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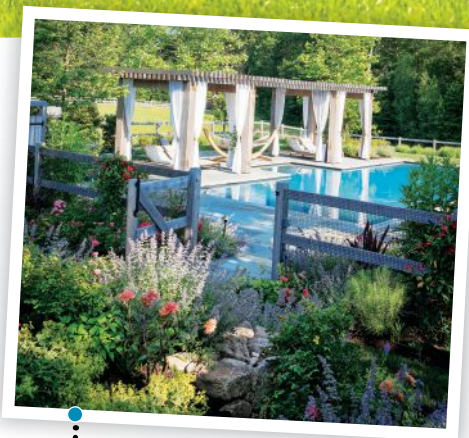
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## Learning by doing

**T**he Chinese philosopher Confucius is credited with the saying, “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” And while I admit that quoting Confucius in just my fourth column for *LM* was absolutely not on my bingo card, I have to admit that those words have hit pretty close to home as I’ve settled into my new role with this magazine.

I’ve always considered myself someone who learns best by doing. I think back to my college days and the countless hours I spent inside lecture halls during my work on a degree in mass communication. I picked up a few things from those lectures, of course, but given the option to actually go out and write about something for the student newspaper as opposed to listening to a professor talk about that writing process, I’d take the first option every time.

I’ve tried to take a similar approach as I’ve started my tenure at *LM*. Sure, I’ve read plenty of back issues of the magazine and had conversations with countless landscape contractors, consultants and company reps to get a feel for this industry, the people in it and how they consume information. I’d be doing everyone a disservice if I didn’t do that.

But I think I’ve taken my biggest steps forward in that quest by getting out there and spending time with many of those same people, visiting their facilities and getting up close and personal with the landscape industry. Seeing what you do and how you do it has really flattened my learning curve, and I hope that is coming through in the content you’re reading here.

“I’ve taken my biggest steps forward ... by getting out there and spending time with many of those same people, visiting their facilities and getting up close and personal with the landscape industry.”

I took that approach as I worked on this month’s cover story on Scythe Robotics and the autonomous mowing solutions that are slowly becoming part and parcel of the landscaping industry. I referenced this visit in last month’s column, and having the opportunity to spend a day at Scythe’s headquarters in Colorado to see how their product was designed, developed and built, and ultimately how it’s being used in the field increased my knowledge and understanding more than any amount of phone interviews ever could. I think you’ll learn a lot from our exclusive inside look at one of the industry’s real up-and-comers.

I had a similar experience a few weeks after that when *LM* was lucky enough to snag an invite to the annual meeting of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). Some of the most important movers and shakers in the business were there, and I felt fortunate to be given the chance to meet many of them for the first time and pick their brains about what makes their businesses and this industry tick.

Speaking of OPEI, the upcoming Equip Exposition will be a great opportunity for those among you who, like me, enjoy learning by doing. Set for Oct. 15-18 in Louisville, Equip might be the single best hands-on opportunity that landscape contractors have to examine the latest and greatest products in the industry, take them for a spin and learn a little bit along the way with a full slate of educational opportunities that include 15 sessions over three days that will be presented by *LM* in partnership with OPEI.

Similarly, I’d be remiss (and probably get a reprimand in the office) if I didn’t mention the similar opportunities available during the annual *LM* Growth Summit, which will take place Dec. 9-11 in Orlando. Pairing leading supplier partners with pre-qualified lawn care applicators, the Summit plays right into the wheelhouse of those hands-on learners with one-on-one opportunities that simply aren’t available anywhere else. You can learn more and apply to attend by visiting the *LM* Growth Summit website ([LMGrowthSummit.com](http://LMGrowthSummit.com)).

As a self-described old dog trying to learn some new tricks in an all-new industry, I can’t tell you how valuable opportunities like these have been for me. I’m grateful that so many have been so willing to share so much with me, and I hope that’s shining through in the pages of this issue of *LM*. 🐕



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## What is your go-to app on your phone and how does it help you get the job done?



**“I use Waze quite a bit as it’s the best GPS app there is. Companywide, we use Real Green’s mobile phone app a lot. I know that texting isn’t an app but I’m always using it! Compared to a phone call, it’s short, sweet and gets the job done.”**



**“Spotify. I listen to many business and economic podcasts that provide me with motivation, inspiration and information to stay on top of business trends and economic conditions.”**

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**“OneNote by a long shot! I used to carry a journal everywhere I went, but now all that information is put into OneNote, and it syncs across all my devices. I use it to organize to-do lists, prioritize and manage my life. It’s been a game-changer for me.”**

### 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).



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# LM GALLERY

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

**1 Fore!** **LM's** Scott Hollister (left) and Bill Roddy (right) teed it up with Zack Davis, the vice president of destination services for Louisville Tourism (second from left) and Troy Winebrenner, the show director for Equip Exposition (second from right), during the OPEI Louisville Golf Classic at the OPEI Annual Meeting in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

**2 Strong as Stihl** The OPEI Annual Meeting gave the **LM** team a chance to connect with leaders from throughout the equipment industry. Here, Hollister and Roddy chat with Chris Keffer, president and CEO of Stihl.

**3 Meeting of the minds** Dan Ariens, the chairman and CEO of Ariens Co. (center), spent some quality time with Hollister and Roddy during the OPEI Annual Meeting.

**4 Partner portrait** OPEI and **LM** are partnering to present education during the annual Equip Exposition for the third consecutive year. Here, Roddy (left) and Hollister (right) flank Kris Kiser, OPEI president and CEO.

**5 Reunited** Hollister and Chuck Bowen, OPEI's vice president of communications and member relations, have a long history dating back to their service on the board of directors of the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association.







6



7



8



9



10



11

**6 It's still 11 o'clock somewhere** (Left to right) LM's Seth Jones; Todd Christianson, Titan LLC, and Michael Hupf, Lifescape Colorado, enjoy the view from the rooftop of 49th State Brewing in Anchorage.

**7 Bear watching** The bear watching at Brooks Camp in Katmai National Park is world-class — both from the safety of the platform and from just hiking around.

**8 Salmon spotters** Curtis Atkinson, Sunline Landscapes;

Jason Cromley, Hidden Creek Landscaping; and Paul Myers, McFarlin Stanford stop for a photo during their hike through Katmai National Park.

**9 Let's go fishing** Chase Coates, Outback Landscapes; James Cali, McFarlin Stanford; Jones; David Amigo, G&G Landscape Solutions; Josh Amigo, G&G Landscape Solutions; and Vince Torchia, The Grow Group take a break from catching sockeye — nice job reaching the limit, guys.

**10 Come fly with me** You can't reach Katmai National Park by road. You need to fly or boat to get there. Atkinson (front left) got to ride as co-pilot (sorry we cropped you out Robert the Pilot) with Cali, Amigo, Jones, Torchia and Will the Guide enjoying the flight home.

**11 Catch of the week** Goes to Garret Hergert, GRO, for hauling in this beautiful sockeye. With a company name like GRO, did the rest of us stand a chance?



## Industry business owners visit the last frontier

**LM goes behind the scenes with ACE Peer group's Alaska trek**

**BY SETH JONES**  
**LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR**

**T**here are 18 hours of daylight, the time change is four hours earlier than Eastern Daylight Time and at times, the bears are as common as deer.

Those are just a few changes from the normal day-to-day for the nine lawn care and landscape companies, two industry consultant companies and one industry trade publication

**Before fishing began, the group dove deep on two case studies and business law.**

that made the trek to Alaska last month. This ACE Peer Group — co-hosted by The



Grow Group and McFarlin Stanford — first stopped in Anchorage to visit Titan LLC, a design/build company started by CEO Todd Christianson 42 years ago. The group then held meetings on the top floor of the Hotel Captain Cook, a member of the Historic Hotels of America.

From there, the group took another flight further south and west to King Salmon, where they stayed at

Rapids Camp Lodge for three days of fishing, bear watching and camaraderie over meals, shuffleboard, darts and even a little bit of karaoke.

**Todd Christianson (center), president and CEO of Titan LLC in Anchorage, Alaska, gives the Ace Peer Group a tour of his facility.**

“Even when we’re having fun, we make sure we get business done,” says James Cali, founding principal, McFarlin Stanford. “It’s an opportunity to get away, spend time together and bond. It’s more about breaking bread with those you work with and build relationships with. Whether it’s your peer group or your team back at home, when you create memories and experiences together, you all get so much closer.”

Chase Coates, owner of Outback Landscape in Idaho Falls, Idaho, told *LM* he joined a peer group in 2017 because he wanted to find like-minded people who were working in the same industry as he was. He says since joining a peer group, he’s grown his business and expanded his network for when he has questions that come up with his business.

*Continued on page 12*





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Continued from page 10

"It's an awesome experience hanging out with all these guys. It's rare you get to spend a lot of time together outside the office, not in meetings, not sitting in a conference room," Coates says. "When you get to hang out, that's when you really get to know people and dig into what they're working on back home in their business."

"It's why our industry is probably the best industry in the world — that's what peer groups are all about, that's what the industry is all about — share whenever you can," says Jason Cromley, CEO of Hidden Creek Landscaping, Columbus, Ohio, who will host Grow! in 2025. "The good companies want to see that success for other companies."

For more on the ACE Peer Group visit to Alaska, including video interviews with the attendees, visit [LandscapeManagement.net](https://LandscapeManagement.net). 

## FMC SELLS GSS TO ENVU

FMC Corp. has signed a definitive agreement to sell its Global Specialty Solutions (GSS) business to Envu.

Envu will purchase the GSS business for \$350 million, subject to a closing working capital adjustment.

In November 2023, FMC announced plans to explore strategic options for GSS, which includes a line of products that serve a diverse mix of non-crop markets such as professional sports stadiums, golf courses and pest control. As FMC concentrates on innovating products and services for the global crop protection market, GSS no longer has a clear, strategic role in the company's mid- or longer-term goals.

"Global Specialty Solutions is a profitable business with a strong history of growth. We believe this agreement with Envu will provide the attention and resources it needs to continue thriving," said Pierre Brondeau, FMC chairman and CEO. "With this divestment, FMC can focus solely on its core business."

According to Envu, which was acquired by international private equity firm Cinven in 2022, the company is solely dedicated to the environmental science sector and sees GSS as an opportunity to support its growth strategy while continuing to deliver powerful innovations for customers in professional pest management, turf and ornamentals and more.

The transaction is expected to close by year-end 2024, subject to regulatory approval and other customary closing conditions. FMC intends to allocate all proceeds from the sale to debt reduction.



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## Harrell's CEO Jack Harrell Jr. dies

**J**ack Harrell Jr., Harrell's CEO and chairman of the board, has died after a short battle with glioblastoma.

"My family is saddened by the loss of my father, but we rejoice that he has gone home to Glory and is not in any more pain and suffering any longer," said Jack Harrell III, president and COO of Harrell's. "His body had been restored and he is at peace. My father was a great man who took care of so many people. Everyone else was always his main concern, rather than himself. We will all miss him but are so happy that he is rejoicing in Heaven."

Following in the footsteps of Jack Harrell Sr., Jack Jr. began working

at Harrell's in 1978 after he graduated from Georgia Southern University with his bachelor's degree in business management. Not too long after, in January of 1982, Jack met his wife Tina Webb Harrell, and just over a year later in February of 1983, they were married.

In April, Jack Jr. and Tina's first child, Jack Harrell III, was born. Not too long after, Jack Jr. and Sr. opened the first Harrell's manufacturing plant off Kraft Road in Lakeland, Fla. The following year, in October



1986, Jack Jr. and Tina's second child, William Harrell, came into the world.


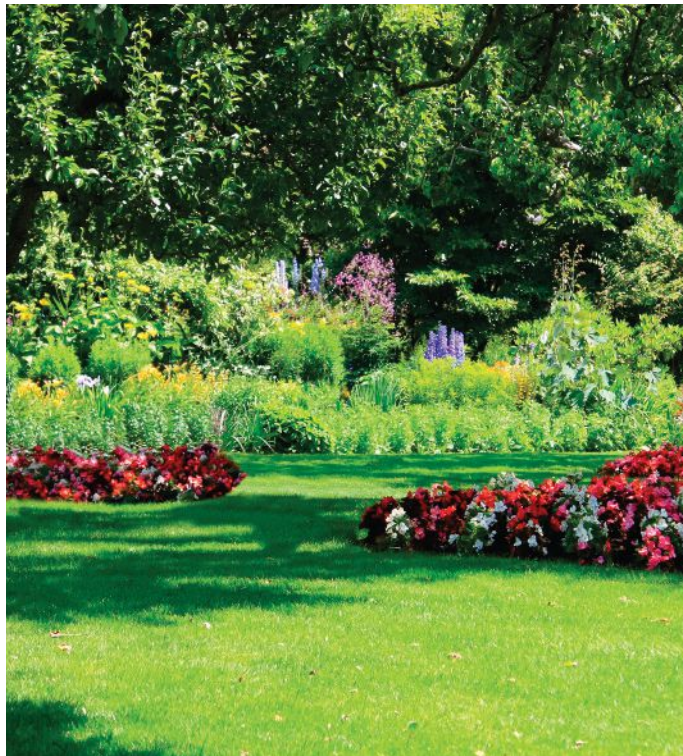
Five years later, Jack Harrell Jr. was appointed CEO of Harrell's. 

PHOTO: HARRELL'S



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# THE NEXT BIG THING?

**Scythe Robotics is among a host of companies banking on all-electric, autonomous mowers to revolutionize the way landscapers manage their businesses**

BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**T**he landscape business might not be the first one you think of when it comes to cutting-edge technology and game-changing advances. And truth be told, the people most closely involved in trying to bring those kinds of things to the industry would probably agree with you.

“The thing that I find ... kind of fascinating about this space is that the landscape industry is almost the last place you’d expect to see this type of technology,” says Billy Otteman, the senior director of brand at Scythe Robotics, a company working to make electric, autonomous commercial mowers more than just novelty items in landscaping.

“That’s actually what drew me to this opportunity. We’re using the same computer vision software and autonomous technology that Tesla is using in its self-driving cars and Apple is using in its new Vision Pro, but it’s in a space of businesses that have traditionally operated on whiteboards and paper. That’s exciting to be a part of change like that.”

To be clear, Scythe Robotics isn’t on an island here; landscapers and lawn care operators have a growing array of high-tech, battery-powered equipment solutions to choose from (see this month’s Innovation + Technology Guide for more on the latest and greatest tools to get the job done). And more and more end-users are embracing these machines in an effort to be more efficient, ease ongoing labor challenges and operate just a little more sustainably.

But it’s not a stretch to say that Scythe Robotics is writing an all-new chapter in this space with its M.52, the industry’s first all-electric, autonomous mower to be designed and built from the ground up to be that way. The company’s modest offices tucked into an office park

on the outskirts of Longmont, Colo., might be an unlikely spot for a full-scale industry revolution, but that’s exactly what the Scythe team hopes is in the works.

“We had three criteria for the kind of product we’d develop and the space we wanted to get into. Commercial mowers and landscaping hit on all of them,” says company co-founder and CEO Jack Morrison.

“First, the product had to actually be valuable to people. Second, we wanted it to not take a billion dollars to get to a finished product ... to spend all this time and money and have nothing to show for it. And third, we wanted it to just be good for the world. We felt like robotics had the potential to ... provide a value to this industry that people would pay for, and we think the M.52 hits on all three of those things.”

## ORIGIN STORY

Scythe Robotics’ origins can be traced to a series of tech endeavors that unwittingly brought the company’s co-founders together. Morrison and Isaac Roberts, now a company board member, connected during their time at Replica Labs, a software company that focused on 3D-scanning technology. When Occipital — another company in that same space — acquired Replica in 2016, Morrison and Roberts met Davis Foster, who was working as an electrical engineer at Occipital at the time. Two years later, he joined Morrison and Roberts in the early days of what would become Scythe and now serves as the company’s chief engineer.

The three men shared a passion for electrification and robotics, and a belief that those things could bring about positive societal change. But exactly how and where to

*Continued on page 16*





#### SOLO SOLUTION?

Scythe Robotics thinks its all-electric, autonomous M.52 mower can change the way landscapers and lawn care operators manage their businesses.



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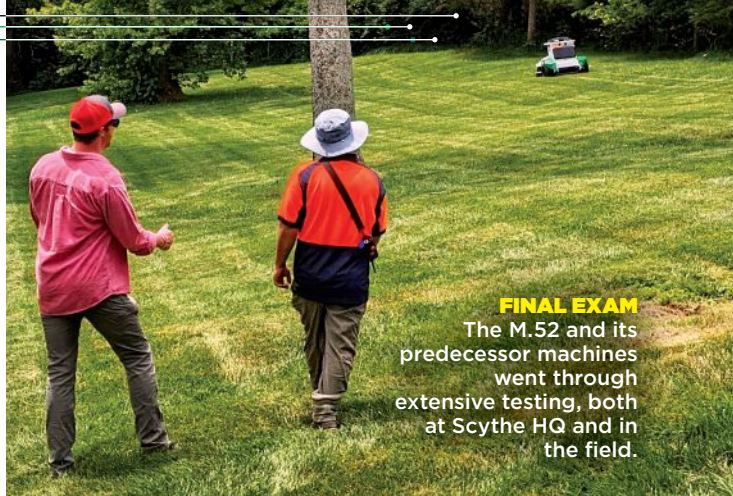


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## ROBOTIC REVOLUTION



### FINAL EXAM

The M.52 and its predecessor machines went through extensive testing, both at Scythe HQ and in the field.

*Continued from page 14*

apply those ambitions wasn't clear at first, at least not until the light bulb went off for Morrison while tackling a task known to produce great thinking — mowing his lawn.

"We had an acre and a half about 10 minutes south (of Longmont), and I just hated mowing it," he says with a laugh. "I grew up in the Chicago suburbs where it was grass lawns as far as you can see, and I was thinking about that while I was mowing mine. I went to Google later and was shocked to see there was almost 40 million acres of turf-grass in the U.S. It just seemed to check a lot of boxes for robotics, because if there's one thing robots are good at, it's going in straight lines. It resonated almost right off the bat."

With commercial mowing now the focus of this new endeavor, the next step was identifying a target market. Golf course maintenance soon rose to the top of the list, driven by the thought that the repetitive mowing that takes place on golf courses would be ideal for an autonomous device.

They quickly learned differently. "When we actually talked to a (golf course) superintendent, we discovered golf might not be the right fit," Morrison says. "So many variables from course to course. I went and toured the Castle Pines course (in nearby Castle Rock, Colo.) ... and that winds up and down the mountain with lots of big drops. I was like, 'This seems like a good place for a robot to drive off a cliff,' and that's not a great business model."

After scuttling their plans in golf — at least for the time being — they soon discovered that an adjacent industry would be a much better fit for their new enterprise.

"One of our co-founders (Roberts) knew a few commercial landscapers through friends of his family. After talking with them, it was pretty evident that it would be a great space for us. Larger properties, fewer variables in terms of size and shape than you see in golf," Morrison says.

"The really interesting piece that we discovered is that landscapers don't necessarily look at electrification and robotics as a way to just save on costs," Morrison continues. "They actually look at it as a way to grow their business. They can take a crew of four, shift two of them

*Continued on page 18*



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SCAN QR



*Continued from page 16*

onto another crew, then that crew with our machines can take on as many jobs as the other crew can without having to hire anybody else.

"It was a perspective we hadn't really considered, but it did convince us that we were going down the right road."

The sustainability part of the equation was another factor in deciding that mowing and landscaping were the right fit for Scythe, Otteman explains. "Contractors are getting demands from their clients where they want electric equipment on their properties, they want more sustainable solutions. Local governments are regulating it. Introducing all-electric, robotic mowers into the market helps mitigate those challenges.

"We're really sitting at this intersection where we have an opportunity to use this technology to resolve both labor and environmental challenges for customers."

## UP AND RUNNING

In early 2018, Scythe began work on its first prototype mower, nicknamed Astro, aiming to master the basics before moving into more technologically challenging territory. The M.52 represents the sixth iteration of that



### TRIED AND TRUE

While the autonomous operation of the M.52 is the machine's prime selling point, it can be used like a traditional stand-on mower.

original machine, with each new version being christened with a nickname pulled from the country's national park system — the first post-Astro prototype was Bighorn, the second Arapaho and the third Caribou.

The predecessor to the M.52 — a pre-production unit, so one step beyond a prototype but nothing that was ever mass produced — was known as Denali, and the current machine was dubbed Eldorado as it was coming online.

As one version gave way to another, extensive R&D work was ongoing, both to ensure the machines were technologically sound and that they could produce the reliability and quality of cut that contractors would expect. That work has included regular software improvements; the current M.52

*Continued on page 20*

PHOTO: SCYTHE ROBOTICS

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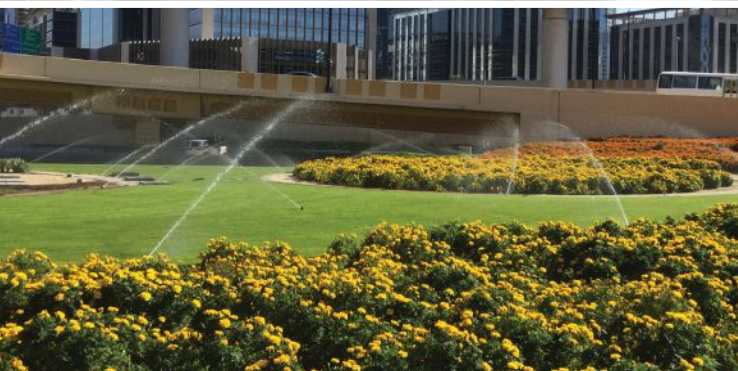


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# Hunter®



*Continued from page 18*

is receiving updates, transmitted wirelessly, on an almost weekly basis. Since all mowers are regularly exposed to the elements, there has been wide-ranging testing to make sure the machine's hardware was properly protected from heat and moisture. And the mowers have gone through hours of stress testing, both at company headquarters in Longmont and in the field, to make sure the sensitive hardware powering the machine can handle the day-to-day rigors of the job.

The M.52 is the first version to reach full production. Dozens of early adopters have been using the mower regularly for the past several months (see "Seeing is believing" on page 23), and by the end of 2024, Scythe hopes to have 100 machines in daily use with landscapers in Colorado, Texas, Florida and Ohio.

On its face, the M.52 looks like most traditional stand-on mowers and can be operated as such (more on that later). It features a 52-inch deck with a rear discharge, with motors that provide 15 horsepower in deck power and 20 horsepower in drive power and a top-end speed of 10 mph. But the machine's feature list also notes its connectivity (2X LTE and Wi-Fi, by the way), which is when you start to notice that the M.52 isn't just a traditional mower.

The mower uses computer vision to sense and navigate around different obstacles and respond accordingly based on its environment. The company used thousands of images to teach the mower to go around things such as trees, poles and park benches and stop when it encounters people, pets and other obstacles that might be in its way.

The end result is a machine that company officials like Otteman say will change the way landscapers think about how they allocate resources on a daily basis.

"We talk about the benefits of autonomy and electric power for end-users and the benefits from a sustainability aspect, but there's an equal value in multiplying what

**OLD SCHOOL**  
Considering the high-tech nature of the M.52, the production process for the machine is a surprisingly analog process.



landscape crews can do," he says. "So, the M.52 is tackling the tedious task of mowing while at the same time giving the opportunity for the crew to go do higher-value, more-interesting work; work that they can get paid more for and then our customer can charge more for. That's really the kind of the value proposition that most of our customers are interested in immediately."

### **EASIER ENTRY INTO ELECTRIC**

The technology that powers the M.52 isn't the only groundbreaking aspect to these machines. How landscapers actually get their hands on one also breaks plenty of industry norms.

Technically, customers don't have an option to buy the M.52. "We never really considered selling these machines outright," Morrison says. "We knew they were going to be expensive, and that would have been a deal-breaker right off the bat."

Instead, Scythe has leaned into a leasing plan that closely matches many of the subscription models that are common in the start-up tech industry.

"Recurring revenue and subscriptions are all the rage in the start-up tech world where we came from," Morrison says. "We never seriously thought about selling a mower subscription, though, because that would be a bit of a foreign concept for landscapers. But at the same time, there were lessons that we took from that idea."

Scythe's plan essentially has two parts. The base monthly lease gets customers the mower, maintenance on the machine and all-you-can-mow manual operation — as mentioned earlier, the M.52 can be operated like a traditional stand-on mower — with no hour cap. Layered on top of that is autonomous operation where customers pay on a monthly basis for every acre they mow.

Morrison sees this plan as ideal for both company and customer. The end-user gets a relatively low barrier of entry into autonomous technology and a tool that should allow them to do more with less and, eventually, land additional new business. For Scythe, the more the M.52 works, the more the company makes, so it's incentivized to make the machine as efficient and reliable as possible with long-track battery power.

*Continued on page 22*

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## ROBOTIC **REVOLUTION**

*Continued from page 20*

"There is a contractor we're working with who has a goal to replace all his machines with ours eventually," Morrison says. "If you're buying those, you're looking at 30 or 40 grand times 20 or 25 mowers. That's a hefty investment. With this model, it gives companies the opportunity to get into the electric game a lot easier from the get-go. When it works right, it's really a win-win."

### COMING ATTRACTIONS

Although early returns have been encouraging, the team at Scythe Robotics knows they have a long road to travel before achieving their mission, which Otteman describes as "pioneering solutions to more sustainably care for outdoor spaces and unlock growth for the businesses that maintain them."

One such barrier, for example, is landscapers' relative unfamiliarity with all-electric, autonomous equipment. "We're on the vanguard of electrification in this industry ... and the M.52 might be the first contact with large-scale electrification for a lot of companies," Morrison says. "That's something we have to keep in mind."

The infrastructure available to charge these mowers might also present challenges.

"Even within one business, you might have different branches with incredibly different electrical infrastructure at the facilities, so that presents charging challenges," Morrison says. "We have to get very specific with each of our partners to understand what we're dealing with and how we can help solve those issues."

Then there is Scythe's almost completely analog production method for each M.52, which is probably more surprising than it is challenging. Despite being on the cutting edge of autonomous technology, there are very few automated processes when it comes to building each machine.

"At the end of the day, you can teach a human to do almost everything. It's very difficult to teach a robot that same thing," says Bryan Waltz, Scythe's senior manager of production and field operations. "I honestly think that we are probably two years away from any kind of meaningful automated production, which is OK because this vehicle is pretty complex. That allows us to have a team of people that have enough ambiguity in their jobs to keep them engaged and keep them learning."

At the end of the day, though, Morrison doesn't see those challenges as insurmountable. He holds a similar opinion about winning the hearts and minds of landscapers as they learn more about autonomous mowers.

"This is a very kick-the-tires industry, but I've been pleasantly surprised that the contractors we've worked with don't need to kick the tires for very long to get what we're trying to do and how it can benefit their business," he says. "They will take risks and want to see this work, and that's encouraging." 🍷





## SEEING IS BELIEVING

For Philip Wagner and the team at Fisk Lawnscapes in Colorado Springs, Colo., good things have come to those who wait, at least when it comes to Scythe Robotics and its M.52 all-electric, fully autonomous commercial mower.

"We've had an interest since back in the summer of 2021, I guess, and were open to being one of the early adopters," says Wagner, Fisk's maintenance division manager. "Our COO Jacob (Stankich) reached out to them, got a demo set up and then we got on a reserve list a few months later. We just stayed in touch, kept the ball rolling and now we've had them in use for a couple of months."

Fisk comes by its interest in electric products and robotics naturally, Wagner says. "It's kind of a combination of us wanting to be on the cutting edge a little bit with something that helps with our labor challenges, helps us look out for the environment and also helps us look out for our guys and what they're exposed to in terms of noise and fumes."

It's also a good fit when you study the makeup of Fisk's business. While 60 percent of the company's business comes from residential installations, its maintenance efforts are solely focused on commercial properties, the kind of large layouts where the M.52 and the value proposition it offers truly shines.

"We have a large commercial crew, which takes care of basically all of our large sites, any of our city contracts, and that's where we have the machines implemented," Wagner says. "They have the most square footage ... of grass, and they're relatively wide-open spaces so we

can actually take advantage of the autonomous functions."

Even though the business case for the M.52 was a sound one for Fisk, that didn't mean there weren't hurdles to overcome as the machines were first coming online several months ago. Issues such as reliability, battery life and a potential steep learning curve in mastering the new machines gave operators and senior staff alike some pause, Wagner admits.

But a thorough training process — "Scythe was side-by-side with our crew in the field for an entire day, but I think most of my guys were like, 'We got it down. You guys can take off now' by lunch," he says — and

smooth sailing in the first few weeks of operation went a long way in calming any nerves about the M.52, according to Wagner.

Fisk has three units on site during the initial deployment, two of which are in regular use with the third serving as a backup. This is consistent with how Scythe has worked with customers who aren't close to the company's operations in the Denver area, Texas and Florida.

So far, there have been few mechanical or technological concerns with the M.52 for the team at Fisk, and Wagner says the mowers have delivered on their promise of freeing up operators to tackle other tasks on the jobsite while the machines handle the mowing.

"It's really been smooth sailing," Wagner says. "I'm not sure they'll be right for everybody, and you have to make sure that you really understand your goals and how you want to utilize the machine so that they work best for you. But so far, they're delivering the kind of benefits that we hoped they would. It's been a great experience for us."



**Philip Wagner**

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## INSECT ID + CONTROL

# Protecting your turf from fall armyworm

Early detection is a key to controlling this relatively new threat to home lawns and turfgrass

BY GEORGE KEGODE, PH.D. | CONTRIBUTOR

**F**all armyworms have posed a significant threat to agriculture in the United States for decades, particularly affecting crops like corn, sorghum and other grasses.

Since the early 2000s, this pest has also emerged as a problem in home lawns and turfgrass. According to Jesse Benelli, Ph.D., Green Solutions specialist for Envu, 2021 marked the year fall armyworm became a significant issue in turfgrass.

## RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF INFESTATION

Matt Giese, technical services manager for Syngenta, notes that fall armyworm is a major pest in the southern United States and occasionally affects the Midwest. The moths migrate from the south, carried by airstreams and storms.

Adult fall armyworm moths are brown and can be difficult to distinguish from other moths. Benelli describes these moths as ranging from grayish to brown, with a wingspan of 1 to 1½ inches and a white spot in the center of their forewings.

A female fall armyworm moth can lay up to 1,000 eggs in a cluster, typically on artificial structures like buildings, fences and landscape plants, but not in turfgrass. The eggs hatch within a week, and the young caterpillars feed voraciously both day and night, says Edwin Afful, Ph.D., insecticide product development manager for FMC.

Fall armyworm caterpillars vary in color from green to brown to black. The most distinguishing characteristics

are a broad black stripe on each side of the worm and an inverted Y on the head capsule.

According to Benelli, when they hatch, the larvae are only 1/8 inch long and cause minimal damage at this stage. However, they can grow up to 2 inches long, and 80 percent of the damage to turfgrass occurs during the late instar caterpillar stage.

Large fall armyworm populations move in 'armies' across turfgrass and can decimate all foliar tissue in an area, creating a distinctive line of demarcation between damaged and undamaged turf, notes Afful. Once they have fed sufficiently, the 2-inch-long larvae burrow into the soil to pupate, making them difficult to control at this stage.

## EARLY DETECTION AND EFFECTIVE TREATMENT

The key to successfully controlling fall armyworms is early detection. Larvae are easiest to control when they are young. Benelli notes that a magnifying lens can help lawn care operators (LCOs) see the inverted Y marking on the head capsule. Since fall armyworm larvae are mostly nocturnal, proper evening, nighttime or early morning scouting is essential for their detection.

To gauge the level of infestation, Giese recommends mixing 1-2 tablespoons of liquid dish soap in a gallon of water and pouring it over a small patch of soil infested with fall armyworms. The soap solution irritates the armyworms, causing them to surface, making it easier to estimate the infestation levels.



For large infestations, insecticides containing active ingredients such as beta-cyfluthrin, chlorantraniliprole, indoxacarb, lambda-cyhalothrin or tetraniliprole can be used. These active ingredients provide some residual control depending on application rate and environmental conditions.

Afful advises LCOs to pay close attention to irrigation, mowing schedules and height to ensure optimal control with insecticides. Furthermore, the intensity of the fall armyworm infestation will affect the rate of insecticide application.

Insecticides with residual control are particularly important in areas with multiple generations of armyworms, such as the southern states. LCOs must also consider resistance management and rotating modes of action, especially in regions with multiple generations of fall armyworms, says Giese.

## PROACTIVE MEASURES AND RECOVERY TIPS

Early detection is crucial for managing sporadic fall armyworm infestations. Benelli recommends that LCOs communicate with others to determine if infestations occur in their area. Following fall armyworm damage, providing ample fertility, watering and raising the mowing height will help turf plants recover. 📌

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

**↑ KNOW YOUR ENEMY**  
Broad black stripes and an inverted Y on the head distinguish fall armyworm caterpillars.



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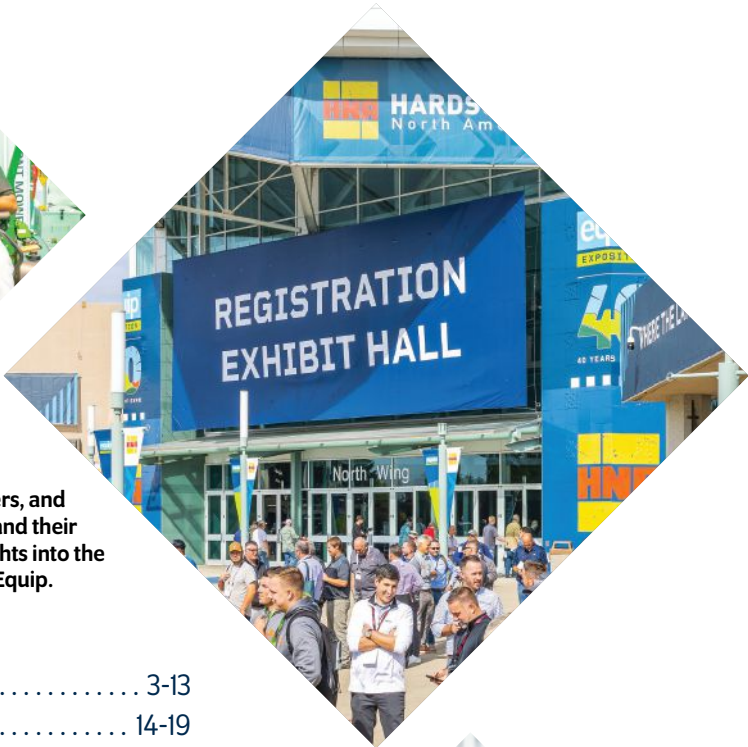
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### THURSDAY

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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Equip Exposition is open to attendees ages 12 and up. Must be 16 or older with a valid driver's license to demo.

## OUTDOOR SCHEDULE

### WEDNESDAY

12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

### THURSDAY

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

### FRIDAY

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM



## Outdoor Demo Yard

## South Wing

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**7:00 AM - 8:00 AM**

Lace up for the third-annual Mulligan's Fun Run 5K, stepping off Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. and taking participants across the Ohio River on Louisville's Big Four Pedestrian Bridge. Presented by the TurfMutt Foundation benefiting the Kentucky Humane Society.

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## OPENING KEYNOTE

**Wednesday, October 16**

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Join us for an engaging keynote by Kevin O'Connor from "This Old House" on Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. at Equip Expo's Keynote Stage. He'll share his stories from his work as a contractor, and how attendees can benefit from trends in the industry.

Kevin O'Connor  
Host of



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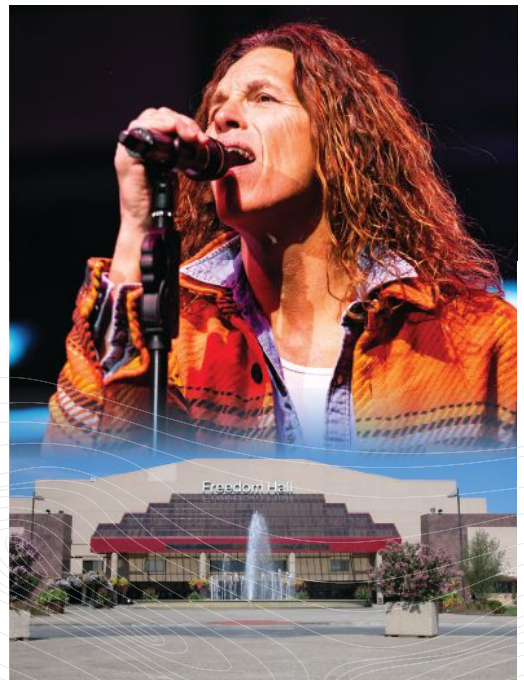


## NEW HAPPY HOUR WITH THE CRASHERS

**Wednesday, October 16**

**5:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

Walk over to Freedom Hall for a happy hour and after-hours entertainment with The Crashers on Wednesday, just after the exhibit hall closes at 5:00 p.m. Food and drinks will be available for purchase.







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Thursday, October 17

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## THE MORNING SHOW AT EXPO

Thursday, October 17

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM

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Thursday, October 17

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

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Hardscape North America is co-located with Equip Exposition, which gives Equip attendees complimentary access to HNA indoor and outdoor (Hardscape House) exhibits, as well as the opportunity to cheer on and watch the teams competing in the HNA Installer Competition. Hardscape education is also available by upgrading your Equip trade show registration to include installation demonstrations, workshops focusing on hardscape fundamentals, and an array of other educational opportunities.



# OUTDOOR DEMO YARD: TEST-DRIVE THE FUTURE OF YOUR BUSINESS



## OUTDOOR SCHEDULE

### WEDNESDAY

12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

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9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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# EQUIP YOUR TEAM TO GROW

## CONTRACTOR EDUCATION PARTNERS



## SESSIONS TAUGHT IN SPANISH

WEDNESDAY	<b>Turfgrass Cultural Practices (Taught in Spanish)</b> Master turf care with essential practices like mowing, irrigation, fertilization, and more. Learn for optimal turf health and appearance.	Wednesday, October 16, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$50
	<b>Turfgrass Nutrient Management (Taught in Spanish)</b> Learn efficient turfgrass nutrient management techniques for lush, resilient turf. Improve fertilization schedules and soil analysis.	Wednesday, October 16, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	\$50
THURSDAY	<b>Interpreting Pesticide Labels for Turfgrass Industry (Taught In Spanish)</b> Learn to interpret pesticide labels for turfgrass. Understand essential elements, application instructions, and safety precautions. Gain confidence in responsible pesticide use.	Thursday, October 17, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$50
	<b>From Worker to Leader: Developing Your Foreman (Taught in Spanish)</b> In this dynamic seminar, foremen learn how to more effectively handle tight deadlines and tight margins and increase customer satisfaction.	Thursday, October 17, 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	FREE
	<b>Weed Management in Turfgrass (Taught In Spanish)</b> Learn weed management principles for lawn and turf. Covering weed identification, sprayer calibration, and herbicide label adherence.	Thursday, October 17, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	\$50
FRI	<b>From Worker to Leader: Developing Your Foreman (Taught in Spanish)</b> In this dynamic seminar, foremen learn how to more effectively handle tight deadlines and tight margins and increase customer satisfaction.	Friday, October 18, 10:30 PM - 1:30 PM	FREE



## RECHARGE AT EQUIP



Running low on energy, but have a full day ahead?  
Grab a cup of coffee at the Equip Lounge and Coffee House.

Sponsored by

**SUNSEEKER®**

# CONTRACTOR EDUCATION



WEDNESDAY	<b>Gamify Your Company Culture: Competition Creates Engagement</b> Transform your company culture with gamification. Discover how integrating gaming elements can boost engagement and motivate employees. Turn work into a game!	Wednesday, October 16, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	\$99
	<b>Building an Accountable Organization</b> Learn to foster accountability and productivity in your landscape organization. Gain insights and tools for creating a culture of responsibility and achieving collective goals.	Wednesday, October 16, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	\$99
	<b>Facility Must-Haves: What are the Best Companies Doing When Designing Their Facility?</b> Explore facility design essentials for growing businesses. Learn from industry leaders about optimizing workflow, storage, and office spaces.	Wednesday, October 16, 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	\$99
	<b>Your Company, Your Culture</b> Join industry veterans for insights on fostering a positive company culture.	Wednesday, October 16, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	\$99
THURSDAY	<b>Hello, it's Private Equity Calling... How Do You Answer?</b> Navigate the private equity trend in the green industry. Hear from industry executives on mergers, acquisitions, and predictions for the future. Learn how to attract attention from private equity.	Thursday, October 17, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	\$99
	<b>Leveraging a Strong Brand to Attract and Retain Employees and Customers</b> Unlock the power of branding to attract and retain employees and customers. Discover how a strong marketing plan enhances company strength and employee empowerment.	Thursday, October 17, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	\$99
	<b>Talking Tech, 2030 and Beyond</b> Explore the latest in landscaping technology, from AI to smart equipment. Learn from industry leaders and stay ahead of the curve!	Thursday, October 17, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	\$99
	<b>Start Clean, Finish Clean</b> Master the "workflow" within your organization to cure the chaos and other bewildering elements of any workplace lacking clear systems.	Thursday, October 17, 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	\$99
	<b>How to Hire the Best Landscape Employees</b> Learn to attract and identify top landscape employees. Discover effective methods and interviewing tips from industry professionals and consultants. Find your star players!	Thursday, October 17, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$99
	<b>Turning Good Ideas into Great Realities</b> Turn ideas into business tactics and learn the four important steps that will empower anyone at your company to implement change.	Thursday, October 17, 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	\$99
	<b>A Roadmap For Visionary Landscape Business Owners</b> Unlock visionary business strategies for landscape management success. Learn effective leadership, innovation, and practical implementation.	Thursday, October 17, 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	\$99
	<b>Grow Your All-Star Team from Within: Recruit, Retain and Reward</b> Transform your current team into all-stars. Learn strategies to recruit, retain, and reward employees. Build alignment, accountability, and success together.	Thursday, October 17, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	\$99
FRIDAY	<b>Keying in on Key Performance Indicators</b> Learn about the critical KPIs in our industry and the answers to which ones you should monitor and when you should look at them.	Friday, October 18, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	\$99
	<b>An Electric Personality: The Growing Movement of Electric Equipment</b> Explore the rise of electric equipment in landscape management. Discover strengths, weaknesses, and user perspectives.	Friday, October 18, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	\$99
	<b>This is Goodbye: Five Things to Know About Selling Your Business</b> Prepare for the inevitable transition. Hear from former business owners about selling their landscaping business and navigating the process.	Friday, October 18, 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	\$99



Scan Code For  
Session Information



# CONTRACTOR EDUCATION

## CHEMICAL APPLICATION SESSIONS

This October Equip Exposition will open its Certification Center in the West Wing, hosting 20 sessions covering weed management, pesticide application, tree and plant health management, tree/shrub pruning, and pesticide safety courses. Some sessions will provide CEUs for applicators in approved states. Scan the QR code to see which sessions.



WED    THURSDAY	<b>Develop Your Detective Skills: How to diagnose plant problems</b> Enhance your plant diagnostic skills in this workshop. Learn steps and examples to effectively diagnose plant problems.	Wednesday, October 16, 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	\$30
	<b>Biochar</b> Explore the benefits of biochar for plant health and sustainability. Learn about its production, applications, and potential in the green industry.	Thursday, October 17, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	\$30
	<b>Reducing the “Spray and Pray”: Managing pests before pesticides</b> Learn alternatives for pest management and improved plant health.	Thursday, October 17, 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	\$30
	<b>Be a Pesticide Compliance Superhero</b> Equip yourself with pesticide compliance expertise. Ensure safety, tackle pests, and navigate changing regulations confidently.	Thursday, October 17, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$30
	<b>Pesticide Safety and Emergency Procedures</b> Learn essential pesticide safety measures, including risk assessment, PPE selection, label interpretation, and emergency procedures in case of spills or exposure events.	Thursday, October 17, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	\$30



WEDNESDAY    THURSDAY	<b>Turfgrass Cultural Practices</b> Master turf care with essential practices like mowing, irrigation, fertilization, and more. Learn for optimal turf health and appearance.	Wednesday, October 16, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	\$50
	<b>Turfgrass Cultural Practices (Taught in Spanish)</b> Master turf care with essential practices like mowing, irrigation, fertilization, and more. Learn for optimal turf health and appearance.	Wednesday, October 16, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$50
	<b>Turfgrass Nutrient Management</b> Learn efficient turfgrass nutrient management techniques for lush, resilient turf. Improve fertilization schedules and soil analysis.	Wednesday, October 16, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$50
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# CONTRACTOR EDUCATION



**HARDSCAPE**  
North America

WED	<b>The Science of Great Leadership</b> Uncover the science behind effective leadership. Learn actionable strategies to boost engagement and retention in your organization.	Wednesday, October 16, 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	\$150
THURSDAY	<b>Hardscape Workshop 1: Efficiency Systems for Hardscape Teams &amp; Field Leaders</b> Increase efficiency and profits in hardscape teams. Learn industry-leading production systems and tools for enhanced productivity and success. Real case studies included. Class provided in partnership with Hardscape North America.	Thursday, October 17, 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM	\$85
	<b>Hardscape Workshop 2: Walk on The Block That I Stumbled On</b> Learn from a 40-year hardscape veteran's experiences. Discover tools and systems to alleviate pain and boost profitability in the industry. Class provided in partnership with Hardscape North America.	Thursday, October 17, 10:00 AM - 11:00 PM	\$85
	<b>Psychological Safety: The Key to Individual, Team, and Organizational Success</b> Foster open communication and engagement for success. Learn practical strategies at our session.	Thursday, October 17, 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	\$150



**HARDSCAPE**  
North America

WEDNESDAY	<b>Demo 1: Segmental Retaining Walls</b> Participate in interactive demonstrations building segmental retaining walls. Learn excavation, base prep, block installation, and coping techniques hands-on.	Wednesday, October 16, 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	\$85
	<b>Demo 2: Paver Installations</b> Immerse yourself in paver installations through hands-on demonstrations. Learn prep, laying, cutting, fitting, and joint sanding techniques alongside industry experts.	Wednesday, October 16, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	\$85
THURSDAY	<b>Demo 3: Modern Tools of the Trade</b> Experience the latest hardscape tools and equipment hands-on. Test modern machinery, explore technology, and learn time-saving techniques with expert guidance.	Thursday, October 17, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	\$85
	<b>Demo 4: Lighting and Software</b> Engage in interactive sessions on lighting and software integration in hardscape design. Experiment with fixtures and software for real-time project visualization.	Thursday, October 17, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	\$85
	<b>Demo 5: Water &amp; Fire Features</b> Dive into water and fire feature design and installation with hands-on demos. Install features in minutes, learn proper techniques, and maintenance tips.	Thursday, October 17, 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	\$85
FRI	<b>Demo 6: Outdoor Kitchens &amp; Other Enhancements</b> Roll up your sleeves and build outdoor kitchens and enhancements. Actively participate in creating inviting outdoor spaces guided by industry professionals.	Friday, October 18, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	\$85



## EMB SOCIAL MEDIA LOUNGE

Located in South Wing Lobby A

Sponsored by  **ECHO MEANS  
BUSINESS**

Stop by the EMB Social Media Lounge to network with fellow pros, get plugged into your industry community and recharge your devices.



# CONTRACTOR EDUCATION



WEDNESDAY	<b>IA Certification Exam Session</b> Become a certified irrigation professional with the Irrigation Association. Gain credibility and a competitive edge in your career.		Tuesday, October 15, 12:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Scan QR Code
THURSDAY	<b>Getting Into the Irrigation Business</b> Start your journey into the irrigation business. Gain valuable tips and insights from successful contractors. Whether adding services or becoming a full-service contractor, get started here!		Thursday, October 17, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	\$99
	<b>Irrigation Repair Fundamentals</b> Learn irrigation repair fundamentals from scratch. Identify and handle common repairs, from replacing sprinkler heads to fixing valve issues. Perfect for beginners or periodic maintenance.		Thursday, October 17, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$99
	<b>Electrical Troubleshooting Fundamentals</b> Learn electrical troubleshooting for irrigation systems. Learn volt-meter usage and fault identification for effective system servicing. Prior knowledge helpful but not required.		Thursday, October 17, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	\$99
	<b>Anatomy of an Irrigation System</b> Understand the basics of irrigation systems: components, design, installation, and service. Ideal for beginners in the field.		Thursday, October 17, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	\$99
FRIDAY	<b>Controller Operation Fundamentals</b> Master the basics of irrigation controller operation. Ideal for field staff with little to no irrigation experience seeking to perform common tasks effectively.		Friday, October 18, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	\$99
	<b>Irrigation Scheduling Fundamentals</b> Learn irrigation scheduling essentials. Learn to optimize water usage for landscapes efficiently. Explore soil, irrigation system, and plant water requirements. Recommended for all levels.		Friday, October 18, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	\$99
	<b>Microirrigation Fundamentals</b> Dive into microirrigation basics! Learn about its components, benefits, and application for precise watering. Essential for landscape irrigators seeking water savings and improved plant health.		Friday, October 18, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	\$99



THURSDAY	<b>Plug In Outdoor Lighting to Your Business Offerings</b> Explore the benefits of adding landscape lighting to your company's services and learn how to get started, avoid common mistakes, and ensure a successful launch with insights from industry experts.	Thursday, October 17, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	FREE
	<b>Hardscapes and Lighting – A Perfect Match</b> Elevate your hardscaping projects with landscape lighting. Learn best practices in design, products, and techniques from lighting experts.	Thursday, October 17, 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	FREE
FRIDAY	<b>Lighting Design 201: Diving Deeper into Lighting Design</b> Dive deeper into lighting design with Lighting Design 201! Learn to elevate outdoor spaces into artwork that elicits emotion and wonder. Discover techniques to showcase the true value of lighting.	Friday, October 18, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	\$99

# CONTRACTOR EDUCATION



THURSDAY	<b>Developing IPM Programs for Success!</b> Learn to create effective IPM plans for site-based operations. Utilize a 6-step process to reduce inputs and save money. Don't hope, plan!	Thursday, October 17, 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM	\$99
	<b>Financially Navigating Changing Technologies in Landscaping</b> Navigate landscaping technology changes financially. Learn finance fundamentals in a battery-operated, autonomous equipment era. Ensure profitability as an owner-operator.	Thursday, October 17, 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM	\$99
FRIDAY	<b>Customer panel on how autonomous mowers can save time, labor, and money</b> Hear from end users on the benefits of autonomous mowers: saving time, labor, and money.	Friday, October 18, 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM	\$99
	<b>How to Create Your Own Landscape University</b> Learn to build your own Landscape University™ for enhanced team productivity and empowerment. Discover customized training and leadership development strategies from industry experts	Friday, October 18, 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM	\$99



THURSDAY	<b>Pool Design 101 for Landscape Designers</b> Discover the essentials of pool design, from choosing the perfect location to specifying materials, even if you're new to pool design. Join us to explore layout options, construction techniques, regulations, and more.	Thursday, October 17, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	\$99
	<b>Business Opportunities in Pool Service, Design, and Build</b> Unlock business opportunities in pool service, design, and build. Discover the importance of integration, collaboration, and team-centered approach for success.	Thursday, October 17, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$99
	<b>Step-by-Step Pool Design Project Profile</b> Discover the importance of pool design and execution. Learn how to communicate and explore design concepts effectively.	Thursday, October 17, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	\$99
	<b>Next-Level Design Details: Learn the How and Why of Pool Design and Build</b> Explore essential pool design details for success and enjoyment. Learn why attention to installation and components is crucial, and how to communicate and execute design details effectively.	Thursday, October 17, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	\$99



## **Bobcat®** **MOWER** **GIVEAWAY**

**Thursday, October 17 at 1:30 p.m.**

**Must be present to win at Booth #3052**

The Bobcat ZT7000 zero-turn mower is the peak of toughness and best-in-the-business performance. With transport speeds up to 19 mph and mowing speeds up to 13 mph, you can knock out quality results, job after job.



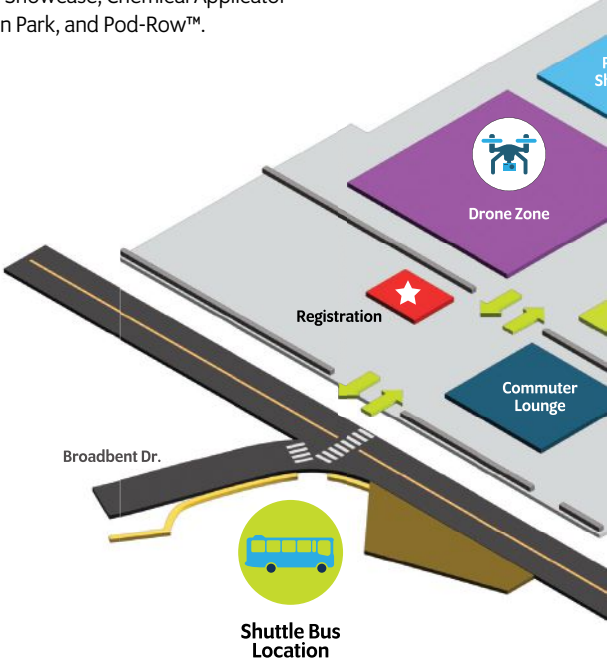
# EXPERIENCE EXCLUSIVE WEST WING EVENTS

The historic West Wing of the KEC offers 170,000 square feet of additional indoor exhibit space. This space is one of the KEC's original structures, and is adjacent to Freedom Hall. The West Wing will host exhibits and the New Product Showcase, Chemical Applicator Education Sessions, the Drone Zone, Mulligan's Garden Park, and Pod-Row™.

## \$1,000+ DAILY GIVEAWAY!

Get ready to maximize your trade show experience with our West Wing Giveaway, featuring a range of incredible prizes totaling over \$1,000 daily! Every attendee receives one ticket that enters you into all three days of drawings. The sooner you visit the West Wing and enter, the more drawings you are included in.

## FREE EDUCATION



### CHEMICAL APPLICATORS ► DRONE TRAINING ► TEAM DEVELOPMENT ►

#### Wednesday, October 16

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	How to Get a Pesticide Applicators License (and why you should)
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	How to Get a Pesticide Applicators License (and why you should)
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	UAS Flight 101 and Aircraft Registration
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Creating 3D Models with Drones
12:30 PM - 1:00 PM	Creating a Legal and FAA Approved Drone Program
1:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Creating Digital Surface Models and Volumetrics With Drones
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Tree Planting and Mulching

#### Thursday, October 17

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	From Worker to Leader: Developing Your Foreman
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Getting Airspace Approval and Unlocks
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Pruning Small Trees and Shrubs
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Creating 2D Cads for Automated Mowers
12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	From Worker to Leader: Developing Your Foreman (Taught in Spanish)
12:30 PM - 1:00 PM	Do I really need a license if I am not charging for the drone?
1:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Using Drones for Landscape Photography and Marketing

#### Friday, October 18

7:00 AM - 10:00 AM	From Worker to Leader: Developing Your Foreman
9:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Turf Sprayer Calibration Workshop
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Creating Digital Surface Models and Volumetrics With Drones
10:30 AM - 1:30 PM	From Worker to Leader: Developing Your Foreman (Taught in Spanish)
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Plant Health Care Equipment and Application Techniques
1:15 PM - 1:45 PM	Integrated Pest Management



# EQUIP GOLF EXPERIENCE

Sponsored by  **Retail Card Services**

Take a swing in the West Wing at the Equip Golf Experience. Competitions and prizes are awarded after the show for each day's longest drive and closest to the hole. No previous golf experience is required and instructors are nearby to provide some tips to improve your game.



# DEALER EDUCATION

Equip Exposition is the best event in the industry for you take your dealership to the next level, with free sessions for leaders designed to help you boost your dealership's profits and stay ahead of industry trends. Bring your technicians to be trained in the latest equipment technologies, and demo the latest products for your show floor.



## DEALER EDUCATION PARTNERS



WEDNESDAY	<b>Should you open another location?</b> Curious about expanding with a new location? Join us as we delve into six essential questions to consider before making this leap. We'll also discuss alternative growth strategies.	Wednesday, October 16, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	FREE
	<b>How to meet and exceed your sales goals for the upcoming season.</b> Join us to learn actionable steps to exceed sales goals. Bob Clements International presents strategies for sales success, essential for salespeople at any level. Don't miss out on maximizing your potential.	Wednesday, October 16, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	FREE
THURSDAY	<b>How do we help our departments get along?</b> Learn how to foster harmony among dealership departments! Join Sara Hey from Bob Clements International as she shares five strategies to promote teamwork and reduce tension between service and other departments.	Thursday, October 17, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	FREE
	<b>Creating a customer experience that will generate raving fans.</b> Discover how to turn customers into raving fans! Sara Hey from Bob Clements International shares insights on creating a memorable customer experience, managing tense situations, and reducing friction in dealership processes.	Thursday, October 17, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	FREE



# DEALER EDUCATION



WEDNESDAY	<b>Hydro-Gear - Hydrostatic Transmissions</b> Discover the inner workings of Hydro-Gear Hydrostatic Transmissions in zero-turn and stand-on mowers. Gain hands-on experience, learn repair procedures, and leave with a comprehensive understanding.	Wednesday, October 16, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM or 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$45
	<b>OPE Electrical Systems &amp; Troubleshooting</b> Join us for an interactive course on basic electrical systems. Learn diagnostic procedures, build circuits, read schematics, and troubleshoot components using practical methods and tools.	Wednesday, October 16, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM or 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$45
	<b>Tuff Torq - Hydrostatic Transmissions</b> Get hands-on with Tuff Torq hydrostatic transmissions used in mowers. Disassemble, reassemble, and learn procedures, tools, and specs. Leave with a deep understanding and repair skills.	Wednesday, October 16, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	\$45
	<b>Two-Stroke Engine Failure Analysis</b> Join our hands-on training on ECHO Equipment. Learn to identify and analyze two-stroke engine failures in hand-held power equipment. Through live demos and hands-on examination, interpret engine failure clues and determine causes.	Wednesday, October 16, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM or 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$45



WEDNESDAY	<b>Developing People to Grow Your Business</b> How much of your time is spent working in the business, putting out fires and dealing with day-to-day issues? Increasing your team's business acumen allows your time to be better spent working on the business, designing strategies, and exploring opportunities	Wednesday, October 16, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	FREE
THURSDAY	<b>Balancing inventory levels and retail sales</b> Understanding and managing the balance sheet management is key to controlling our cash. The new ratios assist dealerships in keeping their inventory at a healthy level.	Thursday, October 17, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	FREE



## \$5,000 DEALER GIVEAWAY

Dealers, don't miss your chance to win big during the Dealer Preview on the morning of October 16. Simply bring your STIHL giveaway ticket to the indoor booth to enter for your chance to win. With \$5,000 on the line, this giveaway is not to be missed! See your ticket for the details.





# WELCOME TO LOUISVILLE

As the 16<sup>th</sup>-largest city in the U.S., Louisville is home to over 90 attractions, 17,000 hotel rooms, and 2,500 restaurants. Louisville is easily accessible and within a day's drive of nearly half of the nation's population.



The Louisville International Airport, only seven minutes from downtown, and across the street from the Kentucky Exposition Center, handles nearly 100 flights per day.



Equip Exposition is hosted at the Kentucky Exposition Center, 937 Phillips Lane, Louisville, KY 40209. We provide free parking for all attendees.

## REGISTRATION DEADLINES

Visit [www.equipexposition.com](http://www.equipexposition.com) to register online. Registration is open now and the earlier you register, the more you save!

**Early Bird:** Register by Sept. 5 for \$30 per person.

**Pre-Registration:** Register between Sept. 6 and Oct. 13 for \$60 per person.

**Registration Rate:** Register at the show for \$120 per person



# TRAVEL AND HOTEL BOOKING INFORMATION

## HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Louisville Tourism, the official housing provider for the show, offers the lowest room rates at Equip Exposition hotels. The list of rates is available at **equipexposition.com** under Travel & Hotels. To make reservations by phone, call the Louisville Housing Bureau at (800) 743-3100.



## AIRLINE DISCOUNTS

**Delta** is offering up to a 10% discount on flights. Search flights at **<https://www.delta.com/flightsearch>**, Use Meeting Code NM3QE or by calling our Delta Meeting Network Reservations at 800-328-1111.

**United Airlines** is offering up to 10% discount on flights. Search flights at **[www.united.com/meetingtravel](http://www.united.com/meetingtravel)** and Z Code: ZPKS976093. Or call United Reservations Meetings at (800) 426-1122.

**Southwest Airlines** is pleased to offer Equip Exposition attendees discounted fares. To utilize the discount, book via **[www.swabiz.com](http://www.swabiz.com)** using Company ID 99636972. Discount valid for travel 10/12/2024 to 10/21/2024.

## SHUTTLE SERVICES

Equip Exposition will run shuttle buses between select hotels and the Kentucky Exposition Center and on the final day to the airport.

See the shuttle schedule at:  
**[www.equipexposition.com/book-your-travel](http://www.equipexposition.com/book-your-travel)**







# 2024 EDUCATION CATALOG

To register for any of these events and classes, complete and include this page with your mail-in registration form and payment.

## FEATURED EVENTS

EVENT TITLE	TIME	COST	\$
Mulligan 5k Fun Run & Walk	Wed. 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	\$40/per	

## CONTRACTOR EDUCATION

CLASS TITLE	TIME	COST	\$
The Science of Great Leadership	Wed. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	\$150/per	
Turfgrass Cultural Practices	Wed. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	\$50/per	
Turfgrass Cultural Practices (Taught in Spanish)	Wed. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$50/per	
Gamify Your Company Culture: Competition Creates Engagement	Wed. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	\$99/per	
Develop Your Detective Skills: How to diagnose plant problems	Wed. 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	\$30/per	
Building an Accountable Organization	Wed. 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	\$99/per	
Demo 1: Segmental Retaining Walls	Wed. 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	\$85/per	
Turfgrass Nutrient Management	Wed. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$50/per	
Facility Must-Haves: What are the Best Companies Doing When Designing Their Facility?	Wed. 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	\$99/per	
Demo 2: Paver Installations	Wed. 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	\$85/per	
Your Company, Your Culture	Wed. 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	\$99/per	
Turfgrass Nutrient Management (Taught in Spanish)	Wed. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	\$50/per	
Developing IPM Programs for Success!	Thu. 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM	\$99/per	
Financially Navigating Changing Technologies in Landscaping	Thu. 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM	\$99/per	
Hardscape Workshop 1: Efficiency Systems for Hardscape Teams & Field Leaders	Thu. 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM	\$85/per	
Getting Into the Irrigation Business	Thu. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	\$99/per	
Interpreting Pesticide Labels for Turfgrass Industry	Thu. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	\$50/per	
Pool Design 101 for Landscape Designers	Thu. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	\$99/per	
Biochar	Thu. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	\$30/per	
Demo 3: Modern Tools of the Trade	Thu. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	\$85/per	
Hello, it's Private Equity Calling... How Do You Answer?	Thu. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	\$99/per	
Hardscape Workshop 2: Walk on The Block That I Stumbled On	Thu. 10:00 AM - 11:00 PM	\$85/per	
Leveraging a Strong Brand to Attract and Retain Employees and Customers	Thu. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	\$99/per	
Psychological Safety: The Key to Individual, Team, and Organizational Success	Thu. 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	\$150/per	
Business Opportunities in Pool Service, Design, and Build	Thu. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$99/per	
Interpreting Pesticide Labels for Turfgrass Industry (Taught In Spanish)	Thu. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$50/per	
Irrigation Repair Fundamentals	Thu. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	\$99/per	
Talking Tech, 2030 and Beyond	Thu. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	\$99/per	
Demo 4: Lighting and Software	Thu. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	\$85/per	
Reducing the "Spray and Pray": Managing pests before pesticides	Thu. 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	\$30/per	
Start Clean, Finish Clean	Thu. 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	\$99/per	
Electrical Troubleshooting Fundamentals	Thu. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	\$99/per	
Step-by-Step Pool Design Project Profile	Thu. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	\$99/per	
Be a Pesticide Compliance Superhero	Thu. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$30/per	
How to Hire the Best Landscape Employees	Thu. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$99/per	
Weed Management in Turfgrass	Thu. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$50/per	
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Pesticide Safety and Emergency Procedures	Thu. 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	\$30/per	
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Weed Management in Turfgrass (Taught In Spanish)	Thu. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	\$50/per	
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Mastering the Numbers: Building Business Acumen	Fri. 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	\$99/per	
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Microirrigation Fundamentals	Fri. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	\$99/per	
This is Goodbye: Five Things to Know About Selling Your Business	Fri. 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	\$99/per	

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Hydro-Gear - Hydrostatic Transmissions	Wed. 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	\$45/per	
OPE Electrical Systems & Troubleshooting	Wed. 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	\$45/per	
Tuff Torq - Hydrostatic Transmissions	Wed. 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	\$45/per	
Two-Stroke Engine Failure Analysis	Wed. 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	\$45/per	
Hydro-Gear - Hydrostatic Transmissions	Wed. 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$45/per	
OPE Electrical Systems & Troubleshooting	Wed. 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$45/per	
Two-Stroke Engine Failure Analysis	Wed. 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	\$45/per	

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## TURF DISEASE ID + CONTROL

# Stop snow mold in its tracks this year

Experts share their top tips for staying ahead of a snow mold outbreak

BY GEORGE KEGODE, PH.D. | CONTRIBUTOR

**S**now mold is a turfgrass disease that thrives in cool to cold weather. It poses significant concerns for lawn care operators (LCOs), particularly in regions experiencing heavy snowfall and prolonged winter conditions.

Understanding the causes, symptoms and preventive measures for snow mold is crucial for maintaining a healthy and aesthetically pleasing lawn.

### IDENTIFICATION

Snow mold is a fungal disease that manifests as unsightly patches of dead grass and can wreak havoc on lawns if not properly managed. Paul Koch, Ph.D., a plant pathologist at the University of Wisconsin, explains that the fungus grows under snow cover, and the damage becomes apparent once the snow melts. This damage appears as circular patches of dead or matted grass, ranging from a few inches to several feet in diameter.

There are three primary types of snow mold: gray, speckled and pink. Gray and speckled snow molds (collectively referred to as gray snow mold), caused by *Typhula* species of fungi, have sclerotia that allow the fungal disease to spread and form gray or white circular patches in turfgrass. Pink snow mold, caused by *Microdochium* species of fungi, doesn't always require snow cover to form and creates pinkish circular patches.

Certain turfgrass species, such as tall fescue and perennial ryegrass, are more susceptible to snow mold, while others, like Kentucky bluegrass and fine fescues, are more tolerant.

Koch advises against using fungicides for snow mold control in lawns, as they generally recover on their own, although recovery may sometimes take a while. However, effective snow mold products that can be used on lawns exist within the strobilurin and demethylation inhibitor classes of fungicides.

### PREVENTION

Pink snow mold is more common in southern states and the Pacific Northwest and does not require snow cover to occur, unlike gray snow molds which do. Lisa Beirn, Ph.D., technical service manager for Syngenta, advises keeping an eye out for snow mold in areas with snow cover or during prolonged rainy and overcast periods in the spring.

"LCOs must stay on top of their maintenance programs by limiting fertilizer applications and continuing to mow late into the fall to avoid promoting excessive grass growth. Tall grass at the time of snowfall provides a conducive environment for snow mold," she says.

When using fungicides for snow mold management, applications in late October to early November prior to snow cover provide good control. For pink mold, fungicide applications within the same time frame, even when there is no snow, can provide good control.

Many fungicides are labeled for snow mold control, and LCOs must read product labels carefully. It is recommended to use tank mixes of different active ingredients or fungicides with multiple active ingredients to combat the various species that cause snow mold.



Pink snow mold can grow any time grass is wet and soil temperatures dip below 40 degrees F.




Gray snow mold generally only kills grass surface blades but can destroy roots if left untreated in wet soil.

### STAYING AHEAD

Zac Reicher, Ph.D., a specialist with the Envu Green Solutions Team, states that snow mold is generally not a big issue on home lawns except after a hard winter. In spring, snow mold is usually associated with areas where snow has been piled up for a long time. When the snow melts, it leaves circular patches that don't green up.

"Preventing a conducive environment for snow mold is the first line of defense," he says. "This includes continuing to mow at a 3-inch height until the grass stops growing and ceasing fertilizer applications in late fall. Removing tree leaves before winter also helps, as they can create an environment for snow mold."

Reicher adds that snow mold rarely causes turfgrass death, and infected areas will eventually recover. Raking infected areas to remove dead grass will allow turfgrass to regrow and recover. However, fungicides may be used in areas with heavy snowfall, such as mountain towns and the Northeast, or in instances where high-value turf is present. 

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





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# WEEDING OUT DALLISGRASS

Identifying and eliminating this illusive weed requires diligence

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**N**othing ruins a perfect lawn quite like dallisgrass. This clumpy warm-season grass, found throughout the U.S. but most heavily in the south and southeast, was originally a forage plant introduced from South America in the 1800s.

Now, this pest bunches up everywhere in lawns, golf courses, sports fields and wherever it can sink its roots into, creating gaudy and uneven clumps that can diminish the quality of the turf.

Dallisgrass (*Paspalum dilatatum*) also grows much faster than other turfgrasses, has seedheads that can stay low to the ground and has coarse leaves that cut unevenly, meaning control solutions past simply mowing are needed.

## A PERENNIAL PEST

One dallisgrass benefit for lawn care operators (LCOs) is that, unlike many other turf pests, dallisgrass remains fairly consistent throughout the U.S. You don't have to worry about different species or regional variations.

One important difference, however, is whether dallisgrass comes up from seed or as a perennial. Chris Butcher, Quali-Pro Southeast territory manager, says the perennial dallisgrass is far more difficult to treat.

"You can prevent dallisgrass from seed with your typical preemergents like prodiamine or dithiopyr — just a lot of different options out there for preventing dallisgrass from seed," Butcher says. "However, a dallisgrass plant, if it's a perennial, the typical preemergents are not going to work on that."

Paying attention to dallisgrass that reemerges every year from its established root system is important to determine what kind you're dealing with, as Butcher says treatment options are far more limited.

## TRICKY TREATMENTS

Dallisgrass reproduces through seeds and creeping underground stems called rhizomes, and options to stop this spread with an herbicide specific to dallisgrass are unfortunately lacking.

"We don't really have a product that controls dallisgrass postemergent," Butcher says. "There may be some other options out there, but I guess there's no silver bullet."

Butcher says monosodium methylarsonate (MSMA) was the standard for dallisgrass removal, but after the Environmental Protection Agency banned its use — except for golf courses, sod farms and highway rights-of-way — a better selective replacement hasn't been found.

Some herbicides with active ingredients like trifloxysulfuron-sodium or pinoxaden can still show results, though, and applications in the spring and fall around the hot summer months are the most effective.

Butcher says non-selective herbicides like glyphosate and others can be effective in killing dallisgrass, but those also kill any other plant they touch. However, for open areas with high dallisgrass concentrations or where other vegetation isn't needed, this can be the best solution.

Carefully digging out the dallisgrass — ensuring you remove the rhizomes — and proper turf maintenance and irrigation are also more traditional yet effective ways to keep your grass healthy and weed-resistant.

## CRABGRASS CONFUSION

Butcher says one of the most common mistakes in treating dallisgrass is misidentification, as dallisgrass and crabgrass look very much alike.

"With crabgrass, it's a pretty good product called Quinclorac," Butcher



Dallisgrass grows faster than other turfgrasses with seedheads that stay low to the ground and coarse leaves.

says. "A lot of times guys will spray Quinclorac on dallisgrass thinking it's crabgrass and it doesn't work, and then they'll say, 'Why didn't my treatment work?'"

With a keen eye, however, Butcher says there are a few ways to tell the difference, such as dallisgrass having a coarser texture and crabgrass having a lighter, slightly bluish color.

The seedhead is another identifying characteristic, and dallisgrass' are noticeably larger, often with tiny black spots on them. Plus, in our growing digital age, Butcher recommends using technology designed to help.

"There's a couple of apps now ... one is called PictureThis," Butcher says. "You can snap (a picture of) those weeds, and depending on what it is, it'll give you a pretty close answer, if not right on." 📷

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## THE BIG ONE

# Starting Fresh

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**LOCATION** Carlisle, Mass.

**COMPANY** A Blade of Grass

**DETAILS** With a project as broad as this, the best way to succeed is to embrace the chaos. From pools to patios, gardens to greenhouses and everything in between, this roughly 30-acre residential property just about has it all.

Heather Lashbrook Jones, co-owner and director of marketing at A Blade of Grass, says it started with the wetlands that cover the property; removing dead trees, invasive plants and excess overgrowth. Out with the old, and in with a fresh layer of native vegetation, all while staying approved by the Carlisle Conservation Commission.

“There’s so much going on there. I don’t even know where to start,” Jones says. “It’s really pretty, and it (now) looks like it should — not this overgrown mass of bittersweet and all going up the trees.”

Jones says maintaining a balance between a country aesthetic and a modern design that still feels close to Boston was important for the project, and the property has plenty of farm-like characteristics and animals to fulfill that homey vibe.

Gardening, for example, was a necessity for the client, and a handful of planting beds, a greenhouse, an orchard and large vegetable gardens all yield produce for the family’s chef to use in meals. And while the property usually sees roughly 12 employees doing biweekly maintenance, the gardens still receive weekly attention.

A Blade of Grass won two gold awards from the National Association of Landscape Professionals’ Awards of Excellence program for this project. 

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



PHOTOS: A BLADE OF GRASS AND MICHAEL J. LEE





**Captions |** **1.** Jones says the team tries to mix things up and get creative by changing the plant displays to match the seasons. **2.** Jones says well issues and water shortages mean perennials that can withstand a bit of drought have become favored. **3.** With the pool and many other large structures on-site, lots of weekly meetings and communication with the client was required to finalize the design. **4.** With water shortages preventing the use of the irrigation system, A Blade of Grass brings their own water in 100- and 200-gallon skid sprayers. **5.** Espalier pear trees surround garden beds with a spring bulb display. **6.** Jones says bigger plants like lavender and ornamental grasses are now preferred to roses since they can radiate color while still handling the weather. **7.** Initial designs had much smaller vegetable gardens, but talks with the clients pivoted this plan and expanded them. **8.** The maintenance team uses a Scag 52-inch V-Ride Standard mower and a Scag Cheetah II 61-inch mower to cut the property's many fields and lawns.



## REV YOUR ENGINES

# Power on the go

**Learn how manufacturers innovate battery technology for longer run times, faster charging and more power in handheld equipment**

BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR

**O**ver the last decade, the shift to battery power in handheld equipment marked a pivotal moment for landscape professionals. It solved increasing legislative restrictions and client demand for quiet, emission-less landscape services.

However, manufacturers specializing in commercial-grade handheld tools face the ongoing challenge of developing innovative battery-powered solutions that rival the performance and durability of gas-powered equipment.

Landscape professionals require lighter, more powerful and more durable handheld tools, and the shift to zero-emission electric equipment impacts each of these requirements.



Mike Poluka

“Power to weight is at the core of our product development,” says Mike Poluka, segment product manager for Stihl. “But we’re looking at designing and developing (handheld) tools that are the total package.”

“When it comes down to it, the issue is does your battery give you the power that you need to get through the day,” says Todd Zimmerman, vice president of product development at Kress.

### PROTECTING POWER

Pro-grade handheld landscape equipment design is tried and true, and manufacturers are not focused on reinventing proven products like stick edgers, string trimmers and blowers.

Instead, equipment manufacturers have emphasized improving and getting the most out of their power sources — lithium-ion battery packs.

“What we’re all trying to do is protect the (power) cells and make sure they don’t over-heat while getting the optimal performance out of them,” Zimmerman says. “High heat is detrimental to lithium-ion batteries, resulting in decreased power capacity and reduced performance over time.”

A lithium-ion battery by itself provides around 75 to 80 percent of its total power to compensate for this heat issue. Handheld manufacturers are developing technology around lithium-ion batteries that gets that power output to as close to 100 percent as possible.

In addition to power output, battery management is essential to landscape professionals. Work crews, especially larger ones, must manage numerous batteries to get through the workday, which is inconvenient and inefficient. Handheld tool manufacturers aim to provide on-the-go charging solutions to address this issue, as well as battery packs with longer life cycles and shorter charge times.

“At the end of the day, we’re listening to landscapers to truly understand what the challenges are so we can come back and provide solutions that help them overcome those challenges and provide operators (handheld tools) with the same power, the same look, feel, fit and finish as their current gas product,” Poluka says.



Todd Zimmerman

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Battery technology will continue to evolve and be the focus of innovation. Handheld tool manufacturers anticipate this tech’s rapid improvement, allowing batteries to pack more power without increasing in size. This means that tools

powered by these batteries can be lighter, more ergonomic and more powerful, potentially rivaling or surpassing the performance of gas-powered tools, which remains the benchmark.

“When Stihl introduced its first lithium-ion battery pack, it had about 80 watt-hours of capacity,” Poluka says. “Today, we have that same cartridge-type battery with over 300 watt-hours of energy packed inside. I can’t help but imagine (battery technology) will be on that similar trend where contractors will continue to get more energy from the same sized (battery).”

Handheld tool manufacturers may find inspiration in EV technology and how batteries power electric cars and trucks.

“(Kress’) nano-pack battery is a lithium-ion cell using a tabless design ... which electric vehicles use,” Zimmerman says.

Tabless battery design reduces the inner resistance of each power cell by as much as half, which leads to less heat generation and longer runtimes — both ideal qualities for handheld equipment.

“What everyone is trying to do with this new technology, no matter what that technology is, is trying to reduce the resistance of the cell, reduce heat buildup and allow that cell to stay cool for a longer period of time,” Zimmerman adds. 📱

Mike Zawacki is a Cleveland-based writer who has covered various aspects of the landscape and horticulture industries for the last 20 years.

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**INSIDE:** Autonomous mowers ride into the spotlight **P. IT4** | Software solutions **P. IT10** |  
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## Autonomous mowers ride into the spotlight

How Greenzie keeps one college a cut above the rest

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**W**hether it's the shades, blinds or lights, Charles Brian Quinn says he loves automating household things. His favorite examples are the lights turning on and the toilet seat rising when someone walks into the bathroom.

So, when looking to start his next company, Quinn remembered a constant complaint he'd heard from landscapers he spoke to.

"They're like, 'I can't find people,'" Quinn says. "You should build

something to just fix that,' and I said, 'That seems really hard.'"

Quinn went on a few ride-alongs with landscapers to talk about and see what lawn care projects were taking the longest, and he found mowing was the clear winner.

"I said, 'What if your mower could do it for you?'" Quinn recalls. One landscaper responded, "Well, shoot — I'd buy that."

Quinn says a light bulb went off in his head, and soon he became a co-founder of Greenzie in 2018.

The company's goal is freeing people from repetitive outdoor labor through upfitted, autonomous mowers.

Greenzie strives to make the self-driving process as simple as possible. After purchasing a mower that's been equipped with Greenzie technology from select equipment dealers, Quinn says there are only three short steps to getting started with an autonomous mower.

"You map (by manually mowing) the outer perimeter of the job you want to do, you step away and you press mow and you let the mower mow, and there is no step three," Quinn says. "Step three is profit — it's go do another task. Do all the detail work while the mower does the middle part. (It) basically is an extra worker on your crew."

Once the software maps the perimeter of the target area, the hardware moves the mower, easily making turns thanks to waypoints created from the established boundary and avoiding obstacles with the multiple sensors and cameras. Safety is a top priority for Greenzie, and Quinn says there have thankfully been no injuries between a mower and people.

Greenzie mowers work best on large, flat fields with minimal obstacles. Grounds such as athletic fields, parks and warehouses give the mower plenty of space to move.



"We're starting in the green industry, which is dear to my heart and one that I think has some of the highest repetitive injury, repetitive strain injury and deaths — let's be honest — on people on mowers when they fall over," Quinn says. "We're going to continue to help landscapers be more productive, more efficient and safer."

## CAMPUS LIFE

Safety continues to be a vital component to the mowers as Greenzie finds a new home on college campuses across the country. Despite the constant presence of students, trees, sidewalks and all sorts of obstacles in the way, Greenzie has stepped up to the task and established itself as a mainstay of campus landscaping.

Maurice A. Coley, superintendent of landscape operations at Georgia Southern University, says he's two years into having Greenzie mowers on campus, and they've helped tremendously with productivity.



**Step three is profit — it's go do another task. Do all the detail work while the mower does the middle part. (It) basically is an extra worker on your crew."**

CHARLES  
BRIAN QUINN

"Typically, it will take about two guys half a day to mow the field. There's one guy now that can mow the fields and do everything else," Coley says. "The technology is allowing me to repurpose those guys to do something else where we weren't before able to do all the detailed stuff because I had to have the guys cutting."

One worry with autonomous technology like this is that it's a job killer, but Coley says it becomes much more exciting for crews once they get familiar with the mower. He says his decision to purchase mowers with Greenzie technology was due to labor shortages, and he needed a way to "do more with less."

Quinn also says it's typical for crews to joke or worry that autonomous mowing is their replacement, but they quickly realize it instead supports them in their job and saves them time.



"If my goal was to create just terrible jobs, I would give all my guys scythes or scissors and then I'd say, 'Hey, we need 1,500 people to cut this field.' That's not what we're in the business of," Quinn says. "What I want is my best, hardest working guys getting the best tools, and that happens to be a Greenzie-equipped mower right now if they're going to mow big acreage."

According to Quinn, another part of what makes Greenzie-fitted mowers great tools is its powerful software and data collection. For example, Greenzie mowers receive software updates every two weeks to improve the mower's safety, efficiency and productivity. Other features include data collection on the mowers' speed and efficiency, customizable stripe angles and alerts if the mower runs into any issues.

"All kinds of productivity and efficiency can be gained with this new insight," Quinn says. "You have

**Quinn says already-established lawn mowers and brands are upfitted with Greenzie technology, so consumers don't have to leave the company they already work with and trust.**

*Continued on page IT6*



*Continued from page IT5*

all these mowers, and you have these people in the field. You have this data, and using it to make your crews more efficient becomes a lot easier once you can visualize it and see it.”

Coley says this data has been helpful for his teams at Georgia Southern, especially the feature that lets him save and replay certain recurring jobs.

“As the technology gets better, (the mower) could work (better) in smaller spaces, around obstacles and trees and stuff like that,” Coley says. “I know they’re working around some of those obstacles, but I see in the future that just about every landscaping company or university possibly could have an autonomous mower in their fleet. It kind of makes sense.”

Despite autonomous technology garnering recent excitement, especially with similar equipment such as self-driving cars and campus food delivery robots, Quinn says the novelty for him wears off quickly. Seeing a robot perform tedious work just makes sense.

Meanwhile, Coley has a bit more fun with his campus fleet of mowers.

“We’ve had a few calls where people think, ‘Hey, we have a runaway mower,’ so we just put an American flag on it,” Coley laughs. “We did the flag just to let people know it’s an autonomous mower, it’s not a runaway mower. I’ve seen people pull over on the side of the road looking at it. I’ve seen people that are walking around the track stop and look at it, so we have gotten some good reactions on it.” 📷



RC Mowers Vice President of Sales and Marketing Tim Kubista says his company’s mowers are designed for extreme landscapes, such as steep slopes, hazardous areas and wet areas.

## TWO SCHOOLS OF AUTONOMOUS MOWERS

### RC Mowers gives a lesson on the two distinct classes

BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Autonomous mowers are still taking some getting used to, and that includes understanding the different kinds of mowers available to the market. Tim Kubista, vice president of sales and marketing, RC Mowers, took some downtime in a busy airport to talk to *LM* about how he views the two different categories.

#### THE “AUTOMOWER” CLASS

“These types of mowers are installed on the property, and they work like a Roomba (vacuum). They have a base station, and then you either put a wire in the ground or you establish an antenna structure. And rather than mow once a week, it takes a tiny bit every single day,” Kubista says. “It’s like you getting a haircut every day, you’ll never really notice that it grows. And one of the advantages of mowing every day is not only does it look crisp and clean all the time, but it uses less power, and that’s really important. When you have a small machine, you can’t put a lot of power on it.”

#### THE “AUTONOMOUS COMMERCIAL MOWER” CLASS

“These mowers go in trailers. So rather than having a trailer with three mowers and three humans, I have a trailer with one human and three mowers, and they go from job to job very much like a traditional mowing crew,” Kubista says. “They get to the jobsite, they unload the mowers, they do the work, they load them back up and they go to the new jobsite. The value of these products is really labor savings — it’s not even about money. It’s about you being able to get more work done with less people, because staffing is the problem. If you can run your same business with fewer people, there’s a cost advantage, but people aren’t doing it for cost because it’s really hard to keep a deep staff.”

OK, lesson over, back to work!

PHOTO: LM STAFF



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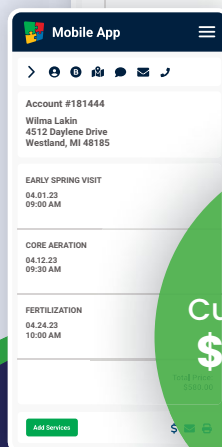
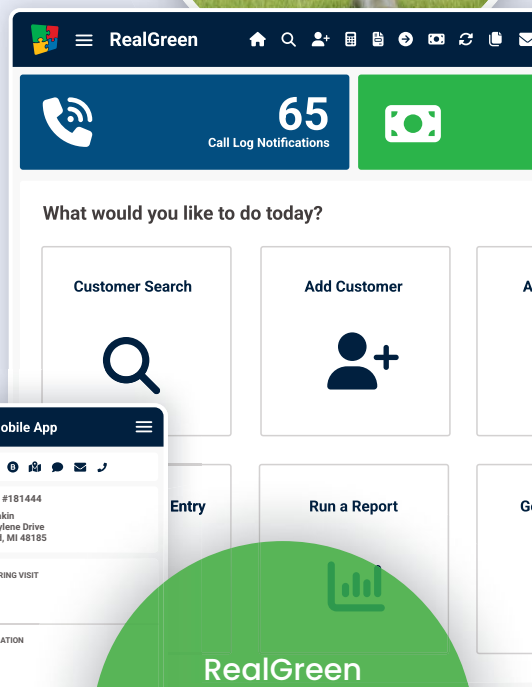
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## Unlocking software solutions

You probably use less than half of your business software's functionality. The pros weigh in on how to get the most out of your tech and increase efficiency and profitability.

BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR

From revolutionizing operations to fostering client engagement and growth, business software and mobile apps have become the backbone of modern landscape and lawn care businesses. However, the very tools designed to empower often become a double-edged sword.

Complex functionalities within everyday software technologies often overwhelm and paralyze small businesses, hindering their ability to make the most of the ever-expanding digital landscape. This stems from a lack of understanding, the inability to utilize the software's vast potential fully, or simply the owner or manager's pride to reach out for help. A 2019 study by HR solutions firm Oasis revealed a staggering statistic — nearly 42 percent of small business owners fail to leverage technology to its full capacity.

However, a wealth of solutions is just a few keystrokes away. In many cases, these solutions can be unlocked with a bit of additional training, empowering you to fully leverage the technology's potential. To conquer some of these systemic software challenges, we reached out to software developers serving the landscape industry for tips and insights on utilizing their suite of offerings better and

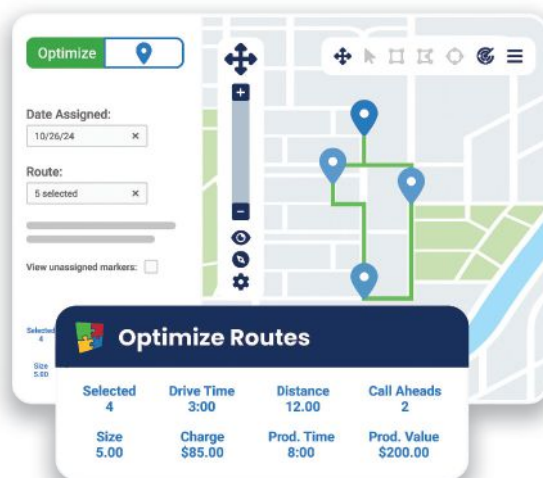
unlocking the immense potential for greater efficiency and success.

### READ THE EMAILS

On any given day, the content flowing into your inbox may seem endless. However, you must be on the lookout for hidden gems from your software vendors. They periodically send crucial messages packed with valuable insights on optimizing your use of their business tools. These messages can unlock efficiency and effectiveness you never knew existed.

Despite the wealth of functionality offered by landscape business software, Ted Rightmire, CEO of HindSite Software, a green industry field service software company, reveals a common challenge: landscape professionals often admit to only utilizing less than half the software's capabilities in their daily routines. To bridge this gap, HindSite employs a dedicated digital adoption manager.

"We've got a person whose sole job is to make sure we're producing content on how to use the software," Rightmire says. "Emails contain how-to guides, case studies, best practices and things like that. And that alone, just looking at the



newsletter or the release notes, will be a huge help."

### OPTIMIZE YOUR REACH

Mike Carden, a product manager for Real Green Systems by WorkWave, takes a client-centric approach when tackling software underutilization in the landscape industry. He starts by understanding where contractors spend their most valuable time and their efficiency goals.

"Many are still building customers in a manual fashion, either because they don't understand or don't realize their software can do that for them," he says. "Many times, it begins with route planning and route building and showing

**"Software and reporting tools ensure you're pulling clean lists, building dense routes and spending dollars on prospects that will grow your business," says Mike Carden, with Real Green Systems.**

*Continued on page IT12*



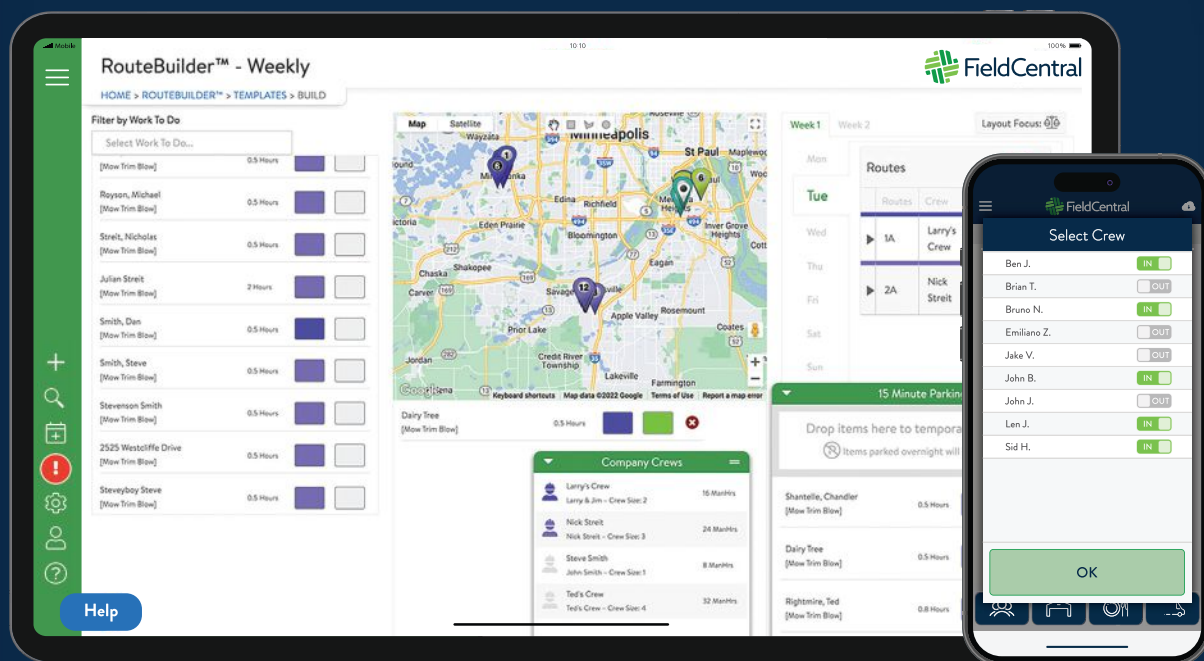
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*Continued from page IT10*

them the tools (in the software) to dynamically build routes on the fly and automatically handle all of the nuances that go into routing.”

## CONTRACT RENEWALS

Manually writing new service contracts and renewals is so 2000. Most modern business software suites will automatically generate this for landscape contractors.

“If you’re a landscape contractor dealing with maintenance, then you’ve got a lot of seasonal contracts, and too many contractors are still manually creating those contracts every year,” Rightmire says. “This is just not necessary. Your software can and should have the ability to provide you with a price matrix so you’re able to manage pricing by a variety of variables — square footage, (irrigation) zones, difficulty factors like slopes, gates and landscaping.”

The software assesses, compiles and mass-generates contract renewals with a few clicks. Another underutilized function integral to contract renewal is calculating client profitability.

“It’s easy not to realize that you’ve got a property that’s actually costing you more money than you’re making from the contracts, or at least your margin on that property is very small,” Rightmire adds. “So, having the software run a report saves the contractor hours having to review properties and make contract comparisons to determine if you need to adjust the price or say goodbye to a client.”

## STAY CONFIGURED

Another tactic to combat software

underutilization is what Carden calls regular software “hygiene.” He advises landscape contractors to schedule periodic reviews of their software settings to ensure optimal configuration for their company’s specific needs.

“On a quarterly basis, make sure your employee setups are correct, your vehicle constraints are correct and your business constraints are correct,” he says. “If those software configurations and parameters aren’t set up correctly, you may not realize the time you’re wasting.”

## LABOR SAVER

Finding and keeping skilled workers has become a significant challenge for green industry contractors. Fortunately, landscape software, when properly configured, can be a powerful aid. Accurate estimating and job costing, facilitated by the software, streamline operations and boost profitability, allowing contractors to rely less on manual inputs and back-office paperwork.

“Ensure that your software either supports or is configured with a module that allows for accurate estimating,” Carden says. “Ensuring you know precisely how many man-hours a service should take and what you should budget for at a property throughout a season is paramount and a cornerstone of any (landscape) software package.”

## MASTERING MOBILE

Mobile apps, accessible on phones and tablets, are not just tools for the back office. They’re a source of empowerment for your field crew. These apps stream-

line operations with features like accurate timekeeping and greater payroll accuracy. They also enable your crews to optimize scheduling and allocation, and capture data in real time for improved decision making, putting them in greater control of tasks and responsibilities.

“You should be able to view all of the property details and make sure they’re accurate and up to date,” Rightmire says. “For example, if a client just put in a fence, you may not be able to get a big mower into the backyard anymore, and you’ll need one with a smaller deck. You can capture that detail and push it back to the office.”

## TRAIN, AND TRAIN AGAIN

Once the software is set up and operational, training seals the client/vendor relationship. However, that connection is often lost.

“We have a lot of industry knowledge and can guide (contractors) through any problems they may be having or questions they need to be answered.”

Entrepreneurs often struggle to reconcile pride with the need for help. However, Rightmire challenges this perspective.

“When we have a client come to us who is really struggling, we’ll work with them and show them this tool they didn’t know they had, and that’ll fix everything for them. When there’s a pain, we know how to apply technology to solve it. Learning how to use new tools is easy, and we can teach the skills to use them.” 📧

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Zawacki has covered various aspects of the green industry for the last 20 years.

# INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY GUIDE



## AMAROK



with **Eric Lipson**

Senior Director - Enterprise Accounts

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## Q&A with Aspire Software co-founder Mark Tipton

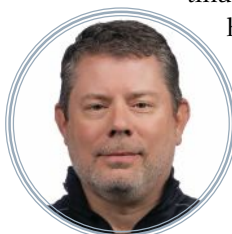
The man behind the software giant discusses the future of the company, the day he thought his upstart company might make it and how artificial intelligence will take Aspire to the next level

BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

A little over a decade ago, Mark Tipton and the late longtime *LM* columnist Kevin Kehoe put their heads together to create a software solution for the landscape industry. Today, Aspire Software is one of the largest business management systems for contractors across the nation, with hundreds of employees servicing the landscape industry alone.

"And we're not slowing down or backing off," Tipton tells *LM*. "We're able to hire the talent that has industry experience. Our team has well over 500 years of industry experience, meaning we've hired former contractors who are now serving our clients. We're investing more as we go forward. We haven't topped out — we haven't peaked yet."

Shortly after the release of the June *LM*150 issue, *LM* caught up with Tipton to discuss all things Aspire.



Mark Tipton

**Landscape Management:** How does it feel to look at the *LM*150 list and realize that so many of the biggest companies in the industry are your clients?

**Mark Tipton:** Well over a third of the *LM*150 list are running on the Aspire platform. It's very motivating to be able to have an opportunity to play a part in the success that these businesses are having as they continue to grow. Since the beginning, the vision I had for Aspire was really to change the industry, and it's exciting to see that become a reality as Aspire is adopted by more and more of those leaders that you see on that list and across the industry.

**LM:** Do you ever go back and reflect on how it all got started? How much has Aspire changed over the years?

**MT:** You know, it hasn't changed a ton. If you go back and look at our original plan from 10-plus years ago, it was certainly ambitious. It was big. I'm not sure I really understood what big looked like until we took some of those steps we have to be where we are today. Since the beginning, the vision was we wanted to change the industry. It's just hard work. But when the (*LM*150) list comes out, and you step back and you look at the names on the list and the contributions we had and working with so many of the companies on the list and getting a chance to speak with them and hear about the impact we're making ... it certainly just takes you back to those early days, that early vision. And now getting a chance to see some of that happening? It's certainly gratifying, and it's fun to be a part of.

**LM:** How about the industry as a whole — how have you seen it change?

**MT:** It's harder and harder to run a business in this industry. Labor costs keep going up at rates that are higher typically than the price increases that you can give to your customers. To really effectively

Tipton says that the Aspire software itself hasn't changed a ton since it launched over 10 years ago, but that it has changed the industry.



run the business, you need to manage it better. Software has become a more and more important piece of that.

**LM: How do you see new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) changing the industry?**

**MT:** AI is going to have a big impact, and it's coming in the forms of different things; not just on the software side, but also on the equipment side with autonomous mowers. And there's going to be integration with the autonomous mowers and the software platforms. We're working on that today, and we'll be rolling it out in the next year.

There's a lot changing (with AI). We're also seeing the changes go more from just the basic, to more specific. From, "How do I get my jobs scheduled? How do I invoice my customers?" to taking the next step from that; to, "How do I really analyze my business? How do I look at my portfolio? Who are my best customers? Who are the customers that I'm not making money on that I either need to raise prices or replace with another customer that I can make money on?"

**LM: What excites you about the future of Aspire? What's next for your company?**

**MT:** We've made some significant investments over the last year. I'm excited about investments on our Crew Mobile app that allows customers to work disconnected. Some of our customers work in remote areas, and they need their crews to be connected in the field even when they're *not* connected. We were able to do that this year, introducing new levels of security, facial recognition for teams to be able to clock in, clock out. There's now snow subcontractor management and marketing. One of the values we get of being part of ServiceTitan is we can introduce new products of the ServiceTitan portfolio. We introduced Marketing Pro this year, which is a powerful product to really help you grow your business.

**LM: How has the acquisition by ServiceTitan gone within the walls of Aspire?**

**MT:** It's going fantastic. If you look at where we are today versus where we were three years ago, certainly we've grown as a business significantly, but we've also made tremendous investments in the platform itself. Our year-over-year investment in just research and



(Top) Lt. Col. (Ret.) Rob "Cujo" Teschner, LM Publisher Bill Roddy, Amy Tipton, Mark Tipton, Aspire CEO, and Ashly Neneman, GM, Sun Valley Landscaping at the 2020 Aspire users conference. (Bottom) LM Editorial Director Seth Jones with the late Kevin Kehoe, longtime LM columnist and co-founder of Aspire.



development alone is three times, maybe four times what it was pre-ServiceTitan. They've really enabled us to make those investments.

**LM: Do you have a most memorable day at work, maybe from the early days of getting Aspire off the ground?**

**MT:** There were a lot of days along the way. Some were bittersweet, some just felt big. One in particular I remember, it was probably in 2015 or 2016. We were still an upstart. We had customers, we were a small business, but we were making inroads, bringing on some nice logos onto our platform, and we had a big hotel room at GIE+EXPO. We were going to have some prospect meetings and hopefully move the ball forward on some deals that we were pursuing. There was one company in particular — I won't mention their name to protect the innocent — but it was a big deal opportunity for us. We had some good successes along the way, but this was a next-level one. We had the meetings with them there, and even though we didn't close the deal there, we walked away from that meeting in that hotel room knowing we were going to close the deal and knowing it was a game-changer. Kevin and I and a couple other of us were there, and just that moment both during the meeting and once the meeting was over, we're looking at each other going, "OK, this is real, this is really going to happen." It was going to happen as big as we'd hoped it was. 🍀

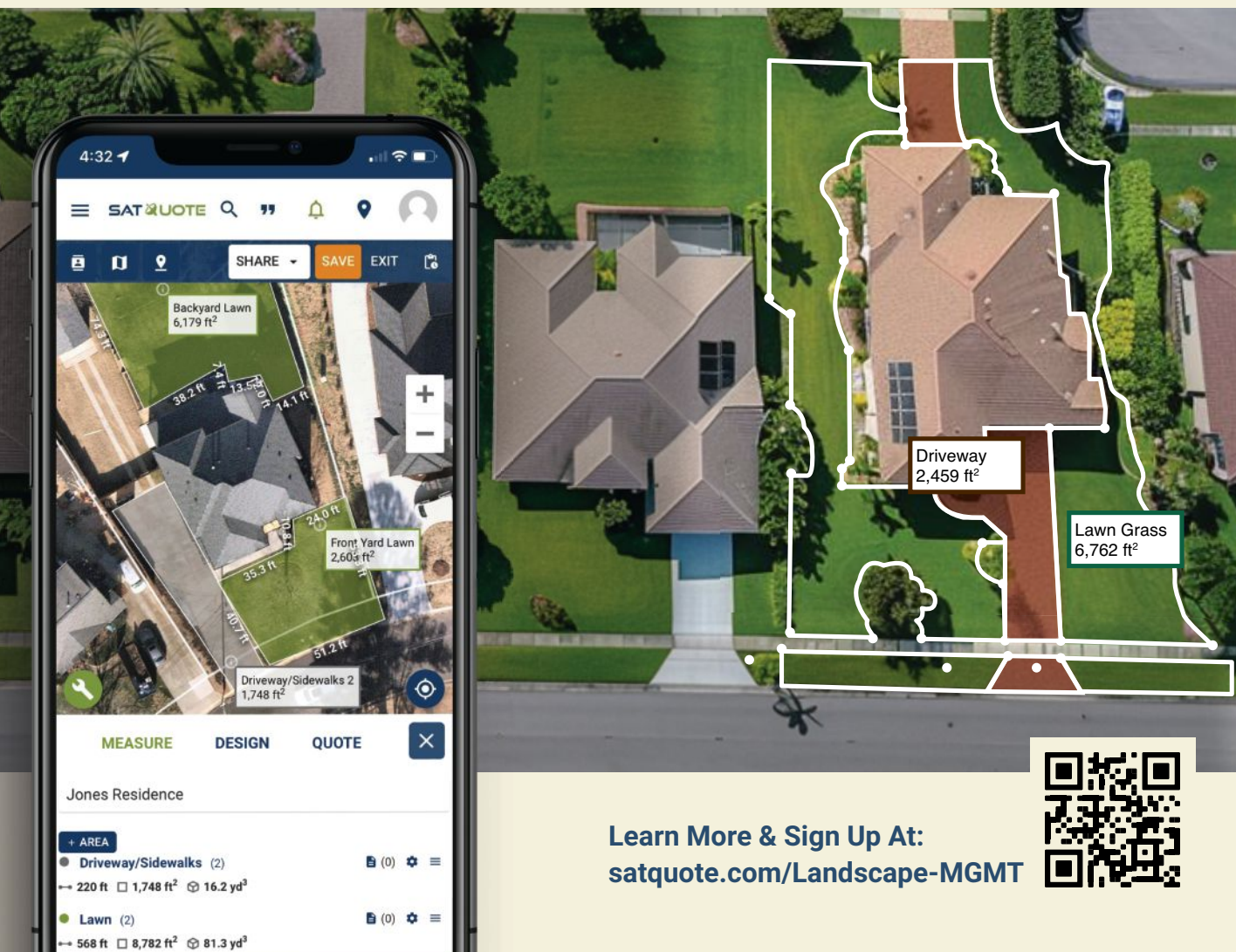




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## HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

### Farm to table

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**LOCATION** Baton Rouge, La.

**COMPANY** EdgeForm Landscape Management

**DETAILS** EdgeForm Landscape Management's primary objective for this project was to preserve the character of the site — a former dairy farm. This included a pair of large silos that featured in the final design by the contractor.

The contractor's major hurdle during this project was working in a residential community. EdgeForm crews had a small workspace due to the surrounding homes and also needed to be aware of noise levels during their work.

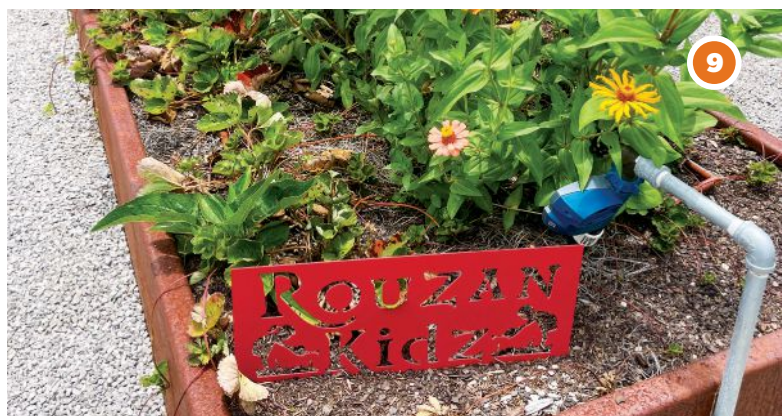
Other challenges included working with the existing soil conditions. To overcome these challenges, EdgeForm utilized raised-bed planters for a community garden that would provide residents with a place to grow flowers, herbs and vegetables.

EdgeForm Landscape Management won a bronze award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program for this project. 🏆

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







**Captions** | 1. The preexisting silos served as the focal point of EdgeForm Landscape Management's design. 2. Materials for the Silo Farm were thoughtfully designed and built. The contractor constructed these planters with concrete and a wood finish to provide durability. 3. The contractor repurposed an old horse trough found on the site as a water feature. 4. An aerial view of the project highlights the raised garden beds installed by the contractor. 5. The surrounding community has taken to the raised-bed planters, establishing vegetable and herb gardens with big results. 6. An aerial photo showcases the Silo Farm's location at the heart of the neighborhood. 7. The main walkway is flanked by fruit trees on the left and steel flower planter boxes on the right. 8. EdgeForm chose pollinator-friendly plantings in areas near the planters. 9. EdgeForm's planter boxes are designed with individual irrigation and provide opportunities for educating area residents.



## BUSINESS BOOSTERS

# Let your landscapes shine

Brightening up your day with these lighting tips

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

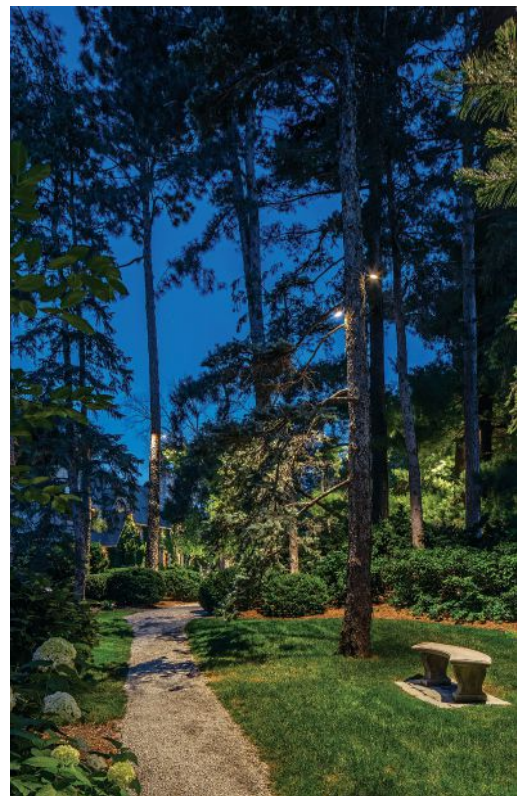
**Y**ou just put in all this work with maintenance or installations to make a client's property look perfect. So, why limit its visibility to only half the day?

When the sun goes down, landscape lighting can make a big project shine in a whole new light — literally. Jerry McKay, owner and founder of McKay Landscape Lighting and the Lighting Summit, says correctly illuminating a property is often neglected, and with

more than 30 years in the industry, he has some advice to take your projects to the next level.

"I've heard it a thousand times, but you can't see the landscape at night, and you can't see the architectural features of your home at night," McKay says. "(Lighting is) the age-old safety, security and beauty. But creating that beauty for families and creating some safety, and then

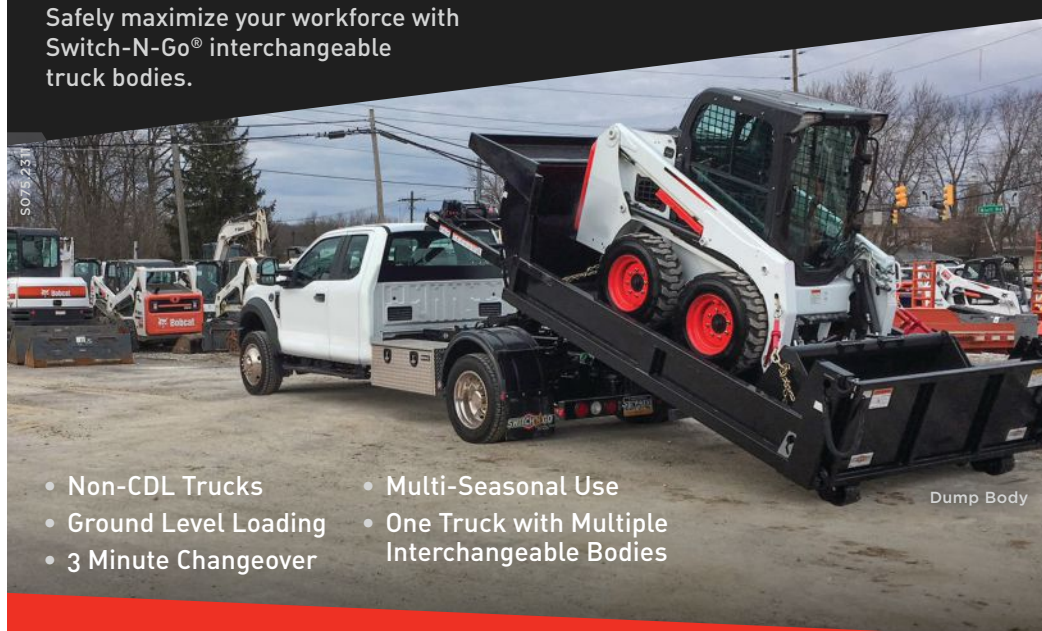
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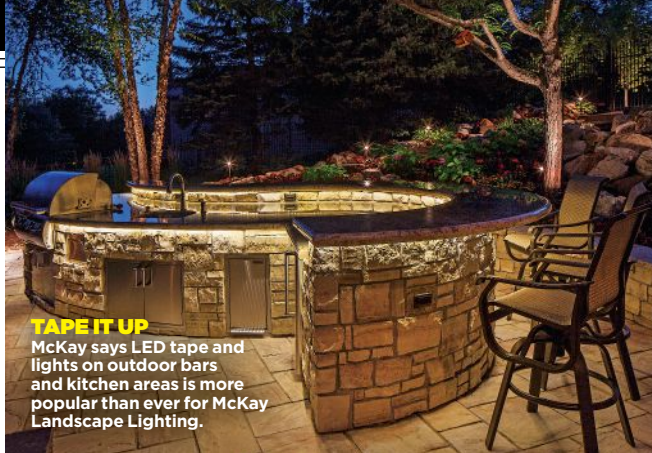
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#### TAPE IT UP

McKay says LED tape and lights on outdoor bars and kitchen areas is more popular than ever for McKay Landscape Lighting.



#### HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

One popular technique is to install sconces that shine on pathways while not making the light source too obvious.

enhancing their security — all done tastefully — can be pretty powerful.”

McKay says many people often fall victim to overused light features that don't work well for their project, such as excessive path lighting and uplighting on trees. Instead, he suggests starting simple and just looking at the landscape to see what looks bad or needs some work.

“I was at a job this morning that had one little tree and had four uplights on it. It made no sense,” McKay says. “I think what happens is people just see

stuff and they think that's the way it should be, and so they really have to think out of the box.”

For McKay, there's a few design choices he finds are being used more often by his company, such as LED tape underneath outdoor kitchens and bars, architectural sconce lights, downlighting on large trees for a more natural aesthetic and architectural bollards that match the property's design.

“The use of bollards in certain instances, I would say it's more like jewelry for the house. It just makes it

look that much better,” McKay says.

One big difference between landscape lighting and other typical jobs is that the magic happens in the dark. Needing to work long days and evenings to see your product glow into the night can sometimes be a difficult grind, but McKay says going that extra mile can make it all worth it.

“To be able to mix a little bit of art with business, it still has some pizzazz as kind of a cool business,” McKay says. “And so that's kind of the fun part of it.”

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# Dig in

**Consider the value proposition and return on investment compact excavators contribute to your jobsite efficiency** BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR

**A** compact—or mini—excavator is a game-changer for landscape professionals of all levels. Its unmatched versatility and efficiency empower businesses to conquer a wide array of projects and jobsite challenges easily.

Compact excavators drive significant growth, expansion and unparalleled customer satisfaction by streamlining operations and increasing productivity. Regardless of your level of landscape

experience, consider these essential factors when incorporating a compact excavator into your fleet.

### MATCH TO NEEDS

A compact excavator can be a valuable asset for both new and established landscape businesses. The decision to add this versatile tool depends mainly on the types of projects the contractor is involved in or plans to undertake as part of a growth strategy.

Contractors facing increasing demand for projects requiring precise digging, grading or accessing and working in tight spaces can significantly enhance their jobsite abilities and versatility with a compact excavator. It comes down to matching the excavator with the contractor's needs, says Mike Fitzgerald, Bobcat marketing manager.

"Whether you're a new owner or someone who already has one, the biggest thing to look for is matching the machine to your needs," Fitzgerald says. "For example, if you're a smaller contractor with a pickup truck, a smaller machine is easier to transport, will get

PHOTO: BOBCAT

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you through gates and into backyards and will enable you to do projects like retaining walls and boulder work.”

And if you're a larger, more established landscape contractor, while those needs may vary, utilizing a compact excavator on the jobsite still makes sense.

“You can really do so much with a compact excavator,” Fitzgerald says. “This machine’s flexibility will allow you to take on a lot of diverse projects and complete your jobs in less time.”

### FULL-SIZED OPTIONS

Just because compact excavators are small in stature doesn't mean they lack the excavating bells and whistles of their bigger brothers. Landscape professionals should note that most models feature enhanced auxiliary hydraulic capabilities, allowing for the use of various attachments such as augers, thumbs and hydraulic breakers, to name a few.

“Generally, compact excavators need sufficient power to handle various tasks without compromising performance,” says Lee Padgett, Takeuchi-US product manager. “Ensuring the excavator has enough horsepower to run hydraulic attachments effectively is essential for maintaining productivity.

“Modern compact excavators offer increased hydraulic flows, enabling the use of a broader range of attachments,” he adds. “This ensures that landscape contractors can perform demanding tasks without feeling limited by the machine’s smaller size.”

In addition, most modern compact excavator cabs are engineered for operator comfort. They feature controlled climates, joystick controls, touchscreens, suspension seats and an array of cameras for improved visibility and greater jobsite safety.

### LABOR SAVER

By taking over more labor-intensive tasks, a compact excavator allows landscape contractors to focus on more skilled aspects of their work, increasing productivity and job satisfaction with fewer people dedicated to a job site.

“With a compact excavator, contractors are getting jobs done faster because they're using machines instead of relying on manual labor,” says Justin Steger, a John Deere product marketing manager. “Suddenly, your workforce is more productive. Then you add attachments (to a compact excavator), and you're getting even more work — more specialized work — done.”

Steger says another labor-saving feature of the compact excavator is the backfill blade.

“If you have to backfill a hole or a trench you've just dug, that (backfill blade) on a compact excavator makes that job so much faster just by being able to direct the dirt where it needs to go the first time,” he adds. 🍌

Mike Zawacki is a Cleveland-based writer who has covered various aspects of the landscape and horticulture industries for the last 20 years.

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## EVERY DROP COUNTS

### Renovating your landscape and irrigation for future compliance

BY MAX MORENO | CONTRIBUTOR

**A**s California faces increasing water scarcity challenges, the state has taken significant steps to ensure sustainable water use. Central to these efforts are Senate Bill 606 (SB606) and Assembly Bill 1668 (AB1668), collectively known as “Making Conservation a California Way of Life.”

These laws aim to create a long-term framework for water conservation, recognizing the need for more efficient water use in urban and agricultural sectors. On July 3, 2024, the California State Water Board adopted critical

measures to enhance these efforts, which will be implemented by agencies in January 2025 and enforced starting January 2027.

Here’s why it’s crucial to renovate your landscape and irrigation systems now to meet these future compliance requirements.

#### UNDERSTANDING SB606 AND AB1668

SB606 and AB1668 mandate establishing urban water use efficiency standards, aiming to reduce water consumption across California. These laws require urban water suppliers to:

- Develop and adhere to water use objectives.
- Implement water shortage contingency plans.
- Improve agricultural water management.

#### CALIFORNIA’S NEW MEASURES

On July 3, 2024, the California State Water Board adopted specific measures to support these mandates. These measures include:

##### 1. Water efficiency standards:

Establishing per capita water use standards that urban water suppliers must meet.

**2. Performance measures:** Introducing performance measures for water loss control, requiring regular audits and reduction strategies.



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**3. Enhanced reporting requirements:** Mandating detailed reporting from water suppliers to ensure compliance and track progress.

#### IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- **January 2025:** Agencies are expected to implement the adopted measures.
- **January 2027:** Enforcement of these measures will begin.

#### WHY NOW?

**1. Proactive compliance:** By renovating your landscape and irrigation systems now, you can ensure compliance with the upcoming standards and avoid potential penalties when enforcement begins in 2027. Early adoption of efficient practices will also allow you to adapt to any regulation adjustments over the next few years.

**2. Water conservation:** Renovating your landscape to include drought-resistant plants, native species and efficient irrigation systems can significantly reduce water usage. This not only helps meet the mandated standards, but also conserves a precious resource, contributing to the broader goal of sustainability.

**3. Cost savings:** While the initial investment in renovation might seem high, the long-term savings on water bills can be substantial. Efficient irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation and smart controllers that adjust watering schedules based on weather conditions, can minimize water waste and lower costs.

**4. Environmental benefits:** A well-planned landscape that incorporates native plants and efficient irrigation supports local ecosystems. Native plants require less water and are more resilient to local climate conditions, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

#### RENOVATION STEPS

- 1. Assessment:** Evaluate your current landscape and irrigation systems. Identify areas where water use can be reduced.
- 2. Design:** Plan a new landscape design incorporating drought-resistant plants and efficient irrigation systems.
- 3. Implementation:** Install the new landscape and irrigation systems.
- 4. Maintenance:** Regularly maintain your new landscape and irrigation systems to ensure continued efficiency.

#### CONCLUSION

As California and the rest of the country move toward a future of sustainable water use, it's essential for property managers to take proactive steps in renovating their landscapes and irrigation systems.

By doing so, you not only comply with SB606 and AB1668, but also contribute to a more significant environmental effort to conserve water. 🌱

Max Moreno is the director of technology and ancillary services with Everthrive Landscape in Riverside, Calif.

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# FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

## Gene Freeman

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
**COMPLETE LANDSCULPTURE**  
**DALLAS**

### 1 What would you like people to know about Complete Landsculpture?

Chris Strempek founded the company 39 years ago. Chris and I have been together for 33 years and (2024) will be the 34th we're going to embark upon together. We are a full-scale design/build maintenance firm. We do everything from all the architectural designs, the construction, the swimming pools, outdoor structures and oasis landscape lighting, planting, irrigation and drainage. We also provide aftercare long-term maintenance programs to make sure that the garden doesn't just look good when it goes in, but it looks great as it develops and actually reaches its mature design intent. We service Dallas, Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Austin.

### 2 How did you get into the business?

I was that kid when I was 13, doing three newspaper routes in the morning. I had a lot of drive and fire. I started mowing yards for a living, and then I hired some high school kids to drive the trucks. I didn't have a driver's license, so I would pay them cash at the end of the day. Then I got into work at a great company and had a great mentor, Tim Shea, at Shea's Nursery in Grand Forks, N.D. I started doing landscape and the installation side of things and loved that. I've always really enjoyed the instant gratification of seeing what you've done at the end of the day.

### 3 What is it like working together with Chris Strempek?


Chris and I have never had an argument or a fight. He is just a great guy. We balance each other really well. He tends to be a little more cautious, I tend to be a little more of a risk-taker and we meet in the middle. We put our heads together, and if he feels really strongly about something, then I'm like, "Let's go your way and let's row the boat as hard and fast as we can in that direction." There's no ego

between the two of us. We've been like brothers for so long. It's the longest, greatest relationship I've ever had with anybody and he happens to be my business partner.

### 4 Any trends you're seeing with your customers?

Once upon a time, everything was azaleas, boxwoods, very traditional gardens — I would say traditional "southernscapes," if you will. But now people are open to more drought-resilient, low-maintenance type plant material; ornamental grasses, some succulents and yuccas that have lower water-requiring elements. And then we're also seeing continued innovation and creativity from the plant growers. Limelight hydrangeas, for instance, have come about, and they're a big staple plant material for us in the last couple of years. Customers can actually have hydrangeas in full sun where they never could before.

### 5 Do you have a most memorable day at work?

Our happiest days are when our team members are celebrated and when we all win together. Everyone thinks being an owner is an easy ride — you just cash checks. But it's more about pulling together, having a great can-do attitude and seeing a fanatical client experience come together from our team. Those are the big days, and it seems like we celebrate those regularly. I never feel like I'm at work. For me, the secret sauce is you mix your work, your family and your clients and your travel all together. You're just living life together with the people that you're taking care of and care about the most. 



#### BEST ADVICE

**"Plan your work and work your plan. If you plan your work ahead of time, the results will be better."**

PHOTO: LM STAFF



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## FEWER CALLBACKS, MORE HAPPY CUSTOMERS: WEED MAN & SCION DELIVER RESULTS

**A**fter receiving a turfgrass degree from the University of Tennessee in 1995, Brian Light started his career working in the golf course maintenance industry. He then pivoted to owning his own landscape company and eventually purchasing a Weed Man Franchise in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Since joining forces with Weed Man, Light has seen his business flourish. One reason for his success has been his partnership with FMC, which has provided him with top-of-the-line solutions. One recent addition to FMC's arsenal truly stands out to Light, Scion Insecticide.

Scion is powered by gamma-cyhalothrin with UVX® Technology, a highly efficient pyrethroid. Scion is formulated to provide residual mosquito control for up to 75 days without losing effectiveness, even when other products begin to break down. These qualities make Scion perfect for providing long lasting results when dealing with the hardest mosquito seasons and regions.

Light says he's witnessed significant improvements with Scion.

"We've seen a dramatic reduction in callbacks. The control is much better, the results last longer, and most importantly, our customers are happy. We've been able to cut our reapplication rates in half, and our customer base has grown by 23 percent this year."



**Weed Man**



**“SCION  
HELPED  
US REDUCE  
REAPPLICATION RATES IN  
HALF, AND GROW OUR  
CUSTOMER BASE.”**

**BRIAN LIGHT**  
WEED MAN KNOXVILLE



# How Mountain View has climbed the LM150 list

#117

BY LAUREN DOWDLE | CONTRIBUTOR

**W**ith more municipalities receiving government funding, Mountain View Landscapes has capitalized on the additional projects in their area, landing the company at No. 117 on the 2024 LM150 list.

With a customer base that is 95 percent commercial, along with a few residential properties, the company raked in a 2023 revenue of \$28,000,000.

Mountain View, headquartered in Chicopee, Mass., experienced a 60-percent increase in revenue from 2022 to 2023, which Steve Corrigan, president and owner, attributes to winning more bids from their local municipalities. He says many of these clients received

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding from the federal government and used the money on recreational facilities.

Where Mountain View normally sees two or three playground contracts a year, Corrigan says his company won contracts with the city of Waterbury, Conn., for playgrounds at nine schools and three parks that exceeded \$7 million. The company also won bids for 12 school playgrounds in another city.

“What helped us is that we had the capacity to do that additional work, whereas some of our competitors might not have the capacity to take them on,” Corrigan says. “These last couple of years have been very positive to be able to take advantage of.”

Looking ahead two to three years, Corrigan says he’s concerned the number of government projects could start to decline. If that happens, he says they will focus on bidding on more projects.

“In the last couple of years, you might see three to five people submitting bids,” Corrigan says. “When times get a little tougher, you’ll see eight to 12 people putting prices on the same project. Your margins drop, too, when things get competitive. You have to throw more darts at the board.”

Their commercial grounds division has also seen organic growth of about five to 10 percent yearly. He attributes some of that increase to institutions having more money to spend.

Another important aspect of Mountain View’s growth has been its team members. Corrigan says the company focuses on attracting and retaining good employees by offering competitive compensation and benefits packages.



Steve Corrigan



“People are our most important asset,” he says. “We’re always looking for good people who are willing to learn and put the time in to get the job done.”

**One of Mountain View Landscapes’ playground projects at Walnut Park in Roxbury, Mass.**

Mountain View has roughly 100 employees, and 30 of those are year-round. The annual employees’ average years of service is more than a decade, Corrigan says.

“If we have a person who makes it a year, they end up being a long-term employee,” he says.

Beyond its team, the company also turns to experts and educational offerings to continue improving. Corrigan encourages others to attend industry events and work with professionals like bankers and accountants to cover all of their bases. Corrigan says it’s important for companies to prepare financial statements monthly or at least quarterly so they know if they’re making or losing money.

“Over the years, we’ve definitely utilized consultants and professionals in our industry to grow our business,” Corrigan says. “We’ve been at this for more than 40 years. We’ve seen the ups and downs.”

He adds that implementing good technology and estimating systems are important aspects of managing his business. The company uses software such as QuickBooks, Bluebeam and B2W (formerly Bid2Win). It also uses Landscape Management Network to track its man-hours and schedules for its commercial grounds maintenance.

“Hold the course on how you price and estimate work. Man-hours are the biggest component of whether you’ll make or lose money,” Corrigan says. “You have to make a margin on it to make it work.”



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](mailto:greg.herring@herring-group.com).

# Owners must shift gears to grow well

**J**ust like driving a vehicle with a manual transmission, in business, you must shift gears as you accelerate.

You don't want to upshift too early because you will waste time and money and will focus on the wrong things. You do not want to shift too late because you will burn out your team members. And you cannot skip gears.

Consider the various "gears" in a landscaping business — also known as stages of development. Do not get hung up on these revenue and employee numbers; they are not hard-and-fast rules. They are soft ranges. Focus on the progression of the stages.

What it takes to own and operate a stage one landscaping company is much different than what it takes to oversee a company in stage five. But we often do not think about what it takes to shift from stage one to stage two, stage two to stage three and so on.

One of the most important changes is the owner's role. As the company grows, the owner must become more of a leader and less of a manager. The owner will hire managers to manage and "get stuff

done." As a leader, the owner will set the direction, values, culture and pace.

As the company continues to grow, the owner will become the leader of executives. An executive is someone who functions independently in their responsibilities. The owner and the executives establish the goals and priorities together, and the executive determines how to make it happen.

As the owner makes these changes, the company will require new software, processes and people. Here are some questions to ask as your company moves from one stage to the next:

1. Can you and others see financial and operational results clearly?
2. Do you have reports that help people make decisions easier, faster and better?
3. Do your people hold themselves to standards like labor efficiency?



4. Is overhead expense efficiency increasing? Is your use of software increasing? Does your team have a process-improvement mindset? Are people documenting processes?

5. What is your hiring strategy?

6. Where are you innovating?

Where are you investing for the future?

Some owners do not want to make the changes necessary to get to the next stage. That situation works if they are content with the current revenue level.

Here is another option: You can drive all the way across the country in second gear. It will be a loud, miserable experience, and you will eventually damage the engine (and the company and its people), but you could do it.

The other approach is upshifting. In business, it takes knowledge, discipline and diligent work from the owner and others to do so.

Do you know what it will take for you and your company to shift into a higher gear? 🚗

STAGE	REVENUE	EMPLOYEES
Owner as doer	< \$500k	< 5
Owner as manager	\$500k to \$1 million	5-10
Owner as leader of 1-2 managers	\$1 million to \$2 million	10-20
Owner as leader of 3-7 managers	\$2 million to \$20 million	20-200
Owner as leader of executives	> \$20 million	> 200





BY BEN GANDY

The author is principal of Envisor Consulting. Reach him at [bengandy@envisorco.com](mailto:bengandy@envisorco.com).

# The landscape of the landscaping industry

**N**ot too many years ago, there were managers in our organizations who possessed great field skills and knew how to get things done. These were field-facing bosses who dealt with the crews, not necessarily the clients. I like these guys. They're mission-critical for executing in the field.

However, over the past decade, the landscape of landscaping has changed in many ways, with a huge impact on these managers (production managers, field managers and supervisors). There are many titles in use, but we'll use production manager here. The range and depth of skills needed to be successful in this position have increased dramatically. Our industry must invest in training and education to upskill these leaders.

## TECHNICAL ABILITY

Production managers need to know how to work with sophisticated software. Our industry is taking advantage of relatively new enterprise systems, which can significantly impact informed business decisions.

Production managers control the input side of most of the cost data (labor, materials, subcontractors). Furthermore, the ability to understand the available reporting can be empowering in terms of assessing performance and focusing their time. Enterprise systems are just one piece of the technical array. Mapping applications, GPS and Microsoft products (think Outlook) are widely used (appropriately, we service real estate).

An inability to work with software is a huge deficit in a production manager's skillset.

“Our industry is taking advantage of relatively new enterprise systems, which can significantly impact informed business decisions.”

## BUSINESS SAVVY

Production managers need to understand how we make money and what decisions are under their control that contribute to profit. Staffing levels, overtime decisions, crew size, scheduling, routing and equipment utilization all play into profitability.

There are never infinite resources (our clients don't pay infinite money), so deploying resources is a balance between clients' preferences, fulfilling the scope and limiting the costs. The decisions can be nuanced and require a basic understanding of the financial side of business.

## FIELD SKILLS

The need for field savvy has not diminished. Understanding how to get the work done, what can be omitted, what can wait, what must be done immediately and what is the best way to do it is essential.

The more knowledge of horticulture, turf management, agronomy, pest control, arbor care, floriculture and irrigation systems, the better!

As much as anything, the leadership of people has become incredibly nuanced and challenging.

Production managers must be willing to own their power and exercise their authority. When people leadership is required, passivity is not a workable strategy. This seems obvious, but in today's world, hypersensitivity

to directing activity can be an issue. Speaking of hypersensitivity, PMs are expected to navigate the complexities of our social spectrum without causing offense or implying disrespect.

Production managers must have enough emotional intelligence to relate to their teams appropriately to retain their field teams over time. Teams with tenure are safer, more productive, better able to meet quality expectations and generally lower costs (due to increased productivity).

We all know that our field personnel are constantly approached by competitors and other trades. Their preference to stay is largely dependent upon their leadership.

Moreover, they must maintain discipline regarding safety standards, timeliness, uniforms, attendance and execution.

Production managers set the tone and the pace. Their standards are the standards of the organization. Setting and maintaining high standards is always the best option, and there's nothing easy about it.

My first boss in this industry was Dave. He insisted that I learn plant names — not just common names but genus, species and cultivars — in Latin! I didn't think he was serious at first, but I soon learned differently. Dave's demands made me a better professional and propelled my career.

These leaders have the opportunity and the privilege of significantly impacting the lives of the people they lead. The excellent leaders among them will leave a legacy of people who can say they are better men and women for having worked for those who taught, trained, held accountable and encouraged them.

Thanks, Dave. 🙏

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BY MARTY GRUNDER

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



## Sustainable choices: It's just good business

**C**aring for the natural environment is part of our jobs as landscape professionals. Our teams spend time designing, installing and maintaining landscapes that do so much for our earth.

Because of what we do, we have many opportunities to make small changes that can create an even bigger impact on Mother Earth. Often, these changes also happen to be good for our business.

I'm not sure there's a company in the country that demonstrates that sustainability is good for business better than Sebert Landscape in Chicago, whose LEED Gold Certified facility we'll tour during our Field Trip with NALP on Sept. 17-18. Sebert ranked No. 60 on the 2024 *LM150* list with a revenue of \$61,350,000.

Now listen, I am far from advocating for gas equipment bans or for every company to switch their entire fleet to electric tomorrow. What I am advocating for is that

**“People make great companies great. Little things team members do can make a difference to the environment, too.”**

landscape pros look at companies like Sebert and start with the small changes they could make that might help both the planet and their bottom line.

### FACILITY

In my recent interview with Sebert Landscape founder & CEO Jeff Sebert on my podcast, *The Grow Show*, Jeff shares more information about their facility and the choices that went into building it in 2010.

One of the simplest choices they made that any company could implement this fall is using high-efficiency lighting. We installed motion-activated lights in our offices, and coupled with using LED light bulbs, we've seen improvements in our energy usage.

### EQUIPMENT


The Sebert team is all in on battery-powered equipment and has found ways to make it work for them — with charging infrastructure and trailers set up to handle it.

As you consider your equipment needs for 2025, is it time to try out a few battery-powered pieces and see what your crews think? If worrying about charging infrastructure is holding you back, it may be time to sign up to join us at Sebert in September.

### TEAM

People make great companies great. Little things team members do can make a difference to the environment, too. For example, salespeople choosing plants, both native and non-native, that are well adapted to your region reduces maintenance needs and supplemental watering. These kinds of choices are win-win-wins. They're good for our team, good for our clients and good for the planet.

The Sebert team has gone above and beyond these simple choices: They've set up infrastructure for charging, installed solar panels on their roof, converted nearly all their equipment to battery or propane power and trained their teams to offer more sustainable choices to their clients when working with property managers.

Touring their facility and learning from their team should be at the top of your to-do list this fall if you've thought about making some of these changes but weren't sure where to start. It'll be a chance to get away from the day-to-day of your own business, tour a successful operation and meet other success-minded landscape pros to learn together. I hope to see you in Chicago in September. To learn more about the NALP Field Trip to Sebert, visit [growgroupinc.com/nalp-field-trip](https://growgroupinc.com/nalp-field-trip). 





# INTRODUCING **CARBONCOAT™** FERTILITY BLENDS

**HCAS**

HUMIC COATED AMMONIUM SULFATE

**HCU**

HUMIC COATED UREA

**PCHCU**

POLY-COATED HUMIC COATED UREA

Along with their featured CarbonCoat components - HCU, PCHCU, and HCAS - these innovative blends also feature beneficial materials like SmartPhos® DG slow-release phosphorus, carbon-rich humic acid, and more.



**16-3-3**

50% PCHCU, 50% HCAS, SmartPhos DG



**24-0-4**

75% PCHCU, 25% HCAS



**34-0-6**

100% PCHCU

For more information, visit [AndersonsPro.com/CarbonCoat](https://www.AndersonsPro.com/CarbonCoat).

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# UNIQUELY FORMULATED. DISTINCTLY SOUTHERN.

## INTRODUCING

# AETHON™

HERBICIDE SL FOR TURFGRASS



Long-term control of broadleaf weeds, sedges and kyllinga in an innovative liquid formulated just for the south. It's the best southern concoction since Sweet Tea.

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