; it keeps the moisture there for the seed," he says. "You're starting to see more (hydroseeding) instead of the seed and straw."

Hydroseeding works by creating a slurry of water, mulch, seed and other amendments. LCOs then spray the slurry onto the site with a hydroseeding machine.

"The mix has everything you need for that yard," Farmer says. "You're putting this mulch bed down that has water in it already, and it solidifies the seed and keeps it in one place. So, if you have rainfall or some weather event, you're not losing all of that seed into the storm drain."

While hydroseeding is more expensive than traditional broadcast seeding, experts say it is helpful for some LCOs. 



Jeremy Bigler



Brad Farmer

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THE BIG ONE

Wine country

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOCATION Atlanta

COMPANY LandCare

DETAILS To ensure their maintenance work doesn't interfere with the on-site vineyard's growing process, LandCare maintains a constant line of communication with Chateau Elan's head winemaker, keeping the team informed of maintenance schedules.

Over the last year and a half, LandCare has taken a more hands-on role within the vineyard.

"We assist the winemaker with horticultural needs on the vines," says Tre' Hiltzheimer, branch manager at LandCare. "Anything from fertilization, liming, pruning to nonselective herbicides for the runways that run down the middle of the vineyards."

The winemaker gives LandCare guidance on what the vineyard needs and LandCare executes the strategy for him. LandCare also mows the turf between the vineyard rows. Hiltzheimer says that mowing has been easy because it lines up nicely with a 72-inch mower.

LandCare redesigned the entrance to the 3,500-acre property when it changed ownership in 2017 and has been maintaining the site since 2012. The redesign included a reworking of the front flower bed, the addition of potted flower arrangements and canopy trees.

All in all, LandCare helped redesign the front of the hotel resort, the entrance to the spa on the property and the entrance to the golf clubhouse.

The main entrance to the property is where LandCare focuses the most, making sure the first impression is pleasing to guests, according to Hiltzheimer.

"There's a lot of turf out there, and the turf does present a French winery type of entryway when you enter from the roadway," he says. "There's a large run of well-maintained turf all the way right up to the fountain with the hotel right over to the right."

The property earned LandCare a silver award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence Program. 

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



Captions | **1.** Flowers installed as a part of LandCare's redesign of the property in 2017 accent the fountain at the end of the long drive up to Chateau Elan's front entrance. **2.** Chateau Elan's entrance is a priority for LandCare, setting the tone for the rest of the property. **3.** LandCare's redesign included the addition of outdoor gathering areas, allowing guests to catch prime views of the vineyard. **4.** The long entryway to the property, which runs between the vineyard, is where LandCare spends most of its time.



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REV YOUR ENGINES

Considering the commercial cutter

Experts at Briggs & Stratton discuss how the company strives to make a better mower engine

BY JONATHAN DELOZIER | LM MANAGING EDITOR

How can landscape professionals choose the right mower and engine setup for their businesses? Is there such a thing as too much power?

These are some of the questions *LM* asked experts at Briggs & Stratton. The 114-year-old company operates in more than 100 countries. KPS Capital Partners acquired Briggs & Stratton in late

2020, with subsidiary Vanguard also part of that deal.

When considering the appropriate amount of power, Randy Lockyear, senior director of commercial turf sales at Briggs & Stratton, identifies the commercial mower operator who is staring down a wet lawn early in the morning that needs to be mowed down by 4 inches.



“You have to consider the (power) issue early in the development of a machine,” Lockyear says. “If you ask the vast majority of commercial cutters, they’re probably going to say you can never have too much horsepower. (But) you can put an engine that’s too powerful on a machine, and it will start to break down. The belts start breaking. The pumps burn up. Typically, the pros know what they’re doing once we get that development worked out.”

PRODUCT TESTING IS KEY

Lockyear and Carissa Gingras, senior director of marketing for Briggs & Stratton,

PHOTO: BRIGGS & STRATTON



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Product testing at Briggs & Stratton Power Application Centers pinpoints engine power needs for various pieces of equipment.



pointed to their company's numerous satellite product testing centers as a vital piece to ensure engine power fits users' needs.

"The satellite Power Application Centers truly test the application of an engine or battery," says Gingras. "We look at everything from noise, vibration, heat and extreme cold to understand how the equipment will be used and what engine application works best. This equipment means peoples' livelihoods, and if a piece of equipment goes down, they're losing money. We're acutely focused on innovation that drives productivity and saves them time to keep making money."

EXTENDING MAINTENANCE WINDOWS


Gingras and Lockyear tout Vanguard's Oil Guard system, which

continuously exchanges oil between a machine's engine and an external remote reservoir to further stave off breakdown and extend the time between needed maintenance.

"We launched Oil Guard six or seven years ago as the industry's first and still only 500-hour oil change," says Gingras. "Everyone wants power. It's why we make a 40-horsepower EFI/ETC, which is the largest engine of that kind under 100 CCs in terms of horsepower. They just need to understand the investment that they're making in the total piece of equipment as well as their ability to keep it running, which Oil Guard helps with immensely."

In addition to monetary savings, Oil Guard serves as an "insurance policy" for many users by increasing the amount of oil available at any given time

for a piece of equipment, says Lockyear.

"The No. 1 catastrophic failure of an engine in our market is the engine running low on oil, seizing up and then you have to replace it," he says. "Our Oil Guard system virtually eliminates that issue. Instead of just two quarts, you have six. The cutters can send that piece of equipment out to do its job without needing to check it so often and be confident it's not going to run out of oil. The oil filter is right in the top of the reservoir, so it's not hard to get to. We're focused on making commercial cutters' lives easier and more profitable." 



Randy Lockyear

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← TINE RAKE DETHATCHER

COMPANY: JRCO
URL: JRCOInc.com
JRCO's Tine Rake Dethatcher attaches to a mower to control thatch accumulation and reduce the chance of turf diseases. It also can be used to rake in seed to accelerate germination and lightly aerate the soil to encourage lawn growth. Use the rake for the first spring mow to remove thatch, embedded leaves and debris. The unit

quickly attaches to a mower using JRCO's unique mount bar and is available in 36-inch, 46-inch and 60-inch widths.



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COMPANY: Exmark
URL: Exmark.com
Available for most walk-behind, stand-on and zero-turn riding mowers, Exmark's operator-controlled discharge (OCD) enables the operator to control deck discharge — from fully open to fully closed — on the fly. OCD helps operators increase efficiency while producing better results. The adjustable discharge keeps clippings and debris off garden areas, sidewalks, streets, patios and more. As a result, users need less time to clean up after mowing and spend less time at each job site.

Continued on page 32

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↑ DUMP-FROM-SEAT MATERIAL COLLECTION SYSTEM

COMPANY: John Deere

URL: Deere.com

John Deere's dump-from-seat material collection system features a heavy-duty steel blower. The blower finely chops materials, enhancing the collection process, while the powerful suction means fewer passes for the operator. Tool-free clips provide easy access to the chute if a clog occurs. The location of the blower housing behind the rear tire of the mower creates a shorter path for the clippings to travel into the hopper, helping to reduce the occurrence of plugs.

↓ FLAIL MOWER ATTACHMENT

COMPANY: Steiner

URL: SteinerTurf.com

Steiner's flail mower attachment combines brush cutting with finish mowing. It comes with two different knife options: a standard Y knife to cut tall, heavy grass and brush and a scoop to give turf a finished look. These knife options let the operator seamlessly swap in under 45 minutes without an additional deck. The flail mower's rear roller gives a striped finish. The rear discharge mower deck gets rid of any debris when mowing along roadways and sidewalks.



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HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

Upgraded space

BY LM STAFF

LOCATION Kansas City, Mo.

COMPANY Hermes Landscaping

DETAILS The Linda Hall Library is devoted to the history of science, engineering and technology. The library worked with Hermes Landscaping to transform the property's aging courtyard into a functional outdoor space for study. The library staff wanted to honor the first chairman of the library's board of trustees, Paul. D. Bartlett, and his wife, Joan.


The project includes bluestone pavers, limestone accents, a commissioned sextant sculpture from Eligius Bronze as a focal point, custom sconces from Keller Metal Works, handrails from Austin Iron Works on the steps, copper awning at the building's entry and a bronze dedication medallion.

Hermes worked with Austin Iron Works to restore the 1800s-era iron gate in the courtyard using hot-dip galvanization and marine-grade paint. Additional details include cast-stone urns and pedestals throughout the courtyard.

Hermes discovered issues with stormwater collecting at the back of the original patio. To address this, the company installed a new underdrainage system to remove stormwater from the patio surface. Crews also demolished the failing drainage structure and re-poured the steps.

Hermes also upgraded the courtyard's electrical system and installed Unique Lighting Systems LED lighting accents.

Crews also installed new landscaping and a Rain Bird irrigation system to optimize watering evergreen plants, flowering shrubs and perennials in the courtyard.

The project won Hermes Landscaping a Gold Award from the 2021 National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program. 

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net/hardscapesolutions.



Captions | 1. In this before photo, existing deteriorated pavers in the Linda Hall Library courtyard created unsafe walking surfaces. The concrete slab under the patio pavers and bluestone on steps suffered from years of neglect, salt use and standing stormwater. **2.** The client specified one color for all metal components, which helped unify the design and complement the Bluestone pavers. Metal components include handrails, anodized window frames and new handmade sconces. **3.** Crews matched the concrete sidewalks to the existing sidewalk leading up to the property's iron gates.

BUSINESS BOOSTERS

How to work with dealers to build a strong relationship

Dealers share their perspectives on what landscape pros should look for to develop a connection **BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

Finding dealers and building strong relationships can be invaluable for landscape professionals. The relationship between the two sides goes far beyond just selling the latest top-of-the-line products and parts.

Dale Siever, general manager, Vermeer Southwest, Chandler, Ariz., and Steve Heckman, sales manager, Cleveland Brothers, Harrisburg, Pa., spoke with *Landscape Management* to give their thoughts on what landscape professionals should look for when searching for a dealer.

AVAILABILITY

Heckman says finding a dealership that can assist you and keep you up and running should be the first and foremost thing a contractor looks for in a dealer. He says lost time is lost money, especially when landscapers are in the process of bidding on projects. Both Heckman and Siever agree that landscapers should seek out dealers who will be there for them when they need it most.

“You want a dealer that will be able to support you 12 months out of the year and has parts availability and serviceability,” Heckman says. “You don’t want to be waiting weeks and months to get a technician out to you. They should have the capability to bring the machine in and work on it or do it in the field.”

CONSULTIVE ATMOSPHERE

According to Siever, another key benefit to working with a dealer is having knowledgeable salespeople who know

HELP WHERE IT MATTERS

Experts say the right dealer can make life easier for pros.



the equipment and industry. He says his salespeople know the industries that use the machines and products they sell.

“They understand the industry,” he says. “They attend industry functions, they’re a part of organizations and not only do they know the equipment, but they’re also up to speed on what’s happening in the industry, as well.”

With knowledgeable salespeople immersed in the industry, dealers provide a unique service to landscape professionals, giving them an expert they can get a hold of whenever they need it.

Training is a significant part of what dealers offer to landscape professionals.

“We’re investing a lot of money right now into training our own people and offering training to our customers in the maintenance, safety, operation and all aspects (of the equipment),” Siever says.

INTEGRITY MATTERS

Heckman says integrity is another trait to seek out in a dealer. He says a dealer shouldn’t try to sell you the most expensive piece of equipment. Instead, the salesperson should be concerned



with making sure you’re leaving with the equipment best suited for your job.

“We make sure we have a scope of what they want to do with a machine and what they’re looking to achieve,” Heckman says. “Do they want to own it, is it rent to purchase, a lease or a straight-up purchase? Should we talk about rental fleet equipment that has the price taken down because it was a rental? How about a good used piece of equipment?”

He suggests pros ask if the dealer offers rentals or a rent-to-own program. Dealers can also provide rental fleet equipment for sale at a discounted price.

“It allows the landscaper to take on a project or task they didn’t intend to do,” he says of renting equipment. “So maybe you’ve got someone doing a lot of flatwork, and suddenly, they’ve got an opportunity to install fencing. They can rent an auger for a day, a couple of days or however long it’s going to take to get the project done.”



Dale Siever



Steve Heckman

INSTALLATION SOLUTIONS

Right on track

Experts say innovations in track loaders have the machines trending upwards in popularity

BY JONATHAN DELOZIER | LM MANAGING EDITOR

Diverse job sites bring many factors into play when it comes to deciding between machines equipped with tires or tracks. Varied surfaces, an area's climate and its effect on the terrain present a wide array of needs for users that can change just as work plans are finalized.

Buck Storlie, product manager for ASV, says innovations in track machines could mean them becoming much more widely used in the future, regardless of most site variables.

"The challenge with track loaders is lower ground speed, let's say 6 to 8 (mph)," he says. "At ASV, we've really been pushing that envelope and trying to close that gap. We have track loaders that go as fast as 12.5 mph.

"With today's technology in track loaders, I think you're seeing manufacturers close the gap on the advantages skid-steers have traditionally had," Storlie continues. "We're getting faster with (tracks). We're getting more track life out of them, therefore reducing the cost of ownership."

Track machines' market share continues to grow with no sign of that trend slowing down, Storlie adds.

"We'd like to say that a lot of that is due to the technology we're putting in those tracks," he says. "They're better at moving fast, better at staying on and better at just lasting longer. It's saving

people a lot of money, so more people are going to be using them."

MAINTENANCE COMES FIRST

Lee Padgett, product manager for Takeuchi, urges potential track machine users to familiarize themselves with maintenance before purchasing equipment.

"Anyone who owns or operates a tracked machine should know how to properly adjust the tracks," he says. "Track sag or tension should be checked daily, and proper tension (should be) maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. A rubber track system that gets too loose can cause the machine to 'de-track,' meaning the rubber track rides off the undercarriage. Conversely, operating with the rubber tracks too tight could result in operating inefficiencies such as increased component and track wear."

Despite increased usage of track equipment, Padgett specifies that tires still provide invaluable service across hard surfaces.

"Generally speaking, track machines are better on softer surfaces like dirt or grass, while (wheels) are better on concrete or asphalt," he says. "Operating compact track loaders on hard, paved

MACHINES OF THE FUTURE

No matter the site or terrain, track loaders are becoming a realistic option for more landscape professionals.

surfaces while making frequent spin turns can cause premature wear on the tracks and undercarriage components, increasing operation cost and potential downtime. That's why wheeled machines are better on paved surfaces. Conversely, a wheeled machine will have less ground contact due to its tires, making it less stable for use in multi-terrain applications."

Storlie echoes those sentiments.

"It's generally true that tracks will be advantageous in rougher terrain, softer terrain, dirt terrain, sites like that," he says. "Tires will typically be better on hard terrain like concrete, asphalt, areas where we're more frequently in a load-and-carry or clear-and-sweeping type application."




Buck Storlie



Lee Padgett

TRACKS GAINING MORE STEAM

While users do occasionally trade out track equipment for tires, Storlie says cases of switching from tires to tracks occur far more often.

"The industry trend continues to move toward more and more consumers choosing compact track loaders," he says. "They're considering not having to worry about flat tires, less ground disturbance and the ability to do more jobs. If someone were to switch back (from tracks to tires), I think that would be driven by cost of ownership. The track loader costs you more to run day-in and day-out. Tracks are wearing, and there's more moving parts involved. The reason to switch to tires or stay with tires is generally cost." 



PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Four pros from Quali-Pro weigh in on this year's biggest problems and recommend ways to solve them

Spring has sprung in much of the United States and lawn care operators across the country face a myriad of problems.

Four Quali-Pro professionals weighed in on problems across the country, and offered solutions so lawn care operators (LCOs) don't have to stress.

PROBLEM 1: Sedge Control and Preemergent Season

Ian Rodriguez, Ph.D., technical service manager for Quali-Pro, is not new to the lawn care industry. On the contrary, he's been diving headfirst into the turf and ornamental industry since college, dedicating much of his adult life to finding solutions for common problems LCOs may face. He says one of the biggest problems for LCOs early in the season is control of the Cyperaceae species — also known as sedges. With more than 2,000 species in the Cyperaceae family, controlling this plant comes down to location and timing.



Ian Rodriguez

“Sedges are often a big problem in landscapes,” Rodriguez explains. “When you have



tropical seasons in the Southeast with excessive moisture, this sort of weather promotes the growth of sedges. There is not a lot out there that acts as a preemergent for sedges, so you're largely looking at post emergent control options. Quali-Pro has two products targeted at controlling and eliminating sedge: SedgeMaster and Expel.”

SedgeMaster is a sulfonylurea herbicide that inhibits amino acid production, which disrupts the plant's metabolism over time. According to Rodriguez, SedgeMaster is ideal for multiple types of sedges and broadleaf weeds, and will work without impacting the surrounding turfgrass or ornamentals.

Expel is a fast-acting postemergent herbicide that can control even the trickiest of sedges in as little as 1-2 days. Expel's active ingredient, sulfentrazone, results in cell membrane damage leading to rapid withering and death of the sedge. Rodriguez says the key to controlling many common problems LCOs face is to act quickly when the problem is still on a small scale early in the season.

Rodriguez advises that LCOs plan ahead and talk to their



QUALI-PRO



customers as “a little bit of education and communication can go a long way.” Because schedules for plant care in this industry are largely based on the calendar and the cycle of plant growth,

having a plan in place is highly encouraged.

Solution: SedgeMaster and Expel

PROBLEM 2: Broadleaf Weed Control

With Quali-Pro offering such a large portfolio of insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and growth regulators, Fox has seen the stress pros feel trying to decipher what is going to work best for their business as they navigate through the seasons.



Paul Fox

“We have a very broad portfolio that covers a very broad array of pests and problems, if nothing else we have a portfolio that could solve most problems the lawn care operators face,” says Fox. “We’ve brought some new products out to the market over the last several years, one of which being Fahrenheit, which is targeted for warm-season grasses, focused around broadleaf weed control. It is a combination product, so it’s two different chemistries — two different modes of action — so you

get a little resistance management.”

Because broadleaf weeds can cover many different species, Fox recommends pros use Fahrenheit for many reasons.

“We’re all facing challenging times this season with costs going up. Preemergent supply has been hard and there will be some more need for postemergent herbicides. Finding new and different products will be important this season,” Fox says. “Fahrenheit is a really good alternative option for some of the three-way herbicides. We can use it for broadleaf weed control in warm-season turf.”

As the warmer seasons rapidly approaches, Fox encourages LCOs to order soon, so that broadleaf weeds can be a thing of the past.

“Look at options to be more efficient with pesticide use, reduce callbacks and maximize your labor. You should only need to do a job once. This may mean spending a little more on the product for the longevity, but in the climate we are in today, this should help in the long run,” Fox says.



Solution: Fahrenheit

PROBLEM 3: Red Imported Fire Ants

For Chris Butcher, certain turf problems for LCOs hit closer to home. As the Southeast sales account manager for Quali-Pro, he is responsible for all accounts in Virginia and the Carolinas. Lately, one pest in particular has been plaguing many of his customers: red imported fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*).



Chris Butcher

“One of the biggest problems that LCOs may face in the Southeast are the red imported fire ants. Not only can they give a

painful sting, but the mounds in the environment are very unsightly as well,” Butcher explains. “They can have impacts not only to humans but also to wildlife. They’re becoming more and more of a problem, and it seems like they are getting worse and worse in our area. They can also cause an allergic reaction, which in some cases have been deadly.”

To combat these potentially deadly pests, Butcher recommends a hard-hitting product that is not only effective, but easy to

use. Enter, Taurus Trio G.

“Taurus Trio G is a granular product that can be easily applied with a drop or hand crank spreader. It comes on a nice dustless carrier so it’s a very clean product,” Butcher says. Taurus Trio G offers two main benefits for our southern LCO (1) quick knockdown which is controlled with two active ingredients, and (2) season-long suppression which is achieved via our third active ingredient.

Butcher recommends that every LCO in the Southeast plan at least 6 months in advance, allowing for a base plan to be established early on and additional products added on when needed.

Suggests Butcher, “Plan ahead to be sure you’re doing all the right things to either suppress or prevent pests from being a problem in the first place. Being proactive is going to be a big issue going forward in our world.”

Solution: Taurus Trio G

PROBLEM 4: Snow Mold, Anthracnose, Dead Spot, and Bermuda Decline

Justin Ruiz, West area manager for Quali-Pro is familiar with many different problems that landscapers could face. In the Northwest, there are two main problems for LCOs: snow mold and anthracnose. Both snow mold and anthracnose are common in cold, wet climates as a



result of melting snow paired with slightly warming weather. Luckily, Ruiz suggests one solution for both problems: Strobe Pro G.

“Strobe Pro G is one of the top solutions for all of these problems,” Ruiz says. “It rains a lot in the Northwest, creating soggy and wet conditions which can cause difficult situations to access with large spraying equipment. Granular application is an effective option for these areas. Granular applications are versatile. Smaller, difficult-to-access areas and targeted areas can easily be treated with a spreader.”

In the Southwest, LCOs are more likely to see problems like spring dead spot and Bermudagrass decline, as well as fungi like *Pythium*. Luckily, Ruiz recommends Strobe Pro G for these issues as well.



Justin Ruiz

“Strobe Pro G is a broad-spectrum product, and having Strobe Pro G on hand is ideal throughout the spring and the fall. This is a great solution to protect your turf year around,” Ruiz says. “Down in Arizona during overseed, Strobe Pro G can help protect the new seedlings to become established. When it’s hot and you need to use a lot of water to get the newly planted seed established, you have a greater chance to create *Pythium* and other diseases. Strobe Pro G can combat those issues very well.”

While the area Ruiz manages is large, he recommends having a plan in place and be patient with the results.


“Having a plan in place is important for LCOs,” says Ruiz.

“If you’re caught reacting to issues then it is easy to get behind and it will make your job more difficult. Understanding how disease and weeds work in your area will help you create a plan, and when you have a plan of attack for the most common problems, then protective applications can be applied effectively and in turn the plan will make your job a lot less stressful.”



Solution: Strobe Pro G

LCOs can bet on having problems throughout the seasons. Having a company to put your trust in is vital, and Ruiz feels confident that every LCO should take advantage of that partnership, no matter where in the country they may be.

“LCO’s have access to resources like your local Quali-Pro Representative and the local distributor representatives, which are definitely a valuable tool,” Ruiz says. “The representatives in your area see the big picture of what issues others are facing, are in tune with historical pressures, and can help you create an iron clad plan of protection. The local Quali-Pro Representative and the local Distributors are there to help you with any questions that may arise throughout the year.” 

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EVERY DROP COUNTS

Why we must conserve for the future

BY MAX MORENO | CONTRIBUTOR

It's that time of year again, and families are busy planning vacations and gearing up for summer activities. In the landscape industry, we are likewise preparing for summer. While summer vacation is on everyone's mind, landscapers everywhere are preparing for the busiest time of the year. Summer is crunch time! The days will be longer and the climate is much warmer.

Summer 2022 just got more complicated with the drought in the West, presenting the most challenging conditions in our lifetime and the last 1,200 years.

Landscapers in drought-affected areas face an incredible obstacle. In California, the governor has issued an executive order that will limit our water usage capacity due to the megadrought.

A megadrought, by definition, is "a severe drought lasting for two or more

decades." The driest parts of the West are already in the grips of a megadrought. And while some states may not be in the same situation as California, there may be a day soon when they're in a similar position.

The message to conserve water has not changed, but the urgency to do so is becoming more relevant. My message for water management also has not changed, but every year my strategy, the solutions and our goals do. When evaluating water management strategies annually, make sure to consider the following:

- Water restrictions in place.
- Aging irrigation systems.
- Labor shortages.
- Rising fuel costs.
- Availability of and increasing costs of materials.
- Rising costs of water.

With some or all of these hurdles, it's essential to identify the potential opportunities that water management can alleviate. Looking ahead at water availability and restrictions, I foresee potential issues with plant health, penalties/fines and labor demand.

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Smart controllers are a great solution to help manage watering days restrictions or windows. I am a big proponent of technology, and if I can use it to optimize my resources, I'm working smarter and not harder.

I appreciate that progressive manufacturers like Hydropoint have features such as compliance monitors. This simple feature helps track drought information and keep our communities

Continued on page 42

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

Water management strategies need to reflect current water restrictions, availability of materials, rising water costs and more.



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EVERY DROP COUNTS

“I am a big proponent of technology, and if I can use it to optimize my resources, I’m working smarter and not harder.”



—MAX MORENO

Continued from page 41

and properties within restrictions set by local municipalities. Explaining that feature to any potential client amid a drought is a game-changer. Aside from helping to manage the watering schedules while keeping the plants healthy, other benefits are labor savings, reduced vehicle maintenance and fuel savings. If you can measure the value of maintaining a healthy landscape while keeping the operating cost down, then the importance of water management becomes one of the most significant benefits.

CHANGING CONSUMPTION HABITS

Even if you are reducing the amount of water used, chances are the amount spent has gone up since the price of water gradually increases every year. Solutions to slow down the amount of water used would be to increase the irrigation uniformity or reduce the amount of water-thirsty plants.

I have found that using pressure-regulating sprinklers, lower precipitation nozzles for both sprayheads and rotors and drip irrigation can drastically reduce water usage by up to 40 percent. A benefit of using drip irrigation is a reduction in labor by minimizing the amount of overwatered areas, potentially creating more weeds. Weeds lead to more labor and/or chemicals needed to maintain landscaped areas. Drip irrigation also reduces the amount of water damage to walls, fences and streets by eliminating overspray and misting. These are just additional values and benefits of proper water management.

I am fortunate to be in a position and working for a company that helps our clients and helps our industry move in the direction of water management. When considering water management internally within your company or with clients, look at the solutions or benefits that add value. It will help your bottom line and keep your clients in the best position to maintain optimum landscape appearance; plus, it is the right thing to do for the environment.

Let’s save water together!

Max Moreno is vice president of water conservation with Harvest Landscape Enterprises in Orange, Calif.

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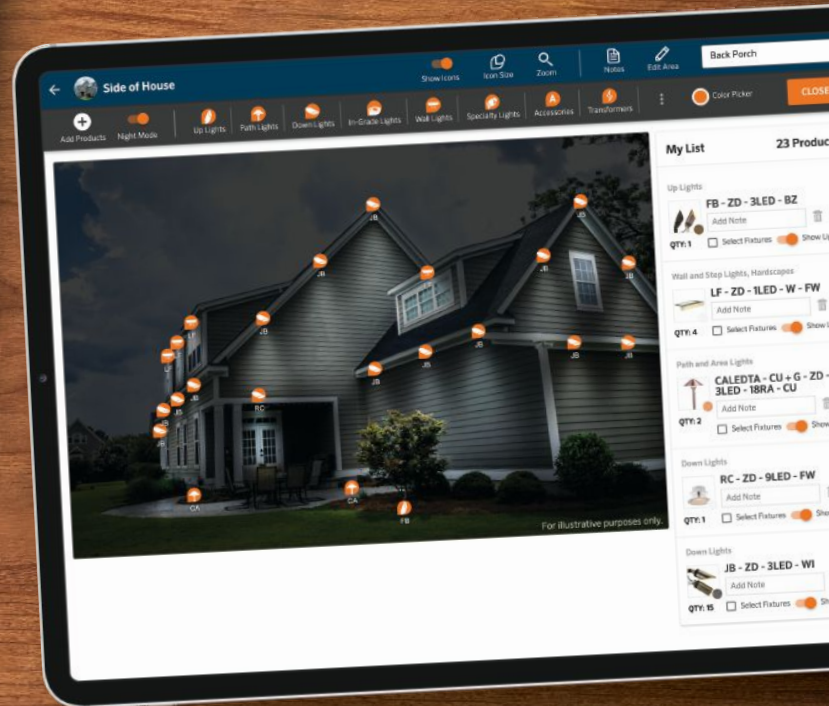
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SNOW STRATEGY

Why it's time to shift to snow

The month of May is one of the most hectic times of the entire year for a landscape contractor. Customers meet to spend money. Contractors deliver and install annual flowers. Turf growth is at its peak. Irrigation systems are running. Weeds are growing in places they shouldn't be. Shrubs have leafed out and anticipate the first pruning. Insects are munching away. In sum, the volume of activity is enormous. Some of you are experiencing this right now.

But for the snow contractor, something else is going on. Snow pros are shifting gears from landscape back to snow. Yes, a lot is going on with landscape operations. But in many respects, the landscape season is already finished from a planning perspective. The operations teams need to continue to execute, but the season is well underway and it's time to turn our attention back to snow.

GET IN FIRST GEAR

So, what does it mean to shift gears back to snow? Great question. There are four important gears to get through. First gear is placing orders for equipment, tools, supplies and materials. This has never been more urgent in light of global supply chain issues.

Before placing orders, it may be necessary to review inventories,

check on the status of repairs and make some projections about next winter. What needs retired and replaced? What needs added for growth? How many extras do you need on hand?

Some items may be completely unavailable. Wouldn't you rather find that out in May versus October? I would.

SHIFT TO SECOND GEAR

Use second gear to expedite contract renewals. If your renewals are not yet completed, you may discover that you've already missed some opportunities. A growing trend in the commercial segment is to renew contracts at the tail end of winter. Getting renewals out in the summer is way too late.

However, before renewing contracts, it may be necessary to have an attorney review and update your sales contract and service partner agreements. You probably need to make price increase decisions. You may wish to propose a new contract format, different terms or an extended contract length.

All of this takes time and effort and may require meetings with your customers.

There may be some customers who choose not to renew. Wouldn't you rather find that out in May versus October? I would.



BY PHIL HARWOOD

The author is president and CEO of Pro-Motion Consulting. Reach him at Phil@GrowTheBench.com.

ON TO THIRD GEAR

In third gear, implement snow staffing plans. The organizational structure for a snow company is different from any other type of business and projected growth is an important factor in developing this structure. Now is the time to review your plan and make improvements. Determine where you have staffing needs and determine your plans to fill those holes.

However, before laminating your organizational chart, it may be necessary to become educated about best practices for structural design in the snow industry. You may want to engage your professional network to make sure your structure is optimal.

There may be some unexpected staffing needs that you were previously unaware of. Wouldn't you rather find that out in May versus October? I would.

HITTING FOURTH GEAR

Fourth gear — while it is definitely not the “off-season” for landscaping — it is absolutely the off-season for snow. Now is the time for professional development.

Take a look at what the snow organizations have to offer. Check SnowFightersInstitute.com, ASCAOnline.org and SIMA.org. These organizations provide a wide range of educational and networking opportunities with peers and suppliers in the professional snow and ice industry.

It's May. The grass is growing. The flowers are going in. Temperatures climb. But we all know that the snow is inevitably coming. It's time to shift gears. Now go forth.



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↓ MAMMOTH 850

COMPANY: Ariens
URL: Ariens.com

The Ariens Mammoth 850 is a ride-on multi-attachment vehicle for snow removal for customers who manage snow and ice for municipalities, universities, commercial landscaping, parking lots and other applications. It allows operators to cover large areas more easily and efficiently than pushing a traditional snow blower. The Mammoth has a powerful 28.5 hp Kawasaki 850V EFI engine with dual-canister filtration and features several attachments that use an electric quick-connect system.



↑ SNOWDOGG VMXII

COMPANY: Buyers Products
URL: BuyersProducts.com

Designed for use with most ¾-ton pickup trucks, the SnowDogg VMXII moves heavy, wet snow and withstands seasons of use in harsh environments. The plow features a 304 stainless-steel blade with flared wings and a frame built to absorb heavy impacts. The VMXII also incorporates SnowDogg features such as a RapidLink Attachment System and Floating A-frame.



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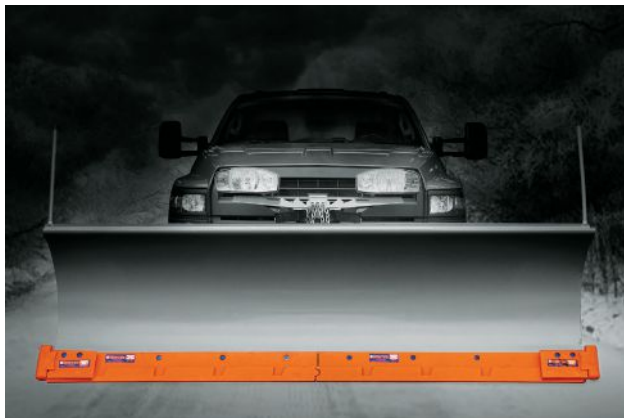
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ICESTRIKER AM/CM COMBI SPREADERS

COMPANY: Hilltip

URL: Hilltip.com

Hilltip's IceStriker 2000-6000 AM/CM Combi Spreaders work with half-ton trucks or larger. These electric-powered spreaders can spread granular salt, sand and gravel and transform into a liquid deicing sprayer — either pre-wetting material as it's spread or directly spraying brine to the driving surface for anti-icing applications. Every IceStriker spreader features liquid tanks integrated into both sides of the double-walled poly hopper, which holds up to 220 gallons of liquid.

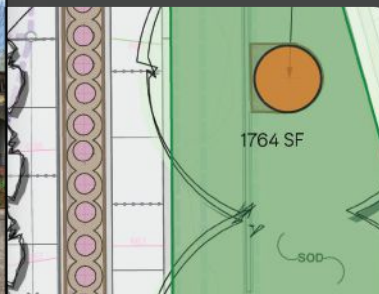


RAZOR ARROW STRAIGHT BLADE SYSTEM

COMPANY: Winter Equipment

URL: WinterEquipment.com

The Razor Arrow Straight Blade System features two 4-1/2-foot Razor blade sections, two Plow Guard Juniors and grade 8 hardware. Two Plow Guard Juniors defend against uneven and premature wear of the wear bar for Western Pro Plus. The system includes a two-piece, pre-welded blade with 5/8-inch abrasion-resistant cover plates welded to a tungsten carbide insert cutting edge, increasing wear life and surface footprint.



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FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Will Haselbauer

**PRESIDENT
BIOLAWN
MINNEAPOLIS**

1 Tell me about yourself and the company?

I've been in the turf industry since I was 18. I started out on the golf course; then, I went to school for turf science at the University of Minnesota. Then I got my master's degree at Tennessee in turf. I worked in the industry for a while, at different jobs — some equipment companies, some chemical companies. Then in 2016, Aaron (Johnsen) and I started talking

and we decided to start a lawn care company. We focus primarily on the plant health side; no mowing, cutting or plowing. We've been growing, and now we have a full team. We're running multiple trucks. It's been a very fortunate six years.

2 What is a trend in the industry that you think will only grow in importance?

I think employees are at the top of everybody's mind. I think we're doing a good job here, focusing on that work/life balance. It seems like the days of grinding it out for six, seven days a week are just not acceptable anymore. That's one of our core values: a work/life balance. If people are here for too long, we tell them to go home. You're just going to grind them

into the ground, and it's not acceptable. It's been a huge focus for us, and it seems to be paying off — we're fully staffed right now, which is great.

3 Any products in the shop that you're especially fond of?

The last couple years, it's been the ride-on aerators. They have made a huge difference. The XT8 from Turfco has a seeder on the front ... it goes back to labor; it's a huge labor savings not only with the ride-on aerator but with the addition of the seed box on the front. It seems like we cut our labor in half with the ride-on, and then with the seeding in the front, we cut our labor in half again. That's been a game-changer.



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4 Do you have a memorable day at work?

We had a barbecue last summer. We did the barbecue, we did a little drawing and we called out some wins for certain employees. Then I called out, 'OK, that's it, everyone can go home now.' And everyone stuck around for another two hours, not clocked in. I went home that evening on cloud nine. When you have the rough days, those are the days I try to remember.

5 What are your sports teams, and do you have a favorite sports highlight?

The classic Minnesota teams: the Vikings, the Gophers. I'm a huge tennis player, and for two summers, I went and worked at Wimbledon. I merged my two

BEST ADVICE

"My uncle, John, who has started and ran a lot of businesses, one of the first things he told me when I started my own business was, 'Find out what you're good at, and then find people who can do the rest.'"

passions — turf and tennis. The fandom highlight, I was out on the courts with Andre Agassi, Jimmy Connors, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic. We were just setting up the nets, talking to them. Especially the week before the tournament, we were out there with them, excuse my French, shooting the (bull). I think that will be my lifetime highlight for sports fandom — I don't think I can top that. 🐮



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BY GREG HERRING

The author is the CEO of The Herring Group, financial leaders serving landscape companies. He can be reached at greg.herring@herring-group.com.

Why you should harness the power of selectivity

Many landscape companies focus on growing revenue. Depending on who owns your company and its current size, there may be a better focus.

Selectivity can be a powerful option for companies not forced by circumstances to show high revenue growth.

I use the bottom line, specifically the operating profit margin, as a measure for:

- The life margin of the owner. The life margin is the owner's excess time and energy no longer a required investment in the company.
- The company's customer satisfaction.
- The effectiveness of management.
- The efficiency of operations.

Operating profit is revenue less direct and overhead expenses, including depreciation and reasonable owners' compensation. The operating profit margin is a percentage calculated by dividing operating profit by revenue.

Using the power of selectivity, companies can focus on optimizing the operating profit margin.

In The Herring Group's Landscape Industry Benchmark Report, we routinely see a \$10 million company making the same operating profit in terms of dollars as a \$20 million company. That means that the \$10 million company's operating profit margin is twice that of the \$20 million company, as seen in the table below.

	Company A	Company B
Revenue	\$10,000,000	\$20,000,000
Operating Profit	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Operating Profit Margin	10%	5%

“Selectivity can be a powerful option for companies not forced by circumstances to show high revenue growth.”

HOW SELECTIVITY APPLIES TO YOUR BUSINESS

As an owner, which company would you rather operate? A smaller company that needs fewer employees and has greater simplicity, yet produces the same operating profit.

A more profitable company has more flexibility to acquire other companies, sell at a greater price, experiment with creative incentive plans to retain valued employees and endure recessions (remember those?).

Selectivity is an opportunity for companies to be more precise about the services offered and the types of customers or projects pursued. Assuming companies have good data, the power of selectivity allows the company to choose more profitable services with higher profit margin customers. These companies let competitors perform less profitable services for lower profit margin customers.

PUTTING SELECTIVITY TO WORK

When The Herring Group works with clients who perform maintenance services, we review each customer's profitability and budget performance for the previous year. While our analysis is more sophisticated, an easy way

for your company to use the power of selectivity is to:

- Calculate the gross margins of the green contract, the snow contract

and any additional work performed, as well as the overall gross margin for each customer.

- Identify the most profitable and least profitable customers.

Companies can be more selective in two ways: First, more aggressive in raising prices for the least profitable customers, and second, more selective in the future by pursuing only the opportunities that share the characteristics of the most profitable customers.

For companies with construction projects, The Herring Group analyzes yearly the profitability and budget performance of each project. This analysis is just as valuable as the analysis of maintenance customers, but it is usually more complicated because of significant variation in labor, materials, equipment and subcontractor costs. The focus is on identifying the project and customer types that enable the company to optimize the operating profit margin.

If done correctly, these reviews will consume many hours, but the return on that investment can be significant. Having data that people trust and reports that make it easy to see clearly will speed up the review and increase the return time invested — increasing your operating profit margin. This process also will increase the owner's life margin because account managers, production managers and project managers perform these tasks with minimal leadership from the owner. 📌

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BY KEN THOMAS

The author is COO of The Greenery and principal of Envisor Consulting. Reach him at kenthomas@envisorco.com.

Don't overlook the importance of courageous leadership

Our mission at Envisor is to help our clients “envision and achieve” their greatest success. As consultants, we help our clients increase sales, increase profits, improve their quality of life or a combination of all three.

Typically, the steps to success in each company are not dramatically different and are not that complicated to understand intellectually. The challenge is in implementation. Unfortunately, while the plan may be simple, it's not easy. Here's why:

Implementing the plan takes courageous leadership. Leadership is doing the right things at the right time. I say “courageous” because it can be scary! Many times the “right things” are counterintuitive for owners and leaders. Sometimes, it seems

like decisions don't line up with the facts. These are the tough decisions leaders have to make to move the organization forward.

Some common “right things” are:

- To hire a key person to move us forward.
- To raise the price or fire some key clients holding us back.
- To replace an individual whose job has outgrown them.
- To spend money we don't have on equipment or software.
- To let a top performer go due to a poor attitude.

HOW TO DO THE RIGHT THING

In the planning stage, all the “right things” make sense. But when the rubber meets the road in implementation, these decisions can become

derailed by over-analysis and fear. The reason is that each decision may come with negative short-term consequences. You may ask, “How can I add overhead or fire customers when I am not making enough money?”

It's complicated and emotional with decisions relating to people. We are dealing with people's lives, and relationships are involved.

Here's the bottom line, folks: many times, the decisions you are most afraid of are the ones that will set you free and allow your company and your team to perform at the highest level.

To overcome the fear of doing the “right things” and move your organization forward, we recommend:

- Outline the pros and cons of each decision. Many times, doing nothing is more detrimental than taking action.
- Seek wise counsel from trusted advisers. Know that your intimacy with the issue could color your teammate's advice.
- Develop a *reasonable* worst-case scenario in terms of work and profits.
- Identify the return on investment (ROI) the decision will generate.
- Develop the sales and/or operations plan needed to generate more gross margin dollars to pay for changes.
- Rally yourself and your team to execute the transition plan.

I have to say, it's rewarding to watch courageous business leaders make the tough decisions required to move their organizations forward and see a huge ROI on growth, quality of life and profits. 🍷



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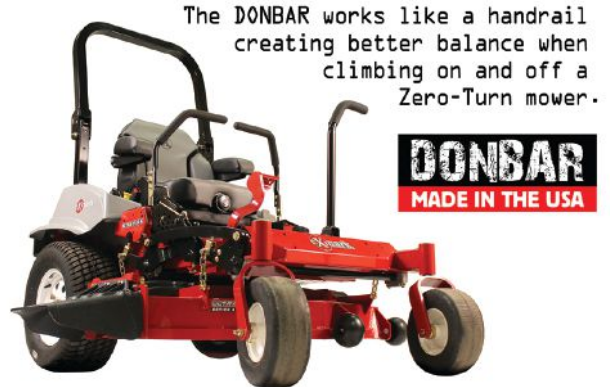
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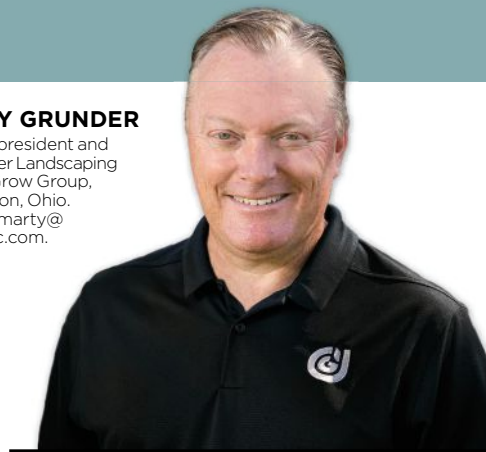
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GROW WITH GRUNDER

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.



Why building personal relationships helps make the sale

At Grunder Landscaping, we have long believed in the power of relationships to close sales, find team members and grow our business. We've built strong relationships in our community, and it has paid dividends in our years in business.

I've been asked before how landscape professionals should go about meeting people and the best way to start building those relationships. Knowing that so many of you have big growth goals this year, I thought this month we'd talk about how to build and leverage relationships:

1 Join community organizations.

Meet your prospective clients where they are. Whether you primarily do residential or commercial work, your local chamber of commerce is a great place to start. An association for builders or real estate agents is a great organization to join if you specialize in residential work. We've also found that getting involved with arts and charity events has been a good source of leads and

“People do business with people they know, like and trust. Relationships have been a driver of our success for years...”

relationships. Don't go into these events thinking about how you'll make a sale but instead find ways to give back to the community and meet new people. Be yourself, make relationships and the sales will follow naturally.

2 Build relationships where you already are.

We've belonged to the same club since my kids were younger and would spend the summer at the pool. I decided to take up golfing a few years ago when we became empty nesters and made so many new connections by playing and signing up for the golf events at the club. I belonged to this club for 10 years before I really started taking advantage of the relationships I could build there, and it led to new clients for both residential and commercial work. Build relationships doing things you enjoy so you can be your authentic self while doing it.

3 Do your research.

We're going after new commercial maintenance clients this year, and my team and I refuse to do any *cold* calling. We feel there's no excuse to call on a prospective client without doing some research ahead of time so we know something about them and their business. Every call we go on is a *warm* call. We may have never

met the prospect personally, but we use LinkedIn, the website for the business and other tools to know something ahead of our visit. We can use that intel to ask someone else to introduce us or to personalize our outreach to make it more relevant.

People do business with people they know, like and trust. Relationships have been a driver of our success for years, and a key driver of our growth for 2021 and 2022.

In June, we'll visit R.P. Marzilli & Co. as part of the Field Trip we host in partnership with the National Association of Landscape Professionals. R.P. Marzilli is a much larger company than mine, with \$53 million in annual revenue in Boston. Their team is well-known for the high quality of their work and the focus they put on craftsmanship and relationships. The team does great work and has built strong relationships within their community that drive referrals to the point where they have dedicated account and project managers but not a dedicated sales team.

I'm looking forward to going behind the scenes to find ways we could become even better at relationship selling at Grunder Landscaping. Learn more: growgroupinc.com/nalp-field-trip



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