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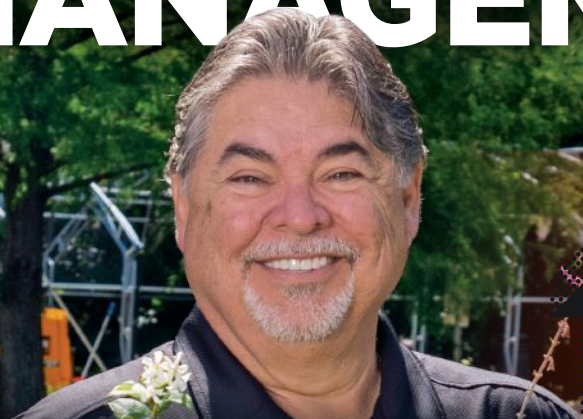
HOUSTON ROCKET

Texas-based Ethoscapes,
led by Manny González,
launches up the *LM*150 list



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[AI AND YOU]

Tech-savvy readers wanted!

Does your operation use artificial intelligence in a new and interesting way? Do you run a large fleet of autonomous mowers? Has your business made a large-scale switch to battery-powered equipment? If so, we want to know. Email Editor-in-Chief Scott Hollister (shollister@northcoastmedia.net) or Associate Editor Rob DiFranco (rdifranco@northcoastmedia.net) and you could be featured in an upcoming issue of LM.



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Climbing out of the deep end

When I was a kid, maybe 5 or 6 years old, my parents decided that I needed to take swimming lessons. They had friends with kids about my age, thought there would be safety in numbers, so they signed up the lot of us with a local instructor who taught out of her backyard pool.

Let's just say it didn't go great.

At the time, I had no interest in swimming. The thought of leaving the relative safety and comfort of solid ground for the deep end of some random pool at the urging of a complete stranger didn't make any sense to me, so I decided I wasn't going anywhere. As the rest of the kids got into the water, I stayed planted on a bench at the side of the pool, not far from where my now slightly mortified parents were watching on.

After a few sessions of me reprising my role as a benchwarmer, my father had had enough. Tired of paying good money to watch his son *not* learn to swim, he decided I was getting into that pool, one way or the other. As the third session drew to a close, he grabbed me off that bench, walked to the edge of the pool and tossed me in.

At least that's how I remember it. To be fair, the whole episode was probably far less forceful than I recall — my dad was a mild-mannered guy, so him choosing the nuclear option in this situation seems unlikely. But the end result was that I was in the water, and I returned there for the remaining sessions.

“My colleagues who are still dragging me through new processes and procedures might disagree, but I'm starting to feel like I'm sort of, kind of settling in ...”

I was never super happy about it, but gosh darn it, it worked. I eventually learned to swim. I'm no Michael Phelps, obviously, but my fear of the water is a long-distant memory, and now, some of my favorite recreational activities involve the water (although I'm not sure drifting on a pontoon boat with a cooler full of beer counts).

This story resurfaced recently during a conversation with my younger brother about my first few weeks on the job with *Landscape Management*. He asked how I was adjusting to the new gig, I referenced the well-worn cliché about drinking from a firehose, and soon, we were talking about getting thrown into the deep end of the pool as kids.

And as successful as it ultimately was when I was a kid, my metaphorical leap into the deep end with *LM* is proving equally effective. My colleagues who are still dragging me through new processes and procedures might disagree, but I'm starting to feel like I'm sort of, kind of settling in, thanks largely to a few interactions with some pretty big initiatives.

First was a trip to Louisville to spend some time with our friends at Equip Exposition, mapping out educational sessions that *LM* will be presenting during the 2024 event in October. I already knew about the great partnership between the show and the magazine, and I'm no stranger to the event and some of the people who run it, but getting an full-fledged crash course into everything that goes into it was invaluable.

Then there was our work on this issue, which features one of our biggest undertakings of the year, the annual *LM150* list, sponsored by Aspire Software, John Deere and Weathermatic. Being thrust into work on this year's list only a few weeks into my tenure gave me the same sink-or-swim vibes that I had in my youth, but now that we've come out on the other side, there couldn't have been a better way to learn more about the industry and connect with actual practitioners in the field. I'm largely still treading water when it comes to all of this, but I can honestly say it beats the alternative.

One final note: I couldn't let this column end without welcoming another new face on the *LM* team — Nathan Mader, our new associate editor. While his arrival means I was only the new guy on the team for a few weeks, I know he and I will both be on the lookout for opportunities to learn more about our readers and their businesses as time goes on. 🍷



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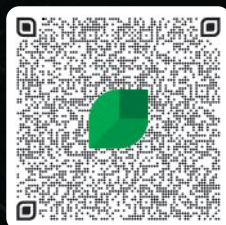


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LM GALLERY

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

1 They play to win the game *Landscape Management's* Seth Jones (right) ran into former New York Jets and Kansas City Chiefs head coach Herm Edwards at a recent industry party.

2 Media room access The *LM* and Equip Exposition teams met up in Louisville — conveniently at the same time as the PGA Championship at Valhalla. From left to right are Craig MacGregor, *LM*; Scott Hollister, *LM*; Chuck Bowen, Equip Exposition; Troy Winebrenner, Equip Exposition; and Bill Roddy, *LM*.

3 TOCA talk It was a celebration at the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association's annual meeting in Lake Las Vegas, Nev. The guys — Mac, Roddy and Jones — are joined by longtime friend and colleague Lynette Von Minden, Swanson Russell.

4 Keeping up with the Joneses (Left to right) *LM's* Jones with Colby Jones, Joe Sharp and Andrew Jones, business development manager, SiteOne.

5 Sustainability session A quartet of industry experts came together at the TOCA annual meeting for a panel discussion on sustainability — (left to right) Ron Reitz, Enhanced Landscape Management; Leah Withrow, head groundskeeper, Reno Aces; Patrick Parkins, superintendent, TPC Las Vegas; and Jeff Jensen, Southwest field staff representative, GCSAA.

6 Westin Resort grounds Jones, Roddy and Hollister were treated to a tour of the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort grounds by Bright View's Javier Sanchez (middle) and Brian Adams (far right).



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Landscape Management rakes in industry-leading 16 awards

In any field, it's nice to see great work rewarded.

The team at *Landscape Management* felt that reward, and then some, at the recent Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) annual meeting, where the best in the industry was rewarded with TOCA awards. *LM* walked away with a whopping 16 awards in writing, design, photography, videos, on-site reporting and column writing.

For comparison, *LM*'s nearest competitor won 7 awards.

"2023 was a standout year for *Landscape Management*, and I'm happy to see that hard work recognized," said Seth Jones, editorial director of the magazine. "Many of these award winners really were memorable — like our cover featuring Frank Mariani, and the reporting we did on McFarlin Stanford's peer group meeting in Florence, Italy."

"I could not be more proud of these results and I told my team ... Seth really got his 10,000 steps in this week, accepting all these awards on behalf of the team," joked Bill Roddy, group publisher of *LM*. "It's clear that our team goes above and beyond covering this industry for our readers."

LM won the following awards, including two "Best in Show" Gardner awards:

GARDNER AWARDS:

- **Best coverage of an on-site event** – Aces peer group meets in Italy, by Seth Jones and Joey Ciccolini
- **Product information article** – Battery-powered equipment guide, by Christina Herrick and Mike Zawacki

FIRST PLACE:

- **Best single photo** – Mariani on a mission, by Tim Klein and Tracie Martinez

- **Opinion piece** – Why focusing on soft skills sets your business apart, by Marty Grunder

- **Operations profile** – Making the cut, by Seth Jones

- **Business management** – Making the cut, by Seth Jones

- **Writing for special projects** – *LM150*, the *Landscape Management* staff

- **Product information article** – Battery-powered equipment guide, by Christina Herrick and Mike Zawacki

- **Best coverage of an on-site event** – Aces peer group meets in Italy, by Seth Jones and Joey Ciccolini

- **Best short video** – An inside look at the new top handle chainsaw from DeWalt, by Joey Ciccolini

MERIT:

- **Personality photography** – Mariani on a mission, by Tim Klein and Tracie Martinez

- **Cover page design** – Mariani on a mission, by Tracie Martinez

- **Best print magazine cover** – The Greatest Show on Turf, by Rob Dobi, Tracie Martinez and Bill Roddy

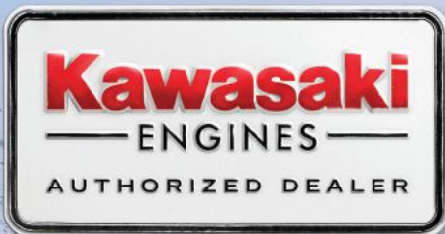
- **Best long video** – More than 500 volunteers gather for NALP's Renewal & Remembrance event, by Joey Ciccolini

- **Editorial/Opinion piece** – How the irrigation industry met and continues to meet challenges, by Danny Smith

- **Series of columns** – Seth's Cut, by Seth Jones

Landscape Management more than doubled its nearest competitor with 16 Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association awards.

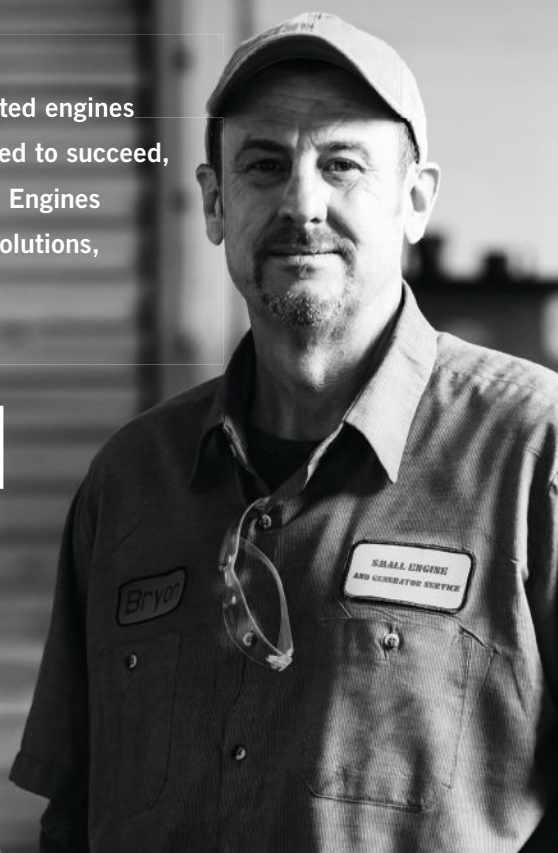




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Common traits of large, high-profit-margin companies

BY GREG HERRING | CONTRIBUTOR

Earlier this year, I teamed up with *LM* Editorial Director Seth Jones to co-host a webinar featuring representatives from high-performing, high-revenue landscape companies.

We deemed these companies “high performers” because they achieved an operating profit margin over 10 percent in The Herring Group’s 10th-annual Landscape Industry Benchmark Report. We use operating profit margin as a key measure of success in a landscape company because it is a single statistic that measures customer satisfaction, management effectiveness and operation efficiency.

The panelists included:

- Allen Sweeney, APHIX, Frankfort, Ky.
- Daniel Currin, Greenscape, Holly Springs, N.C.
- Stefan Banks, American Landscaping Partners, Brentwood, Tenn.

We learned that our three panelists have quite different origin stories, but their businesses have much in common: strong leadership and planning, a focus on people and diligent execution.

STRONG LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING

These panelists proved that strong leaders with a comprehensive plan are the first thing you need for a high-performing landscape company.

Our speakers showed that strong leaders come in many forms. Sweeney founded his business as a teenager trying to earn money for a dirt bike. Currin is a second-generation leader who took the helm during the Great Recession.

Banks was in the US Army Special Forces before entering the business world as an operator and an investment banker. He saw the opportunity to acquire landscape companies because of the industry’s strong fundamentals.

They have taken different paths to their leadership positions, but they all understand it is their duty to lay out a vision and a roadmap for their firms’ success.

Greenscape exemplifies a company with a well-articulated plan. Currently north of \$26 million and No. 123 on the 2024 *LM*150 list, the company’s goal is to be a \$100 million company with 15 branches in 10 years. They would like to be 75 percent maintenance and 25 percent construction, and they would like to self-fund their growth.

Much of Greenscape’s growth has been organic, but they have also made several acquisitions. Currin has a warning for companies wanting to do acquisitions, “It is impossible to be successful in the acquisition game if you have low profit margins. One of the things that drove us to improve profit margins was that higher profit margins provide the cash to service more debt.”

PEOPLE-FOCUSED

These three high-performing firms all have a people-first mentality.

“Growth is not just for the sake of growth,” Sweeney said. “Growth creates opportunity.”

One significant part of the opportunity at APHIX is for employees to be promoted.

Another part of that opportunity comes from the ability to create incentive compensation plans that align with the company’s goals. For example, APHIX’s sales commissions align not only with revenue but also with profitability. Branch manager compensation is also tied to operating profit.

“In a growth-minded company, people are aligned and realizing that we are growing together,” Sweeney said. “This is a team environment and we’re going to win together.”

APHIX, which received private equity investment in 2022, has approximately \$26 million in annual revenue and is No. 120 on the 2024 *LM*150 list.



Greg Herring

DILIGENT EXECUTION

Hand in hand with people is execution. As Banks said, “At the end of the day, we are a people business, right? And to be a great people business, you must be a great training business.”

He emphasizes that training does not have to be expensive or complicated. American Landscaping Partners, which comprises seven firms with approximately \$80 million in annual revenue, has a list of daily disciplines for every role in the organization. Those tasks — things like what to wear or how often to check the oil — are reinforced in morning huddles.

“Training is a breeding ground for leadership and for high-functioning people; it also attracts talent,” Banks said. “A lot of our business is pretty simple. We are not sending people to the moon. We are in the landscaping industry, and so it is about reinforcing basic stuff.”

Finally, as you consider becoming or continuing as a high-performing company, here are some questions to ponder.

- How do you evaluate your company in these three areas?
- In these areas, the goal is continual progress and improvement. How is your company’s progress?
- What are your plans in these areas for the next 12 months? 📅

The author is the CEO of The Herring Group, financial leaders in the landscape industry on a mission to improve the profit margin of companies, the life margin of owners, and the autonomy of employees. Read his blog at herring-group.com or get in touch at greg.herring@herring-group.com.



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Mariani Premier Group adds 20th company

Drost Landscape, based in the northern Michigan market, has become the 20th company to join Mariani Premier Group's family of companies.

"We are thrilled to welcome Drost Landscape to the Mariani Premier Group," said Frank Mariani, chairman of Mariani Premier Group — No. 7 on the 2024 *LM150* list.

Founded in 1991 by Bob Drost and headquartered in Petoskey, Mich., Drost Landscape offers a range of services, which includes design-build, enhancements, irrigation, pool/spa maintenance, tree services,

snow removal, fertilization, lighting and maintenance.

"This partnership represents an incredible opportunity for growth and innovation," said Drost. "We look forward to contributing our 'do more' mindset to the collective expertise of the Mariani family."

Earlier this year the group acquired Lifescape Colorado — No. 95 on the 2024 *LM150* list — a residential landscape firm founded in 1976 by Charles Randolph, and also added Galbraith Grounds Management, a boutique landscape management firm specializing in the construction and care of residential Atlanta landscapes.

Additionally, the group added Botanica Landscaping and Garden Industries based in the Palm Beach, Fla. market and Colorado-based Rocky Mountain Custom Landscapes. Mariani added seven family-owned landscape companies in 2022 — Blue Landscape Contracting Group and Blue Outdoor Solutions, based in Naples, Fla.; Ed Castro Landscape, a full-service operation in Roswell, Ga.; Glengate in Wilton, Conn.; Borst Landscape & Design, in Allendale, N.J.; Southview Design of St. Paul, Minn.; Planted Earth Landscaping, based in the Washington, D.C.; and Siciliano Landscape Co. of Red Bank, N.J. 📍

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Landscape Workshop expands in S.C.

Landscape Workshop, a full-service ground management company and No. 27 on the 2024 *LM150* list, recently completed the acquisition of Cut Above Enterprises in Greenville, S.C. The move adds the company's presence into the upstate South Carolina commercial landscaping market.

Cut Above Enterprises has had a strong reputation in the region since its establishment in the mid-'90s and provides commercial landscape maintenance and installation services within the Greenville market.

BJ Flora, president of Cut Above Enterprises, will assume the general manager position at Landscape Workshop. He will be accountable for facilitating a seamless transition for Cut Above's customers and employees. Also joining Landscape Workshop in a management capacity is Cut Above's General Manager Wes Myers.

Landscape Workshop serves 30 southeastern markets operating in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and Florida. Landscape Workshop is backed by Carousel Capital and McKinney Capital.

Stuart Maxey and Butler Sparks of Bradley served as Landscape Workshop's legal counsel in this transaction. Cut Above Enterprises was represented by N. Ward Lambert of Hudson Lambert Parrott.

JUNIPER EXPANDS FOOTPRINT ACROSS FIVE STATES WITH NEW ACQUISITION

Juniper, No. 15 on the 2024 *LM150* list of the top landscaping companies in the country, acquired Davis Landscaping, a landscaping maintenance and installation provider with operations across North Carolina, South Carolina and Pennsylvania. The addition of Davis expands Juniper's footprint to 33 branches across five states.

Originally founded in 1934, Davis provides full-service landscaping maintenance, installation and snow removal services for commercial customers.

"We are excited to partner with the Juniper team to continue scaling our business," said Scot Davis, president of Davis. "This partnership allows us to take on additional maintenance and installation projects across our regional divisions in the greater Raleigh, N.C., Hilton Head, S.C., and Harrisburg, Pa. markets while continuing to provide best-in-class service quality and care to our existing clients."

Juniper's partnership with Davis expands the company's presence into the Carolinas and Pennsylvania.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with the Davis family and their talented team to build upon and expand our growing presence throughout the Carolinas and Pennsylvania, which we expect will include additional strategic acquisitions in these markets," said Brandon Duke, CEO of Juniper Landscaping.

"We came for one specific rig, but Graham's pricing and service sold us on two more."

Jeremy Lowe | Chorbie | Frisco, Texas



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75 DAYS OF MOSQUITO PROTECTION



COST-EFFECTIVE, RELIABLE, AND TEAM-FRIENDLY

THE BENEFITS OF SWITCHING TO SCION INSECTICIDE

Cain Cooper, Vector Control Manager of Emerald Lawns in Texas, noticed he and his team were not getting the mosquito treatment results they were hoping for. So, when the opportunity to try FMC's Scion Insecticide came along, Cooper decided to test it out.

"When we first started (treating mosquitos), we were using combination products, so we were having to use control products plus an IGR, and that was really expensive. Then we switched to an all-in-one product that had four different actives," Cooper explains.

Compared to multi-ingredient products, Scion is a single-active product that has proven to be both extremely effective and more economical. "The switch to Scion has been great for us," he states.

In addition to treatment success and cost savings, the decision to try Scion Insecticide has been beneficial for the Emerald Lawn Care team too.

Unlike other products that can cause a tingling or burning sensation on the skin, Scion does not have this side effect, making it safer for the applicator's health. Cooper says the improved health and comfort of his team is most important. "My guys love this benefit," he adds.

"Scion is a quality product and my go-to for mosquito treatment, and the support we get from FMC has been great," Cooper says.



**“SCION IS
A QUALITY
PRODUCT AND
MY GO-TO FOR MOSQUITO
TREATMENT.”**

CAIN COOPER
VECTOR MANAGER
EMERALD LAWN

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150

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Texas-based Ethoscapes,
led by Manny González,
launches up the *LM150* list

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		Headquarters	2023 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev. Change from 2022	% Projected Change for 2024	FTEs/ Seasonal Employees	% Comm./ Res./Gov.
1	BrightView Holdings	Blue Bell, Pa.	\$2,816,000,000	2%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
2	The Davey Tree Expert Co.	Kent, Ohio	\$1,693,481,000	12%	7%	11576/482	NR/NR/NR
3	TruGreen*	Memphis, Tenn.	\$1,499,850,000	0%	NR	9766/3826	13/87/0
4	Yellowstone Landscape	Bunnell, Fla.	\$579,000,000	8%	10%	5500/1000	80/0/20
5	HeartLand	Kansas City, Mo.	\$534,747,000	23%	11%	3563/1136	100/0/0
6	Bartlett Tree Experts	Stamford, Conn.	\$481,000,000	10%	10%	2500/200	30/64/6
7	Mariani Premier Group	Lake Bluff, Ill.	\$465,000,000	62%	10%	1040/2160	13/86/1
8	SavATree	Bedford Hills, N.Y.	\$403,000,000	7%	9%	2500/77	25/72/3
9	Gothic Landscape	Valencia, Calif.	\$396,000,000	23%	10%	2400/100	100/0/0
10	Sperber Landscape Cos.	Westlake Village, Calif.	\$383,020,000	16%	10%	3368/28	100/0/0
11	Weed Man	Orono, Ontario	\$351,682,800	14%	13%	NR/NR	3/97/0
12	Ruppert Landscape	Laytonsville, Md.	\$330,700,000	21%	15%	2300/NR	100/0/0
13	U.S. Lawns	Orlando, Fla.	\$317,000,000	8%	7%	NR/NR	97/1.5/1.5
14	LandCare*	Frederick, Md.	\$316,250,000	15%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
15	Juniper	Fort Myers, Fla.	\$286,000,000	68%	15%	2700/3000	85/5/10
16	Outworx Group	Westbury, N.Y.	\$280,000,000	0%	25%	391/2277	85/0/15
17	Divisions Maintenance Group^	Cincinnati, Ohio	\$246,781,335	19%	15%	1029/NR	100/0/0
18	United Land Services	Jacksonville, Fla.	\$242,400,000	58%	30%	1325/180	95/0/5
19	Park West	Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.	\$221,000,000	7%	3%	1659/NR	100/0/0
20	Lawn Doctor*	Holmdel, N.J.	\$209,408,100	10%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
21	Landscape Development Inc.	Valencia, Calif.	\$148,346,000	10%	20%	1180/NR	92/1/7
22	Clean Scapes	Austin, Texas	\$136,911,726	19%	5%	722/258	100/0/0
23	Yardnique	Morrisville, N.C.	\$126,919,000	25%	22%	1200/650	100/0/0
24	The Grounds Guys	Waco, Texas	\$125,500,000	10%	10%	1500/1500	45/55/0
25	Rotolo Consultants	Slidell, La.	\$123,000,000	15%	15%	500/700	80/5/15
26	Turf Masters Brands	Roswell, Ga.	\$110,000,000	35%	35%	900/50	4/96/0
27	Landscape Workshop	Birmingham, Ala.	\$106,000,000	41%	23%	880/416	91/6/3
28	Schill Grounds Management	North Ridgeville, Ohio	\$104,500,000	-8%	12%	1016/272	95/2/3
29	Senske Services^	Kennewick, Wash.	\$102,500,000	101%	10%	857/14	11/89/0
30	The Greenery	Hilton Head Island, S.C.	\$102,000,000	10%	10%	850/200	90/7/3
31	Massey Services^	Orlando, Fla.	\$97,631,706	7%	15%	2813/NR	13/87/0
32	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp. ^	Plainfield, Ill.	\$95,931,000	7%	4%	540/98	10/90/0
33	SunWorks Landscape Partners	Addison, Texas	\$92,800,000	17%	65%	600/160	95/0/5
34	Sunrise Landscape	Tampa, Fla.	\$90,400,000	80%	25%	640/260	NR/NR/NR
35	Garden Design	Farmers Branch, Texas	\$90,000,000	22%	25%	90/NR	95/5/0
36	Mainscape	Fishers, Ind.	\$88,321,000	7%	5%	752/148	100/0/0
37	LMC Landscape Partners	Plano, Texas	\$87,516,018	10%	13%	800/200	91/4/5
38	Choate USA	Carrollton, Texas	\$85,988,865	8%	5%	387/NR	NR/NR/NR
39	Fairwood Brands	Columbus, Ohio	\$81,000,000	96%	10%	330/50	1/98/1
40	Ethoscapes	Houston, Texas	\$80,000,000	203%	50%	600/125	50/10/40
	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	Portland, Maine	\$80,000,000	10%	10%	550/50	100/0/0
	Meadows Farms*	Chantilly, Va.	\$80,000,000	0%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
43	Dixie Landscape	Medley, Fla.	\$79,500,000	4%	0%	395/NR	NR/NR/NR
44	Russell Landscape Group	Sugar Hill, Ga.	\$76,000,000	23%	15%	460/250	NR/NR/NR
45	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	Jupiter, Fla.	\$75,900,000	37%	7%	700/NR	97.5/2.5/0
46	Elite Team Offices	Clovis, Calif.	\$74,300,000	9%	23%	789/NR	60/5/35
47	DJ's Landscape Management	Grand Rapids, Mich.	\$71,680,000	1%	11%	450/100	94/1/5
48	Creative Environments Design & Landscape	Tempe, Ariz.	\$70,500,000	44%	0%	200/NR	NR/NR/NR
49	Ryan Lawn & Tree^	Merriam, Kan.	\$69,685,991	4%	12%	506/40	10/90/0

LEGEND NR = Not reported; * Indicates estimate, based on projected revenue for 2022 reported last year; ^ Indicates a portion of reported revenue was removed (such as pest control, janitorial services or other nongreen industry offerings).



		Headquarters	2023 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev. Change from 2022	% Projected Change for 2024	FTEs/ Seasonal Employees	% Comm./ Res./Gov.
50	Visterra Landscape Group	Park Ridge, Ill.	\$68,145,000	NR	90%	432/349	98//2
51	American Landscape	Canoga Park, Calif.	\$68,000,000	3%	5%	345/NR	40/30/30
52	Environmental Management Inc.	Plain City, Ohio	\$67,000,000	3%	8%	365/45	84/1/15
53	Greenscape Land Design*	Raynham, Mass.	\$66,700,000	15%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
54	Denison Landscaping	Ft. Washington, Md.	\$66,500,000	3%	10%	525/NR	90/10/0
55	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	San Antonio, Texas	\$66,011,431	16%	21%	737/120	NR/NR/NR
56	Bland Landscaping Co.	Apex, N.C.	\$66,000,000	19%	15%	540/160	93/2/5
57	ABM	Columbia, Md.	\$64,000,000	2%	5%	700/700	35/0/65
58	Teufel Landscape	Hillsboro, Ore.	\$63,620,922	31%	NR	429/NR	NR/NR/NR
59	Chenmark	Portland, Maine	\$63,100,856	8%	8%	255/278	NR/NR/NR
60	Sebert Landscape	Bartlett, Ill.	\$61,350,000	7%	8%	125/600	90/5/5
61	Beary Landscaping	Lockport, Ill.	\$61,000,000	5%	10%	100/300	80/20/0
62	Pacific Landscape Management	Hillsboro, Ore.	\$60,215,000	11%	10%	450/125	100/0/0
63	SiteWorks	Chandler, Ariz.	\$57,878,465	9%	5%	183/78	100/0/0
64	Santa Rita Landscaping	Tucson, Ariz.	\$57,800,000	11%	3%	685/60	80/10/10
65	Complete Landscaping Service	Bowie, Md.	\$55,200,000	6%	6%	260/65	98/2/0
66	Superscapes	Carrollton, Texas	\$52,200,000	35%	36%	395/34	92.5/6.5/1
67	AAA Landscape	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$52,100,000	11%	10%	580/30	99/1/0
68	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	Woodbine, Md.	\$51,000,000	5%	5%	300/120	90/10/0
69	ExperiGreen Lawn Care ^	Mishawaka, Ind.	\$50,953,640	4%	19%	125/350	4/96/0
70	Perfect Cuts of Austin	Austin, Texas	\$49,386,249	15%	10%	28/86	100/0/0
71	Xquisite Landscaping	Stoughton, Mass.	\$48,886,744	39%	11%	195/70	100/0/0
72	Kline Bros. Landscaping	Manahawkin , N.J.	\$48,000,000	7%	3%	200/40	10/80/10
73	McHale Landscape Design	Upper Marlboro, Md.	\$47,300,000	1%	3%	400/NR	0/100/0
74	Caretaker Landscape & Tree Management	Gilbert, Ariz.	\$46,266,551	10%	8%	310/50	100/0/0
75	EarthTones Design	Midlothian, Texas	\$46,004,920	-9%	35%	210/70	81/19/0
76	SOI Group	Frisco, Texas	\$45,700,000	26%	15%	145/NR	100/0/0
77	Harvest Landscape Enterprises	Anaheim, Calif.	\$45,659,504	11%	10%	550/NR	100/0/0
78	Schumacher Cos.	West Bridgewater, Mass.	\$45,500,000	10%	5%	110/165	36/64/0
79	Designscapes Colorado	Centennial, Colo.	\$45,000,000	16%	3%	167/131	18/32/50
80	Southern Botanical	Dallas, Texas	\$44,440,000	2%	2%	531/20	62/37/1
81	Christy Webber Landscapes	Chicago, Ill.	\$43,000,000	2%	2%	250/NR	50/35/15
82	Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management	Suwanee, Ga.	\$42,476,809	16%	0%	165/6	NR/NR/NR
83	Dennis’ 7 Dees Landscaping & Garden Centers	Portland, Ore.	\$42,312,770	1%	4%	293/35	22/42/11
84	Scott Byron & Co.	Lake Bluff, Ill.	\$41,921,000	12%	11%	80/170	0/100/0
85	Conserva Irrigation	Glen Allen, Va.	\$41,841,001	28%	30%	250/75	15/85/1
86	Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors	Hayward, Calif.	\$39,400,000	20%	15%	345/NR	35/65/
87	Focal Pointe	Caseyville, Ill.	\$38,890,000	55%	21%	203/111	94/6/0
88	Heaven & Earth Landscaping	Indian Trail, N.C.	\$38,501,926	22%	15%	197/129	100/0/0
89	Merchants Landscape Services	Santa Ana, Calif.	\$38,000,000	5%	4%	450/NR	0/0/100
90	KeyServ Co.	Fernandina Beach, Fla.	\$37,200,000	87%	50%	251/NR	57/42/1
	Urban Dirt	Austin, Texas	\$37,200,000	27%	15%	175/75	100/0/0
92	Earthworks	Alvarado, Texas	\$37,005,000	8%	0%	300/100	98/0/2
93	Pierre Landscape	Irwindale, Calif.	\$37,000,000	-13%	20%	170/NR	40/0/60
94	Stay Green	Santa Clarita, Calif.	\$36,483,000	2%	9%	400/50	76/0/24
95	Lifescape Colorado	Denver, Colo.	\$35,490,688	13%	12%	123/75	10/90/0
96	American Landscape Systems	Lewisville, Texas	\$35,460,817	39%	5%	320/50	NR/NR/NR
97	Naturescape	Muskego, Wis.	\$35,227,632	4%	3%	320/25	5/95/0
98	Chalet	Wilmette, Ill.	\$34,900,000	3%	5%	120/195	0/100/0
99	Service Direct Landscape	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$34,500,000	32%	20%	350/NR	40/50/10
100	LandGraphics*	San Diego, Calif.	\$34,327,500	15%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR

		Headquarters	2023 Revenue (U.S. Dollars)	% Rev. Change from 2022	% Projected Change for 2024	FTEs/ Seasonal Employees	% Comm./ Res./Gov.
101	Andre Landscape Service	Azusa, Calif.	\$34,000,000	15%	10%	322/NR	100/0/0
102	Cherrylake	Groveland, Fla.	\$33,502,506	75%	6%	405/56	100/0/0
103	DLC Resources	Phoenix, Ariz.	\$33,500,000	1%	4%	380/NR	100/0/0
104	The Budd Group*	Winston-Salem, N.C.	\$33,350,000	15%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
105	LMI Landscapes*	Carrollton, Texas	\$33,173,143	15%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
106	Valor Landscape	Aurora, Colo.	\$32,310,389	237%	11%	135/50	70/30/0
107	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting*	Germantown, Wis.	\$31,122,140	16%	4%	189/56	65/35/0
108	Green Lawn Fertilizing*	West Chester, Pa.	\$30,903,575	17%	15%	304/NR	7/93/0
109	Great Oaks Landscape Associates	Novi, Mich.	\$30,600,000	2%	5%	189/NR	80/20/0
110	Landry's Landscape	Baton Rouge, La.	\$30,352,852	40%	19%	51/53	96/4/0
111	The Joyce Cos.	Marstons Mills, Mass.	\$30,049,377	8%	8%	150/50	10/90/0
112	ProQual Landscaping*	Tempe, Ariz.	\$30,000,000	20%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
113	Utz Environmental Services	Leander, Texas	\$29,866,074	27%	25%	150/75	100/0/0
114	Winterberry	Southington, Conn.	\$29,850,000	14%	12%	100/120	70/30/0
115	Complete Landsculpture	Dallas, Texas	\$29,400,800	9%	11%	150/100	50/50/0
116	Realty Landscaping*	Newtown, Pa.	\$28,182,670	22%	12%	103/94	80/15/5
117	Mountain View Landscapes	Chicopee, Mass.	\$28,000,000	60%	5%	26/100	45/5/50
118	Siteworks Landscape*	Richmond, Calif.	\$27,860,000	0%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
119	Saluda Hill Landscapes	Lexington, S.C.	\$27,098,133	2%	10%	145/NR	15/85/0
120	APHIX	Frankfort, Ky.	\$26,873,735	22%	15%	180/126	97/0/3
121	Michael Hatcher & Associates	Olive Branch, Miss.	\$26,750,000	15%	20%	180/125	75/25/0
122	Level Green Landscape	Upper Marlboro, Md.	\$26,747,000	-16%	25%	157/141	96/0/4
123	Greenscape	Raleigh, N.C.	\$26,640,000	17%	10%	150/35	100/0/0
124	Genesis Landscape Solutions^	Mesa, Ariz.	\$26,500,000	20%	20%	365/NR	100/0/0
125	Integrity Landscape	Morgan Hill, Calif.	\$26,200,000	4%	15%	240/25	100/0/0
126	Art By Nature	Granite Falls, Wash.	\$25,598,797	14%	-10%	155/NR	99/1/0
127	Next To Nature Landscape	Olathe, Kan.	\$25,444,223	10%	10%	121/43	44/56/0
128	Timberline Landscaping	Colorado Springs, Colo.	\$25,112,000	3%	5%	50/163	70/22/8
129	Texas Land Care	Dallas, Texas	\$25,104,371	75%	12%	84/12	1/99/0
130	Landscape Maintenance Professionals	Seffner, Fla.	\$25,000,000	20%	10%	320/40	100/0/0
131	North American Lawn & Landscape	Charlotte, N.C.	\$24,900,000	22%	10%	120/40	100/0/0
132	Hittle Landscaping	Westfield, Ind.	\$24,501,000	2%	16%	161/55	100/0/0
133	Urban Habitat	La Quinta, Calif.	\$24,135,031	69%	157%	82/NR	8/0/92
134	Clarence Davids & Co.	Matteson, Ill.	\$23,318,500	1%	2%	80/128	90/10/0
135	GreenScapes Landscape Co.	Columbus, Ohio	\$22,000,000	34%	8%	82/24	NR/NR/NR
136	HighGrove Partners	Austell, Ga.	\$21,900,000	14%	12%	190/40	100/0/0
137	Valley Landscaping*	Christiansburg, Va.	\$21,394,480	0%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
138	Franz Witte Landscape Contracting	Nampa, Idaho	\$21,200,000	18%	10%	131/30	53/47/0
139	Greener Group	Lowell, Mass.	\$20,900,000	7%	8%	80/20	98/2/0
140	Richmond & Associates Landscaping	Carrollton, Texas	\$20,887,410	-6%	3%	149/144	92/1/7
141	GreenView Partners	Raleigh, N.C.	\$20,721,066	15%	15%	200/35	100/0/0
142	Hidden Creek Landscaping	Hilliard, Ohio	\$20,672,000	-5%	20%	95/40	50/50/0
143	Sposato Landscape Co.*	Milton, Del.	\$20,600,742	5%	NR	NR/NR	NR/NR/NR
144	Mullin	Saint Rose, La.	\$20,500,000	-6%	16%	185/30	80/18/2
145	Oasis Landscape Services	Gainesville, Fla.	\$20,133,675	25%	15%	83/10	1/0/99
146	James Martin Associates	Mundelein, Ill.	\$20,010,000	-5%	12%	46/113	48/49/3
147	Earthco Commercial Landscape	Santa Ana, Calif.	\$20,000,000	13%	10%	300/NR	100/0/0
148	Pro Cutters Lawnsapes	Conyers, Ga.	\$19,750,656	0%	30%	85/85	30/0/70
149	Shinto Landscaping	Deerfield Beach, Fla.	\$19,750,000	-4%	15%	250/NR	45/30/25
150	Nature Care / Bay Pro	Santa Ana, Calif.	\$19,000,000	5%	5%	190/20	NR/NR/NR
Total: \$18,592,575,311				Avg: 20%	Avg: 14%		



ANALYSIS

Onward and upward

The 2024 *LM150* rankings showcased continued record-breaking industry growth as combined revenue climbed past \$18.5 billion

BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | *LM* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The landscape industry's decade-long winning streak showed no signs of slowing in 2023. If anything, it only picked up pace.

The 2024 *LM150* list highlighted yet another year of strong revenue growth, with companies reporting combined revenue of more than \$18.5 billion in 2023. That represents a 14 percent increase over the total reported last year, and on average, companies that provided information to *LM* reported revenue increases of 20 percent vs. 2022.

This year's *LM150* list is brought to you by Aspire Software, John Deere and Weathermatic.

The last time the *LM150* list showed an annual decrease in revenue was way back in 2014, when reported 2013 revenue dropped slightly versus the previous year, from \$7.69 billion to \$7.67 billion.

The top four companies in the 2024 *LM150* list remained unchanged from last year. BrightView Holdings, based in Blue Bell, Pa., topped the list with 2023 revenue of \$2.8 billion. It marked the ninth consecutive year that Bright-

View took the No. 1 spot. The Davey Tree Expert Co., based in Kent, Ohio, took the second spot once again with revenue of \$1.7 billion. TruGreen, headquartered in Memphis, checked in at No. 3 with revenue of \$1.5 billion, while Yellowstone Landscape out of Bunnell, Fla., was once again fourth with \$579 million in revenue.

The rest of the top 10 experienced some minor shuffling in comparison to last year's list. HeartLand from Kansas City, Mo., and Bartlett Tree Experts from Stamford, Conn., swapped places at Nos. 5 and 6, with Heartland reporting revenue of \$535 million in 2023 and Bartlett coming in at \$481 million.

At No. 7 is Mariani Premier Group, making its first appearance in the *LM150* top 10. Buoyed by eight acquisitions in 2023, the company based in Lake Bluff, Ill., reported a 62 percent revenue boost last year and revenue of \$465 million.

SavATree from Bedford Hills, N.Y., dropped one spot to No. 8 in 2023 with \$403 million in revenue, while Gothic Landscape out of Valencia, Calif., remained at No. 9 with \$396 million in revenue. Rounding out the top 10 was Sperber Landscape Cos. from Westlake Village, Calif., with revenue of \$383 million.

A trio of companies reported revenue increases of more than 100 percent in 2023 — Valor Landscapes (237 percent), Ethoscapes (203 percent), featured on p. 24 of this issue, and Senske Services (101 percent).

COMBINED 2023 *LM150* REVENUE

\$18,592,575,311

AVERAGE
REVENUE GROWTH
FROM 2022

20%

AVERAGE REVENUE
GROWTH PROJECTED
FOR 2024

14%

COMBINED 2023 REVENUE OF THE TOP 3 FIRMS

\$6,009,331,000

32%
OF TOTAL
LIST

HOW WE CALCULATE OUR FIGURES

LM seeks submissions from landscape companies for the magazine, on **LandscapeManagement.net**, via email and over the phone from January through May. Companies submit their details through a standardized form. *LM* editors compile the results and, where applicable, remove nontypical green industry revenue sources from the totals. For example, we omit revenue from pest and janitorial services.

We estimate revenue for firms that didn't provide data if they participated in last year's list and reported a projected 2023 revenue figure.

The *LM150* information is self-reported unless otherwise noted. Some companies do not break out individual service lines, so we can't be sure what revenue is specific to typical green industry services. Several firms opt not to participate in the list, there are others we are unaware of, and it is possible some revenue overlaps due to subcontracting agreements.

WHO DID WE MISS?

Should your company be on the *LM150* list of the largest landscape companies? Or, do you know of a firm that should be ranked but isn't? Contact Special Projects Editor Marisa Palmieri at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net to be notified next year when the submission period opens. We encourage companies that think they might make the list to contact us for information.



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- Adam Boyette, Regional Director | Yardnique

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Houston rocket

It isn't just NASA that's coordinating launches in Houston — Ethoscapes is rocketing up the *LM150* list

BY SETH JONES
LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Houston is currently the fourth largest city in America, and it's growing rapidly. According to the organization Greater Houston Partnership, the city added 139,789 new residents in 2023, a 1.9-percent increase, behind only Dallas among America's 20 largest metros.

Here's another ranking to make Houston proud: No. 2 fastest-growing out of 150, and 203 percent growth in revenue, year over year. Those numbers belong to Houston-based Ethoscapes, where the company proudly finds itself as the second fastest-growing company on the 2024 *LM150* list. Ethoscapes ranks No. 40 overall, with \$80 million in revenue in 2023. The 2024 *LM150* list, our annual ranking of the top 150 landscape and lawn care companies based on revenue, is sponsored by Aspire Software, John Deere and Weathermatic.

Ethoscapes as a brand may be relatively new, but the companies that comprise it are not. In 2020 Manny González, CEO, and his business partner, Stenning Schueppert, managing partner, Evolution Strategy Partners, purchased Westco Grounds Maintenance, a 44-year-old company. Two years later, Champions Hydro-Lawn, a 47-year-old company, joined the firm. And this year, Ethoscapes

made another move and acquired Houston Landscapes Unlimited, a 41-year-old company.

These three prolific companies are all different from each other but mesh together nicely. Westco Grounds Maintenance does high-touch commercial maintenance grounds care. Houston Landscapes Unlimited performs construction and installation of irrigation and landscapes, as well as landscape maintenance. Champions Hydro-Lawn provides highly sought after flood and erosion control, rehabilitation and turf management services. Together they serve homeowner associations, municipal utility districts and commercial customers across the Greater Houston area. Ethoscapes also organically added Tree60 to meet the growing need and specialized care of trees.

"The Houston area is very flood prone, and Champions focuses on protecting communities from these types of natural weather events," says González. "We serve an abundance of municipal utility districts that require our specialized services. There's a lot of construction in it, a lot of rehabilitation and a lot of maintenance. The companies that comprise Ethoscapes make us very different than your standard landscape business. When you

have the four legs to what Ethoscapes is comprised of, it really sets us apart."

MISSION CONTROL

González and Schueppert have known and worked with each other for over a decade. González was chairman of a few companies where Schueppert was the private equity partner.

González and Schueppert found the landscape and lawn care industry "compelling," and when the opportunity to acquire Westco presented itself, they were off and running. The owner was hoping to sell and retire; González told Schueppert the business looked like something fun, and a good challenge.

"Manny stepped in as CEO and we've been working together closely ever since," Schueppert says.

The partners believed they understood the Houston market and the industries.

"And obviously I think we've proven it, having the acumen and expertise to create a platform business, grow it, scale it and make it relevant to the particular market," González says.

Both González and Schueppert have abundant experience in acquiring businesses and scaling them properly, González says. He says the key is to allow the qualified personnel to do the work they're best at —



CFO Jerry Cavitt (left) and CEO Manny González are making Ethoscapes go.



be that landscaping, tree care, turf control, erosion control and so on. Their job, he says, is to empower their employees and provide the proper strategies, funding and guidance to grow the business.

To accelerate the momentum of the enterprise, another strategic move González and Schueppert made was adding Jerry Cavitt as CFO and COO. With this move, the idea of Ethoscapes was fully developed and became a reality with the three significant acquisitions, three smaller ones and the creation of the tree business.

Cavitt echoes González when he says the success of Ethoscapes comes in the form of a systems approach and letting the employees focus on what they're best at.

"We try to position people in their role to their best and highest use, and then we handle all that other stuff behind the scenes at Ethoscapes," Cavitt says. "Nobody likes messing with health benefits or workers' compensation. Let's strip all that out and make it a business that is agnostic to all of these brands, leave the brands alone and let them focus on operations."

Cavitt also brought in what he calls best-in-class technology to the company, including Acumatica, which he says works great with Aspire Software and Inova. He made sure all the technology at Ethoscapes was fully cloud-based. By fully embracing technology, the company was set for liftoff.

ONE SMALL STEP

Stenning Schueppert describes himself as an investor with a strategy and management consultant DNA. He says he's different from the typical private equity professional who comes from a banking background. He went independent five years ago and says he's having "a ton of fun" working with González and Cavitt on Ethoscapes.

"I look at businesses from a strategic standpoint of view ... what

makes businesses tick, versus spreadsheets and leverage and that kind of stuff," he says. "I focus on deals with companies that make this country great ... nowadays they're called essential businesses. They used to be called industrial businesses — anything with a hard hat, dirty fingernails and steel-toed boots."

Schueppert says Ethoscapes has been so successful because of its approach to culture and strategic acquisitions. He says it is important to respect the existing organizations and the staff.

"I understand the guys in the corner office, and I respect those that are out in the field every day making it happen," he says. "But we respect the organizations, we respect the cultures of the organizations we brought in. You still have Westco, you still have Champions, you still have Houston Landscapes Unlimited. We've kept those brands and we've kept the team members in place."

Cavitt echoes the importance of allowing the companies to maintain their unique identities.

"When you start thinking about acquiring these businesses that have such an identity... you've got an owner that's been there for 40 years and started with his own push mower in the neighborhood. Others may attempt to just smash these kinds of businesses together," Cavitt says. "But why would

Three existing Houston heavyweights came together to form what is now Ethoscapes.



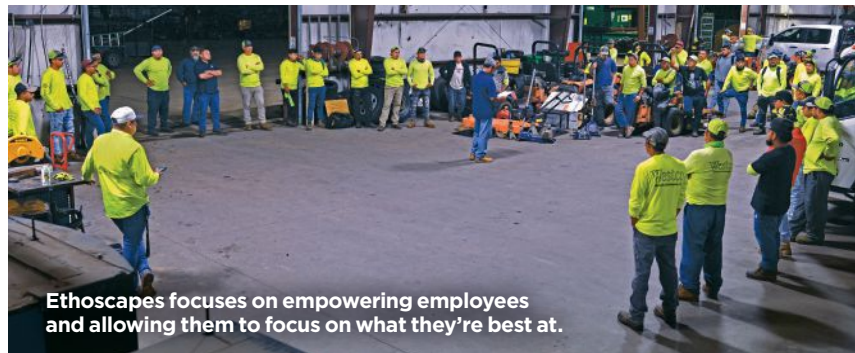
you do that? You're creating cultural problems that don't need to exist."

Schueppert adds that some of the employees, for the first time ever, now have an equity stake in the businesses. That empowers employees to feel like true managers, like an owner of the business.

BEYOND SPACE CITY

González says he's excited that the "thesis" of Ethoscapes has proven to be successful over the last four years. But what's next?

"Our plan is to continue the thesis, grow the business not only here in the Houston market and adding additional services to our value proposition, but expand to other parts of the state," he says. "We'll see where it takes us from there. But first, we wanted to prove it out. We've done that. We feel very comfortable, enlightened, excited, and tomorrow is another day." 🍷



Ethoscapes focuses on empowering employees and allowing them to focus on what they're best at.

Mountain climbers

Buoyed by loyal customers, dedicated employees and a culture of community service, Designscares Colorado continues a steady rise up the *LM150* rankings

BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | *LM* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

When Phil Steinhauer started Designscares Colorado in 1992, he had one goal top of mind as he crafted the company's first mission statement. As much as he was getting into the landscaping business, he was equally focused on making sure his new endeavor was in the relationship business, as well.

Based on the company's track record, consider that mission accomplished. "We're actually doing a renovation job right now for one of the first

customers we worked with 32 years ago," says Steinhauer, the company's CEO and lead landscape architect.

"I'm really proud of those long-term relationships we've built and how we've stayed true to our mission. We have a lot of those kind of stories, where customers call back 10 or 15 years later, and we're at the point now where we're doing work for the kids of clients."

And when you take a quick look at the final numbers from the 2023 *LM150* list, it's clear that focus on relationships benefits not only the busi-

ness and the customer, but also the bottom line. Designscares Colorado checks in at No. 79 on this year's list, up five spots from 2022, with total revenue of \$45 million. That represents a year-over-year increase of 16 percent, and continues a decades-long trend of steady revenue growth.

While that kind of growth has always been a part of *the* plan for Steinhauer and Designscares, he admits that it's not necessarily been a part of *a* plan.

"This is going to sound a little weird, but we don't do a ton of strategic planning," Steinhauer says. "Growth is always the goal, and we've done a good job of that pretty much every year over the past

10 years. But in reality, I view our growth as something more organic as opposed to the result of any sort of formal plan."



Phil Steinhauer

PEAK EFFICIENCY

A graduate of Colorado State University with a degree in landscape design and contracting, Steinhauer started his career with a firm in Connecticut focused on high-end residential clients. The Rocky Mountains were never far from his thoughts, though, so after three-and-a-half years out east, he returned to Colorado to work for a small design-build company and immerse himself in the Denver market. After three years in that role, he decided it was time to go his own way, and Designscares Colorado was born.

"I can't think of a better place to have a business," Steinhauer says of his home state. "We get the change of seasons ... and have the natural beauty of the Rocky Mountains, which is a big inspiration for what we do."

Designscares offers a wide range of services to its clients on the residential, commercial and municipal government fronts, with the latter accounting for half of the company's revenues in 2023. While design/build projects make up a big chunk of the company's total workload (80 percent), Steinhauer says it's the overall diversity of the company's offerings that has been the key component to its growth over the long haul.



Community service has been a hallmark for Designscares Colorado, No. 79 on the 2024 *LM150* list.



"I think that diversity has really been beneficial to our success and growth," he says. "We have our residential team that is all design/build ... and then our commercial team that does a lot of municipal work, parks, playgrounds, city medians, things like that. Add in the maintenance we do for both residential and commercial, we touch pretty much anything to do with landscaping. I think that's pretty unique."

COMMUNITY CENTERED

Designscapes Colorado's customers aren't the only ones to benefit from a focus on forging partnerships and long-term relationships. It extends to the places where the company's employees work, live and play, and an emphasis on charitable giving and community action has become an important part of the company's culture.

Steinhauer credits his parents with instilling in him a desire to give back whenever possible.

"I feel like to be a good leader, you need to be able to give back and help those that might not be as fortunate as you are. I've tried to stress to my team and leadership that we've had a community supporting us for 35 years and that it's important that we give back to the community that's supported our business for all these years."

The charitable initiatives Designscapes Colorado has involved itself in over the years are many, and not surprisingly, most involve helping children. It partnered with Make-A-Wish Colorado and built a large, Victorian-style playhouse to grant the wish of a young girl who wanted a special space to spend more time with friends and family. Along with Wagner Equipment, it worked to improve the landscaping around the Colorado Freedom Memorial, which honors the state's fallen servicemen and women. And it has taken part in the Angels Among Us holiday gift exchange for many years.

Two other efforts stand out as particular favorites to Steinhauer. The first is a partnership with the Clayton Early Learning school to maintain 18 vegetable gardens and an orchard of fruit trees on school grounds. The literal fruits of those labors are used in the school cafeteria and also go to families who otherwise wouldn't have access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

"The whole concept has been great for us and for the school, teaching children about healthy eating and teaching the parents about healthy cooking," Steinhauer says. "Helping the children grow their own food so they can see where it comes from has been really rewarding."

The second was a bit of a holiday surprise Steinhauer sprung on Designscapes' leadership team. In a partnership with Giant bicycles, the company's top brass worked together to build 18 new bikes that were given to local children in need.

A LOOK AHEAD

While continued expansion of Designscapes Colorado's customer base and the steady revenue growth that would come with it remain top priorities, Steinhauer says there are other boxes to check as the company looks at the remainder of 2024 and beyond.

Chief among those is securing a skilled and reliable workforce, a challenge that Steinhauer admits is not unique to his company. Designscapes Colorado has been an active player in the H-2B visa program for nearly two decades, and this year secured 136 temporary workers through the program. To augment those efforts, the




Community outreach has included maintaining vegetable gardens for the Clayton Early Learning school.

company began work on a permanent residency program in 2018 to transition between 8 and 12 workers each year to full-time residency in the U.S. To date, 10 workers have received full-time residency with another 58 still in the process of receiving a green card.

Designscapes is also diving into technology in order to improve the customer experience as well as the experience of the company's workforce. It is currently in the process of introducing Aspire Software's solutions into its business management processes, and will utilize the tool to improve accounting, invoicing and estimating, among other things.

Steinhauer is also excited about a pair of new autonomous mowers that have been added to the company's fleet. "We're just getting them dialed in, but I'm excited about the possibilities."

The same can be said about the veteran team at Designscapes Colorado as they look ahead.

"Like most thriving companies, the real key to our success is the team that we have in place," Steinhauer says. "We have so many key people with 15, 20, 30 years in the same position. When you have that kind of loyalty ... you really can achieve some great things." 



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From bishops to Cardinals and beyond

A steady riser over the last three years, Focal Pointe founder and CEO John Munie shares how his company has grown without private equity

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Focal Pointe — No. 87 on the 2024 LM150 list — has been a steady riser over the last three years.

The Caseyville, Ill.-based operation made its LM150 debut in 2022, ranking No. 123 with revenue of \$21,003,054. Fast forward two years and the company, led by founder and CEO John Munie, has grown its revenue to \$38,890,000 and vaulted into the ranks of the top 100 revenue-generating firms in the country.

How has Focal Pointe done this? If you ask Munie, it starts with his people

and their commitment to being more than a landscaping company.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Munie launched Focal Pointe in December 1997, with a borrowed lawn mower and a dream.

“I was thinking, ‘How is this going to work?’ I didn’t have that fully thought out,” Munie says. “I remember talking to Bishop (Wilton) Gregory from the Diocese of Belleville (Ill.) about the idea of starting my own business. And he said, ‘Give me a price to mow my lawn.’ I can still remember

it was \$95 to cut his yard, and he said, ‘You’ve got the job.’”

From there, Munie canvassed the surrounding neighborhood for new leads, promising a full-service landscaping option to potential clients.

“I said, ‘I’ll do everything for you. I’ll mow, do lawn and shrub care, take care of your pool, mulch and irrigation,’” Munie remembers.

From there, Focal Pointe grew by word of mouth, picking up steam until the mid-2000s when more commercial opportunities presented themselves — including Busch Stadium, home to Munie’s boyhood team, the St. Louis Cardinals.

For Focal Pointe, Busch Stadium was a launch pad into the commercial landscaping space.

“It gave us the credibility to expand further into the commercial market,” Munie says. “And, when you take that high-end residential, white-glove approach to the commercial market, it is different for them.”

In the years after taking over at Busch Stadium, the company added two outdoor shopping malls in the St. Louis area, a corporate campus and universities (Editor’s note: For more on the day-to-day services that Focal Pointe provides at Busch Stadium, check out the June 2023 issue of LM.).



John Munie



Focal Pointe ranks No. 14 on the LM150 growth list with a revenue increase of 55 percent over 2022.



BUILDING A LIFESTYLE COMPANY

Munie takes pride in his company's position as an independently owned and operated business. The company has nearly doubled its revenue in recent years, and it has done so without private equity investments.

"We're not under any demands from outside investors for financial performance. Our motivation is the idea of building a great company," he says. "So, we don't have to acquire anybody. We're under no demand to hit certain growth projections or EBITDA projections or anything like that."

That hasn't stopped Focal Pointe from entering the acquisition market over the last year. In 2023, the company added three privately owned companies — Landworks in Kansas City, Kan., Rite-A-Way Lawn Care in Cottleville, Mo., and Signature Landscape of Oklahoma City.

"It's funny, we had zero acquisitions in 25 years of being in business and somehow three collapsed into place within two months," Munie says. "Who does that? I mean, goodness gracious."

The acquisitions, Munie continues, all had several things in common, starting with a cultural alignment with what he wants Focal Pointe to be — a lifestyle company.

"For better or worse, I look for




Focal Pointe Founder and CEO John Munie takes pride in his company's self-funded acquisitions, its first in more than 25 years of business.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Where does Focal Pointe go from here? Munie says he doesn't foresee his company's strategy changing too much, and he doesn't expect the company to go on an acquisition spree. Instead, he wants Focal Pointe to provide a blueprint for

making landscaping companies a career, not just a job.

"I think more important to us, rather than being recognized for size or EBITDA, is building a company that demonstrates that the landscape industry is a destination industry, not something you settle for," he says. "What industry gives people the ability to be impactful in communities like ours? Not many." 

cultural alignment and where I think we can be impactful in the community. Where that takes us, it takes us," he says. "We want people who want to do right for others. And with that spirit, we can do anything. If we have employees who care, we can train them how to be efficient, how to improve in safety, how to improve quality and how to delight your customers."



BUILDING A COMMUNITY

As it works to retain and reward its employees, Focal Pointe, No. 87 on the 2024 LM150 list, has several initiatives it uses to maintain a healthy culture.

The first is what founder and CEO John Munie calls the "Founder's Wall of Gratitude," a wall in Focal Pointe's headquarters that honors employees who have been with the company for more than 10 years. According to Munie, the employees that currently adorn the wall represent more than half of its staff from a decade ago.

"In our industry, that's pretty unusual. That's one of the things I'm most proud of," he says. "Ten years ago, we were a \$4 million company, and we were not much different than anybody else. And to have people that said, 'Yeah, I'll hitch my wagon to this,' it's just super cool."

What Do These Top 150 Landscape Companies Have in Common?

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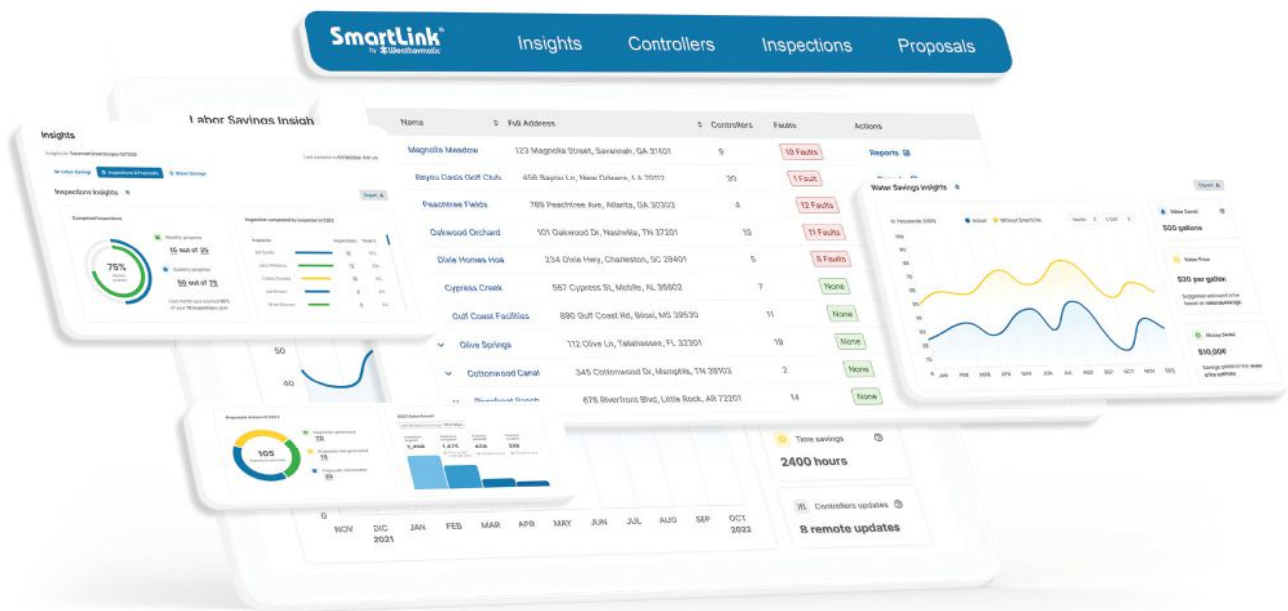
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CLIENT MIX & PROFIT CENTER

TOP 25

A look at the *LM150* list — sorted for top performers by client mix, profit centers and regions

Editor's note: Not all companies report client mix, profit center and regional data. Dollar amounts were calculated by *LM* from data reported. Landscape construction is included in design/build and installation figures.

BY CLIENT MIX

COMMERCIAL

1	HeartLand	\$534,747,000
2	Yellowstone Landscape	\$463,200,000
3	Gothic Landscape	\$396,000,000
4	Sperber Landscape Cos.	\$383,020,000
5	Ruppert Landscape	\$330,700,000
6	U.S. Lawns	\$307,490,000
7	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$246,781,335
8	Juniper	\$243,100,000
9	Outworx Group	\$238,000,000
10	United Land Services	\$230,280,000
11	Park West	\$221,000,000
12	TruGreen	\$194,980,500
13	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$144,300,000
14	Clean Scapes	\$136,911,726
15	Landscape Development Inc.	\$136,478,320
16	Yardnique	\$126,919,000
17	SavATree	\$100,750,000
18	Schill Grounds Management	\$99,275,000
19	Rotolo Consultants	\$98,400,000
20	Landscape Workshop	\$96,460,000
21	The Greenery	\$91,800,000
22	Mainscape	\$88,321,000
23	SunWorks	\$88,160,000
24	Garden Design	\$85,500,000
25	Lucas Tree Experts	\$80,000,000

RESIDENTIAL

1	TruGreen	\$1,304,869,500
2	Mariani Premier Group	\$399,900,000
3	Weed Man	\$341,132,316
4	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$307,840,000
5	SavATree	\$290,160,000
6	Turf Masters Brands	\$105,600,000
7	Senske Services	\$91,225,000
8	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	\$86,337,900
9	Massey Services	\$84,939,584
10	Fairwood Brands	\$79,380,000
11	The Grounds Guys	\$69,025,000
12	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$62,717,392
13	ExperiGreen Lawn Care	\$48,915,494
14	McHale Landscape Design	\$47,300,000
15	Scott Byron & Co.	\$41,921,000
16	Kline Bros. Landscaping	\$38,400,000
17	Conserva Irrigation	\$35,564,851
18	Chalet	\$34,900,000
19	Naturescape	\$33,466,250
20	Lifescape Colorado	\$31,941,619
21	Schumacher Cos.	\$29,120,000
22	Green Lawn Fertilizing	\$28,740,325
23	The Joyce Cos.	\$27,044,439
24	Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors	\$25,610,000
25	Texas Land Care	\$24,853,327

GOVERNMENT

1	Yellowstone Landscape	\$115,800,000
2	Outworx Group	\$42,000,000
3	ABM	\$41,600,000
4	Merchants Landscape Services	\$38,000,000
5	Ethoscapes	\$32,000,000
6	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$28,860,000
7	Juniper	\$28,600,000
8	Elite Team Offies	\$26,005,000
9	Designscapes Colorado	\$22,500,000
10	Urban Habitat	\$22,204,229
11	Pierre Landscape	\$22,200,000
12	American Landscape	\$20,400,000
13	Oasis Landscape Services	\$19,932,338
14	Rotolo Consultants	\$18,450,000
15	Mountain View Landscapes	\$14,000,000
16	Pro Cutters Lawnsapes	\$13,825,459
17	United Land Services	\$12,120,000
18	SavATree	\$12,090,000
19	Landscape Development Inc.	\$10,384,220
20	Environmental Management Inc.	\$10,050,000
21	Stay Green	\$8,755,920
22	Christy Webber Landscapes	\$6,450,000
23	Santa Rita Landscaping	\$5,780,000
24	Shinto Landscaping	\$4,937,500
25	Kline Bros. Landscaping	\$4,800,000

**MOWING + MAINTENANCE**

1	BrightView Holdings	\$1,858,560,000
2	Yellowstone Landscape	\$463,200,000
3	HeartLand	\$390,365,310
4	Sperber Landscape Cos.	\$306,416,000
5	Gothic Landscape	\$261,360,000
6	Mariani Premier Group	\$195,300,000
7	Ruppert Landscape	\$185,192,000
8	U.S. Lawns	\$183,860,000
9	Juniper	\$154,440,000
10	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$147,414,329
11	Yardnique	\$114,227,100
12	Park West	\$97,240,000
13	Landscape Workshop	\$74,200,000
14	Schill Grounds Management	\$70,000,000
15	Mainscape	\$59,175,070
16	Bland Landscaping Co.	\$56,100,000
17	Outworx Group	\$56,000,000
18	The Greenery	\$51,000,000
19	Rotolo Consultants	\$49,200,000
20	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	\$45,900,000
21	Visterra Landscape Group	\$43,612,800
22	Landscape Development Inc.	\$40,368,000
23	Ethoscapes	\$40,000,000
24	LMC Landscape Partners	\$39,382,208
25	Urban Dirt	\$37,200,000

TURF + ORNAMENTAL

1	TruGreen	\$1,363,500,000
2	Weed Man	\$351,682,800
3	SavATree	\$165,230,000
4	Turf Masters Brands	\$110,000,000
5	Senske Services	\$98,750,000
6	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	\$93,702,300
7	Massey Services	\$79,365,911
8	SunWorks	\$56,608,000
9	ExperiGreen Lawn Care	\$49,327,460
10	Harvest Landscape Enterprises	\$34,722,331
11	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$33,009,154
12	Green Lawn Fertilizing	\$29,597,790
13	Juniper	\$28,600,000
14	Naturescape	\$28,182,106
15	Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management	\$19,114,564
16	Rotolo Consultants	\$12,300,000
17	The Greenery	\$10,200,000
18	ABM	\$9,600,000
19	Mariani Premier Group	\$9,300,000
20	SOI Group	\$7,312,000
21	Landscape Workshop	\$6,360,000
22	U.S. Lawns	\$6,340,000
23	Sebert Landscape	\$6,135,000
24	Mainscape	\$5,299,260
25	Ethoscapes	\$4,000,000

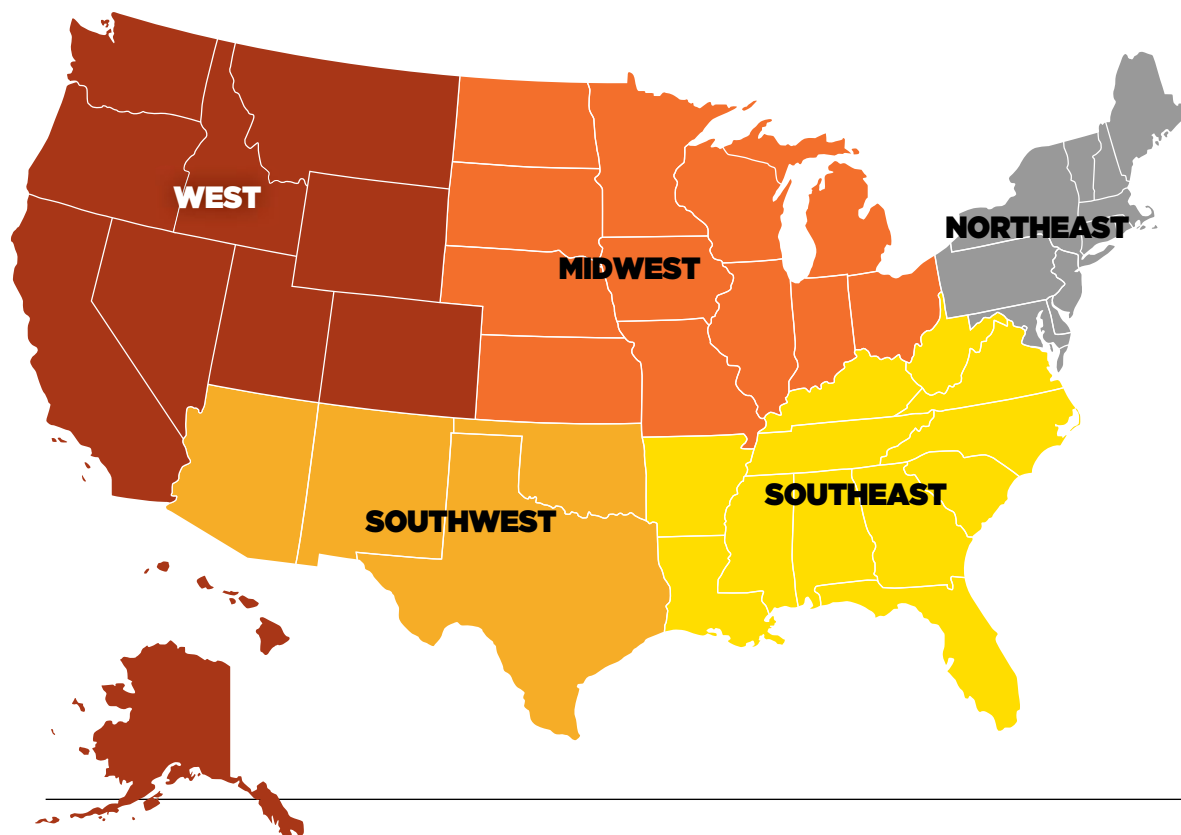
**DESIGN BUILD +
INSTALLATION**

1	BrightView Holdings	\$760,320,000
2	Mariani Premier Group	\$227,850,000
3	Ruppert Landscape	\$145,508,000
4	Gothic Landscape	\$134,640,000
5	Park West	\$103,870,000
6	Landscape Development Inc.	\$100,000,000
7	Clean Scapes	\$73,932,332
8	Fairwood Brands	\$68,040,000
9	HeartLand	\$64,169,640
10	Sperber Landscape Cos.	\$61,283,200
11	Juniper	\$60,060,000
12	Yellowstone Landscape	\$57,900,000
13	U.S. Lawns	\$53,890,000
14	Choate USA	\$52,200,497
15	SiteWorks	\$50,354,265
16	Rotolo Consultants	\$49,200,000
17	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	\$48,848,459
18	Denison Landscaping	\$46,550,000
19	Environmental Management Inc.	\$38,190,000
20	Designscapes Colorado	\$37,350,000
21	Xquisite Landscaping	\$36,665,058
22	Pierre Landscape	\$35,150,000
23	Elite Team Offices	\$34,921,000
24	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	\$31,878,000
25	The Greenery	\$30,600,000

**IRRIGATION +
WATER MANAGEMENT**

1	Conserva Irrigation	\$41,841,001
2	Juniper	\$34,320,000
3	Choate USA	\$33,071,817
4	American Landscape	\$22,440,000
5	Clean Scapes	\$21,905,876
6	LMC Landscape Partners	\$21,003,844
7	Elite Team Offices	\$17,832,000
8	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	\$15,180,000
9	Massey Services	\$14,231,636
10	Winterberry	\$12,835,500
11	Rotolo Consultants	\$12,300,000
12	Superscapes	\$12,214,800
13	Perfect Cuts of Austin	\$11,852,700
14	SOI Group	\$10,968,000
15	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$10,269,515
16	ABM	\$9,600,000
17	U.S. Lawns	\$9,510,000
18	Santa Rita Landscaping	\$8,670,000
19	Cherrylake	\$8,375,627
20	Ethoscapes	\$8,000,000
21	Mainscape	\$7,948,890
22	Southern Botanical	\$7,554,800
23	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$7,397,787
24	The Greenery	\$7,140,000
25	Outworx Group	\$7,000,000

BY PROFIT CENTERS



WEST

1	Sperber Landscape Cos.	\$275,774,400
2	Gothic Landscape	\$229,680,000
3	Park West	\$221,000,000
4	Landscape Development Inc.	\$148,346,000
5	SavATree	\$108,810,000
6	Elite Team Offies	\$74,300,000
7	American Landscape	\$68,000,000
8	Mariani Premier Group	\$65,100,000
9	Pacific Landscape Management	\$60,215,000
10	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$57,720,000
11	Senske Services	\$53,300,000
12	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$50,532,307
13	Harvest Landscape Enterprises	\$45,659,504
14	Designscapes Colorado	\$45,000,000
15	Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping & Garden Centers	\$42,312,770
16	Outworx Group	\$42,000,000
17	Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors	\$39,400,000
18	Merchants Landscape Services	\$38,000,000
19	Pierre Landscape	\$37,000,000
20	Lifescapes Colorado	\$35,490,688
21	Andre Landscape Service	\$34,000,000
22	Valor Landscape	\$32,310,389
23	Integrity Landscape	\$26,200,000
24	SunWorks	\$25,984,000
25	Art By Nature	\$25,598,797

SOUTHWEST

1	Gothic Landscape	\$166,320,000
2	Clean Scapes	\$136,911,726
3	Garden Design	\$90,000,000
4	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$86,138,336
5	Choate USA	\$84,492,659
6	Ethoscapes	\$80,000,000
7	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	\$66,011,431
8	LMC Landscape Partners	\$61,261,213
9	SiteWorks	\$57,878,465
10	Santa Rita Landscaping	\$57,800,000
11	AAA Landscape	\$52,100,000
12	Superscapes	\$49,590,000
13	Perfect Cuts of Austin	\$49,386,249
14	EarthTones Design	\$46,004,920
15	SOI Group	\$45,700,000
16	Caretaker Landscape & Tree Management	\$44,878,554
17	Southern Botanical	\$44,440,000
18	SunWorks	\$38,976,000
19	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$38,480,000
20	Urban Dirt	\$37,200,000
21	Earthworks	\$37,005,000
22	Stay Green	\$36,483,000
23	American Landscape Systems	\$35,460,817
24	Service Direct Landscape	\$34,500,000
25	DLC Resources	\$33,500,000



MIDWEST

1	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$184,384,817
2	Mariani Premier Group	\$125,550,000
3	Outworx Group	\$98,000,000
4	Schill Grounds Management	\$81,100,000
5	Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	\$72,907,560
6	SavATree	\$72,540,000
7	DJs Landscape Management	\$71,680,000
8	Environmental Management Inc.	\$67,000,000
9	Ryan Lawn & Tree	\$65,504,832
10	Sebert Landscape	\$61,350,000
11	Beary Landscaping	\$61,000,000
12	Christy Webber Landscapes	\$43,000,000
13	Visterra Landscape Group	\$42,249,900
14	Scott Byron & Co.	\$41,921,000
15	ExperiGreen Lawn Care	\$38,877,627
16	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$38,480,000
17	Chalet	\$34,900,000
18	Naturescape	\$33,113,974
19	Focal Pointe	\$32,278,700
20	David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	\$31,122,140
21	Great Oaks Landscape Associates	\$30,600,000
22	Next To Nature Landscape	\$25,444,223
23	Hittle Landscaping	\$24,501,000
24	Clarence Davids & Co.	\$23,318,500
25	Sperber Landscape Cos.	\$22,981,200

SOUTHEAST

1	Juniper	\$271,700,000
2	United Land Services	\$242,400,000
3	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$185,943,099
4	Ruppert Landscape	\$185,192,000
5	Yardnique	\$126,919,000
6	Rotolo Consultants	\$116,850,000
7	Landscape Workshop	\$106,000,000
8	The Greenery	\$102,000,000
9	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$91,390,000
10	Sunrise Landscape	\$90,400,000
11	Turf Masters Brands	\$86,900,000
12	Massey Services	\$86,892,218
13	Mariani Premier Group	\$83,700,000
14	Dixie Landscape	\$79,500,000
15	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	\$75,900,000
16	Bland Landscaping Co.	\$66,000,000
17	Mainscape	\$53,875,810
18	SavATree	\$48,360,000
19	Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management	\$42,476,809
20	Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	\$40,800,000
21	Heaven & Earth Landscaping	\$38,501,926
22	Sperber Landscape Cos.	\$38,302,000
23	KeyServ Co.	\$37,200,000
24	Cherrylake	\$33,502,506
25	Outworx Group	\$28,000,000

NORTHEAST

1	Bartlett Tree Experts	\$221,260,000
2	Mariani Premier Group	\$158,100,000
3	SavATree	\$149,110,000
4	Ruppert Landscape	\$128,973,000
5	Outworx Group	\$84,000,000
6	Divisions Maintenance Group	\$81,801,094
7	Chenmark	\$63,100,856
8	Lucas Tree Experts	\$56,000,000
9	Complete Landscaping Service	\$55,200,000
10	Xquisite Landscaping	\$48,886,744
11	Kline Bros. Landscaping	\$48,000,000
12	McHale Landscape Design	\$47,300,000
13	Denison Landscaping	\$46,550,000
14	Schumacher Cos.	\$45,500,000
15	Green Lawn Fertilizing	\$30,903,575
16	The Joyce Cos.	\$30,049,377
17	Winterberry	\$29,850,000
18	Mountain View Landscapes	\$28,000,000
19	Realty Landscaping	\$27,619,017
20	Level Green Landscape	\$23,269,890
21	Greener Group	\$20,900,000
22	ABM	\$19,200,000
23	Sperber Landscape Cos.	\$19,151,000
24	Visterra Landscape Group	\$17,717,700
25	Senske Services	\$14,350,000

WHO DID WE MISS?

Should your company be on the LM150 list of the largest landscape companies? Or, do you know of a firm that should be ranked but isn't? Contact Special Projects Editor Marisa Palmieri at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net to be notified next year when the submission period opens. We encourage companies that think they might make the list to contact us for information.



READY FOR LIFTOFF

More than 40 companies on the 2024 *LM150* list experienced more than 20 percent growth from last year. Executives from those companies share how they work to recruit and retain their employees to help fuel that growth.

Turf Masters Brands

"We have internal recruiters and support recruiting through our people and culture department. We focus on putting people first, paying fair wages, providing opportunities for advancement and living our core values."

John Clift, CEO

Yardnique

"Retaining employees is about focusing on their wants and needs. We use an AMP survey to check in with our team biannually and compare to previous results."

Brian Dumont, CEO

Growth Rank	LM150 Rank	Company	% Rev Change from 2022
1	106	Valor Landscape	237%
2	40	Ethoscapes	203%
3	29	Sensce Services	101%
4	39	Fairwood Brands	96%
5	90	KeyServ Co.	87%
6	34	Sunrise Landscape	80%
7	129	Texas Land Care	75%
	102	Cherrylake	75%
9	133	Urban Habitat	69%
10	15	Juniper	68%
11	7	Mariani Premier Group	62%
12	117	Mountain View Landscapes	60%
13	18	United Land Services	58%
14	87	Focal Pointe	55%
15	48	Creative Environments	44%
16	27	Landscape Workshop	41%
17	110	Landry's Landscape	40%
18	71	Xquisite Landscaping	39%
	96	American Landscape Systems	39%
20	45	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	37%
21	26	Turf Masters Brands	35%
	66	Superscapes	35%
23	135	GreenScapes Landscape Co.	34%
24	99	Service Direct Landscape	32%
25	58	Teufel Landscape	31%
26	85	Conserva Irrigation	28%
27	90	Urban Dirt	27%
	113	Utz Environmental Services	27%
29	76	SOI Group	26%
30	23	Yardnique	25%
	145	Oasis Landscape Services	25%
32	5	HeartLand	23%
	9	Gothic Landscape	23%
	43	Russell Landscape Group	23%
35	35	Garden Design	22%
	116	Realty Landscaping	22%
	120	APHIX	22%
	131	North American Lawn & Landscape	22%
	88	Heaven & Earth Landscaping	22%
40	12	Ruppert Landscape	21%
41	86	Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors	20%
	112	ProQual Landscaping	20%
	124	Genesis Landscape Solutions	20%
	130	Landscape Maintenance Professionals	20%

Ethoscapes

"You can buy and sell businesses or grow businesses. One thing that I've never forgotten and what my partners and the team never forget is that it's all about the people. It's all about the people and the culture that they have built within these respective companies. I do not underestimate that ... and I totally respect it. I think if companies come from outside to invest in a business and don't understand the kind of people they're working with, I think they've already failed."

Manny González, CEO

Read more about Ethoscapes on page 24.

Focal Pointe

"The No. 1 compliment I get year after year from our customers is that we have such great people. We're working to figure out a way to identify folks that are a natural fit for how we do business."

John Munie, founder and CEO

For more on Focal Pointe, turn to page 30.

Genesis Landscape Solutions

"We recruit and retain primarily from referrals. Our goal is to become known as a destination company where people want to work, and where they know they will be taken care of and given opportunity for advancement. We try to show that in small ways — by celebrating wins or offering bonuses and incentives. And in big ways — by promoting from within or investing in training and career development."

Joe Calland, CEO



LM150 Company Index

Company name	LM150 rank		
AAA Landscape	67	Greenscape Land Design	53
ABM	57	GreenScapes Landscape Co.	135
American Landscape	51	GreenView Partners	141
American Landscape Systems	96	Harvest Landscape Enterprises	77
Andre Landscape Service	101	HeartLand	5
APHIX	120	Heaven & Earth Landscaping	88
Art By Nature	126	Hidden Creek Landscaping	142
Bartlett Tree Experts	6	HighGrove Partners	136
Beary Landscaping	61	Hittle Landscaping	132
Bland Landscaping Co.	56	Impact Landscaping & Irrigation	45
BrightView Holdings	1	Integrity Landscape	125
Caretaker Landscape & Tree Management	74	James Martin Associates	146
Chalet	98	Juniper	15
Chapel Valley Landscape Co.	68	KeyServ Co.	90
Chenmark	59	Kline Bros. Landscaping	72
Cherrylake	102	LandCare	14
Choate USA	38	LandGraphics	100
Christy Webber Landscapes	81	Landry's Landscape	110
Clarence Davids & Co.	134	Landscape Development Inc.	21
Clean Scapes	22	Landscape Maintenance Professionals	130
Complete Landscaping Service	65	Landscape Workshop	27
Complete Landsculpture	115	Lawn Doctor	20
Conserva Irrigation	85	Level Green Landscape	122
Creative Environments Design & Landscape	48	Lifescape Colorado	95
David J. Frank Landscape Contracting	107	LMC Landscape Partners	37
Denison Landscaping	54	LMI Landscapes	105
Dennis' 7 Dees Landscaping & Garden Centers	83	Lucas Tree Expert Co.	40
Designscapes Colorado	79	Mainscape	36
Divisions Maintenance Group	17	Maldonado Nursery & Landscaping	55
Dixie Landscape	43	Mariani Premier Group	7
DJ's Landscape Management	47	Massey Services	31
DLC Resources	103	McHale Landscape Design	73
Earthco Commercial Landscape	147	Meadows Farms	40
EarthTones Design	75	Merchants Landscape Services	89
Earthworks	92	Michael Hatcher & Associates	121
Elite Team Offies	46	Mountain View Landscapes	117
Environmental Management Inc.	52	Mullin	144
Ethoscapes	40	Nature Care / Bay Pro	150
ExperiGreen Lawn Care	69	Naturescape	97
Fairwood Brands	39	Next To Nature Landscape	127
Focal Pointe	87	North American Lawn & Landscape	131
Frank & Grossman Landscape Contractors	86	Oasis Landscape Services	145
Franz Witte Landscape Contracting	138	Outworx Group	16
Garden Design	35	Pacific Landscape Management	62
Genesis Landscape Solutions	124	Park West	19
Gothic Landscape	9	Perfect Cuts of Austin	70
Great Oaks Landscape Associates	109	Pierre Landscape	93
Green Lawn Fertilizing	108	Pro Cutters Lawns	148
Greener Group	139	ProQual Landscaping	112
Greenscape	123	Realty Landscaping	116
		Richmond & Associates Landscaping	140
		Rotolo Consultants	25
		Ruppert Landscape	12
		Russell Landscape Group	44
		Ryan Lawn & Tree	49
		Saluda Hill Landscapes	119
		Santa Rita Landscaping	64
		SavATree	8
		Schill Grounds Management	28
		Schumacher Cos.	78
		Scott Byron & Co.	84
		Sebert Landscape	60
		Sense Services	29
		Service Direct Landscape	99
		Shinto Landscaping	149
		SiteWorks	63
		Siteworks Landscape	118
		SOI Group	76
		Southern Botanical	80
		Sperber Landscape Cos.	10
		Sposato Landscape Co.	143
		Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.	32
		Stay Green	94
		Sunrise Landscape	34
		SunWorks	33
		Superscapes	66
		Teufel Landscape	58
		Texas Land Care	129
		The Budd Group	104
		The Davey Tree Expert Co.	2
		The Greenery	30
		The Grounds Guys	24
		The Joyce Cos.	111
		Timberline Landscaping	128
		TruGreen	3
		Turf Masters Brands	26
		U.S. Lawns	13
		United Land Services	18
		Unlimited Landscaping & Turf Management	82
		Urban Dirt	90
		Urban Habitat	133
		Utz Environmental Services	113
		Valley Landscaping	137
		Valor Landscape	106
		Visterra Landscape Group	50
		Weed Man	11
		Winterberry	114
		Xquisite Landscaping	71
		Yardnique	23
		Yellowstone Landscape	4

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY

Here's what professional landscape contractors need to know about identifying and managing this pest **BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR**



The invasive spotted lanternfly remains a significant problem for North American ecosystems, including residential and commercial landscapes. Despite this destructive pest's numerous challenges, landscape contractors are crucial in slowing its spread and mitigating the economic impact on clients' properties.

The spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) has populated 18 states, with infestations concentrated in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, says Ken Johnson, extension educator in horticulture at the University of Illinois Extension, Jacksonville, Ill. However, researchers have confirmed its presence as far west as Chicago and the Nashville area, setting the stage for the lanternfly's expansion westward.

First detected in the U.S. in 2014, concern initially focused on the potential damage the lanternfly could inflict on trees. Researchers now view it as a significant plant stressor, including ornamental trees and shrubs, on residential and commercial properties.

"With healthy trees, we're not seeing the damage as bad as it was originally feared," Johnson says. "Its preferred host is tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), which isn't necessarily a bad thing because it's considered an invasive species in a lot of places. However, it has been known to feed on grape vines, black walnut seedlings, fruit trees, ornamentals and the tender new growth of vegetable crops."

Richard Fletcher, technical services manager, turf and ornamentals at Nufarm, anticipates its eventual distribution to mirror the lanternfly's food sources.

"We know about its relationship with tree of heaven as far as a late-season sugar source," he says. "It's got a few other favorite trees that it likes to eat off, and one is maples. So, we're anticipating it going wherever maples grow."

MITIGATION STRATEGY

Spotted lanternfly adults lay eggs in the fall on tree trunks, branches and other smooth surfaces — like the sides of landscape trailers. Johnson says the eggs are off-white, grayish in coloring, which blends well against the typical covered landscape equipment trailer. Therefore, contractors are encouraged to carefully inspect equipment and vehicles before moving them from one client's property to the next.

Eggs hatch in the spring or as soon as the weather begins to warm, and hungry nymphs — which can travel three to four miles in an evening — go through various phases before becoming adults in late summer. Fletcher says the nymphs are susceptible to multiple mitigation methods.

The first is a contact-type treatment with a pyrethroid base or a systemic-type material, such as a neonicotinoid, in late May and early June, Fletcher says. "These are very, very effective," he says.

"And the nice thing about the systemic materials is they move rapidly in the transpiration-driven water. So, when the tree pops out leaves and the sun shines, it pulls water from the roots out to the leaves, carrying the chemical to the edge of the canopy and where these guys are eating. Once (the lanternfly) hatches, you can nuke them with a contact and

then come back with a systemic to get that extended period of management," Fletcher adds.

While sticky bands applied around tree trunks in late June and July serve as an effective physical barrier to capture nymphs traversing between trees, Fletcher cautions they can quickly clog up. He advocates for a comprehensive program that disrupts the pest's lifecycle at multiple stages.

"This includes systemic (treatment) after egg hatch, a physical barrier mid-summer and then when these guys are adults in late August and early September, you can either use a systemic or a contact," he says. "This isn't a one-and-done approach. You have to do more than one thing to break the lifecycle."

There is some good news — researchers are observing new allies in the fight against the spotted lanternfly.

"Bird species have figured out they can eat them," Fletcher says. "And in the Northeast, the last two or three years have experienced cooler, wetter springs, which means natural populations of bacteria or fungi, in particular *Beauveria* native to forests, have been enough to give us some management of the eggs and even the very young juveniles." 🐦

Mike Zawacki is a Cleveland-based writer who has covered various aspects of the green industry for the last 20 years.

PHOTO: NUFARM

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BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LOCATION West Bend, Wisc.


COMPANY David J. Frank Landscape Contracting

DETAILS David J. Frank Landscape Contracting faced several challenges when they were awarded the contract to handle the landscape construction for the Museum of Wisconsin Art's (MOWA) campus.

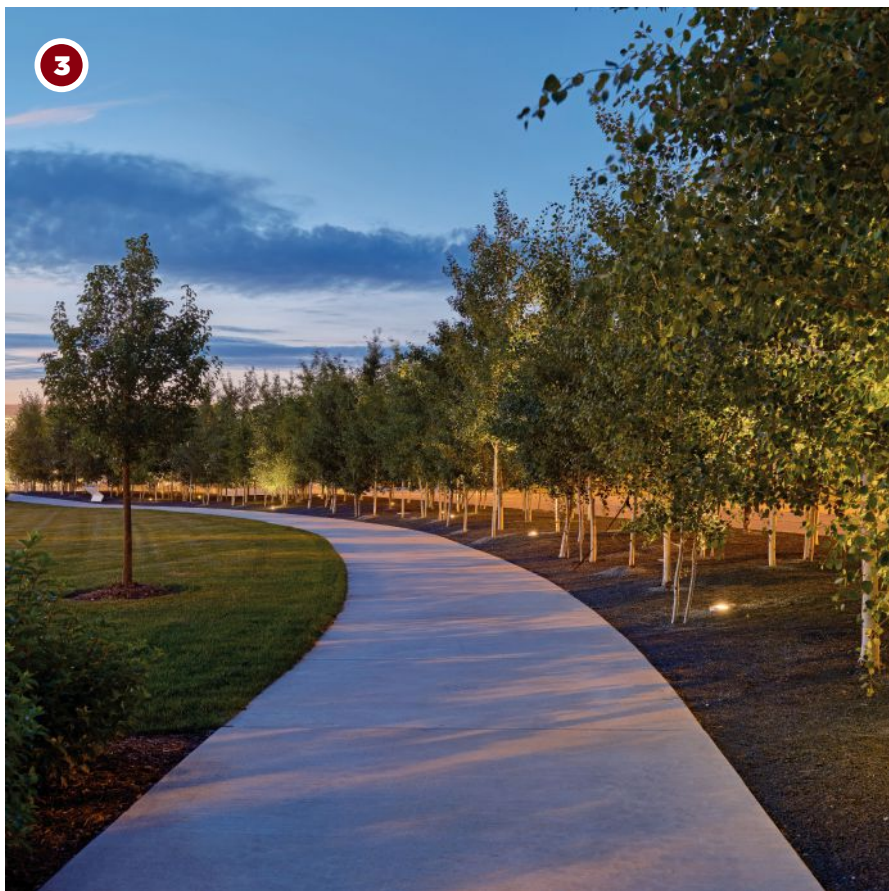
The site was large — often used to host outdoor events and concerts — but also unconventional in shape. The museum was also interested in a design that matched the modern architecture of the building. And designers had to obtain approval from the Environmental Protection Agency and other state agencies before upgrading because the area had previously been declared contaminated.

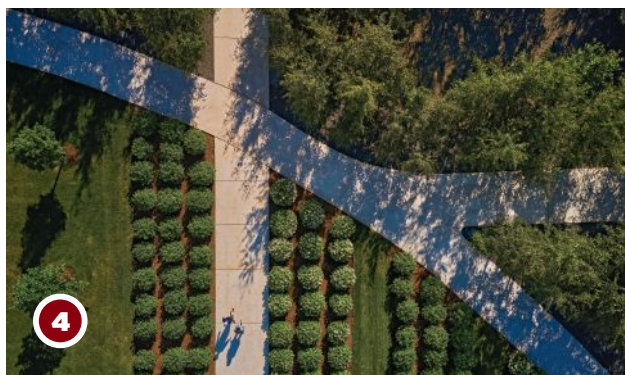
To overcome those challenges, the team, led by landscape architect Jeff Hershberger, utilized GPS technology to guide a plan that featured 778 quaking aspen trees — each 10-16 feet tall — and 759 hydrangeas, a number that has grown to over 1,200 under the company's management.

The trees were planted on 5-to-6-foot centers, and a colored staking system was implemented to match each specified tree to its exact location. And hydrangeas were selected because the plant's blooms could be matched with the biggest events of the year at the MOWA. The project transformed the formerly blighted site into the community's star attraction.

David J. Frank Landscape Contracting won a gold award in the National Association of Landscape Professionals Awards of Excellence program for their work on this project. 

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





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PHOTOS: DAVID J. FRANK LANDSCAPE CONTRACTING

Captions | 1. The landscaping work by David J. Frank Landscape Contracting turned the Museum of Wisconsin Art into hydrangea heaven, with nearly 800 planted during installation. Five different varieties were used to maximize color and time blooms to correspond to some of the museum's biggest events. **2.** The cutting-edge architecture of the Museum of Wisconsin Art played a big role in how David J. Frank Landscape Contracting approached the planning for the landscaping around the museum's campus. **3.** Aspen trees, lit from within, provide a contrast to the area's open lawn, used for concerts, outdoor events and art festivals. The trees, 778 in total, were precisely planted with the help of GPS technology for each tree could be matched to its exact location on the plan. **4.** An aerial view of the primary and secondary walkways at MOWA. The landscape design was created to complement the geometrically striking building and to fit within the unique size and shape of the campus.

HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

A growing garden

BY ROB DIFRANCO | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOCATION Marysville, Ohio**COMPANY** Hidden Creek Landscaping


DETAILS On the Scotts Miracle-Gro corporate headquarters campus, Hidden Creek Landscaping — No. 142 on the 2024 LM150 list — built this community garden for employees.

Hidden Creek installed custom-built raised garden beds with seating options under a nearby pergola. The large building at the center of this design comes from Weaver Barns. The space also features a raised platform used for team meetings and presentations.

To aid with drainage, Hidden Creek installed decompressed granite pathways between the raised planters.

In addition to the main structure, Hidden Creek installed two large pergolas to serve as an entryway to the space. The entryway pergolas house the raised platform, bench swings and stone planters that are updated seasonally with new plantings.

Hidden Creek provides maintenance for the entire corporate campus.

The contractor won a silver award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program for its work on this project. 

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



PHOTOS: HIDDEN CREEK LANDSCAPING



Captions | **1.** Hidden Creek Landscaping installed 60 raised garden beds to flank the central meeting space. The beds serve as growing spaces for vegetables and herbs for employees at the Scotts Miracle-Gro corporate campus. **2.** A permeable granite surface helps assuage potential drainage issues for the raised-bed planters. **3.** An aerial view shows the grid pattern that the contractor followed while installing the raised beds. **4.** Under the main pergola, Hidden Creek installed four fixed tables for employees to use during their off hours. The space also includes a tub sink and seasonal plantings. **5.** The contractor built raised beds to be ADA compliant.



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*Sessions were originally presented by *Landscape Management* during Equip Expo in October 2023

IRRIGATION TECH

How familiar are you with irrigation controllers?

Consider these critical areas that can enhance your use of pivotal irrigation components

BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR

As the brains of an irrigation system, the controller plays a crucial role in managing water resources by signaling to valves when and how much water to release. But beyond this primary function, there are more aspects of modern controllers that contractors may be overlooking.

Here are four irrigation controller considerations that can enhance your effectiveness as a water manager.

PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY

With more frequent drought conditions and more significant government restrictions on available water resources, landscape and irrigation contractors are tasked with being better water stewards for their residential and commercial clients. Tapping into a controller's ability to tailor a property's irrigation functions is now critical, says Ben Sacks, category manager for residential and commercial irrigation electronics at Hunter Industries.

"In some of our busiest markets, like Texas and Florida, they'll be restricted to one or two days of watering availability in a week in the middle of the summer," Sacks says. "So, (contractors) are trying to optimize how much irrigation they can (complete) in those short water windows."

As a result, the irrigation system must run more tasks at one time, requiring the controller to initiate some creative scheduling and programming, often in conjunction with real-time weather data.

"We like to be able to adjust the watering frequency or duration based on local conditions," Sacks says. "So, you can apply more water when it's hot or reduce run times when it's cooler. Having the controller (acting) more proactive in the decisions that are made is definitely beneficial to improving watering efficiency."

INTEGRATED FLOW SENSORS

Doug Closter, product manager of commercial controllers at Rain Bird, says contractors can optimize an irrigation system, especially larger setups, by adding flow sensors that allow the controller to better utilize run times and manage multiple zones simultaneously.

Continued on page 49

Irrigation controllers can offer more functionality than just managing water resources.



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Continued from page 47

"You can optimize your system based on the amount of flow each zone uses," Closter says. "It'll measure each zone and then run the ones that fit within the system's available flow."

An added benefit is that the sensor will tell the controller to shut down in the event of a catastrophic leak or system failure based on high or unexpected flow rates.

"It's an essential safeguard against accidental water waste," Closter says.

ADAPTABILITY

With greater functional demand comes greater complexity. As a result, irrigation manufacturers are engineering modern controllers to be highly adaptable and adopt technological upgrades that will improve their functionality.

"The modernization of irrigation controllers has had a forward and

backward compatibility focus in order to maintain it for 10 to 15 years without having to replace the entire device," Sacks says. "Many manufacturers, including Hunter, offer modular controllers that can be serviced piece by piece and have plug-and-play options to expand the system's capabilities or retrofit and update (controller) systems."


To further increase adaptability and options for contractors, Sacks says modern controllers can receive hardware, software and firmware updates via internet cloud connectivity to offer continual improvements without needing to replace the controller hardware.

"You don't have to be on-site all the time. You can integrate weather data and manage multiple sites very easily and quickly. When we're talking ways controllers can better optimize systems, connectivity is definitely the future," he adds.

CYCLE AND SOAK

Another underutilized asset to maximize an irrigation system's efficiency is the controller's cycle-and-soak feature, Closter says.

Depending on the soil type in a particular area, the ground can only absorb so much water before it begins to pool and run off onto the surrounding pavement. The cycle-and-soak feature rectifies this by turning the irrigation system on and off to allow for water to absorb into the soil thoroughly before starting up again and completing the cycle.

"Let's say you want to have a 20-minute runtime, but at around minute 12, you begin to see runoff," Closter explains. "You can still get that 20-minute runtime, but you're going to cycle this into two runtime sessions." 

Mike Zawacki is a Cleveland-based writer who has covered various aspects of the green industry for the last 20 years.



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BY JASON NEW

The author is a founding principal and executive coach for McFarlin Stanford.

You asked, now we answer

Q I feel like I'm seeing the word "valuation" used a lot in conversations with other landscape business owners. I'm honestly unclear exactly what a valuation is, and if I even need one if I'm not planning to sell. Can you help explain?

— Reader-Submitted Question

A I love this question. With all the news about consolidation in our industry, the term "valuation" has become commonplace. Unfortunately, many business owners don't understand what it means or if it applies to them. We've had many conversations in our ACE Peer Group meetings that have centered on this very question: Do I need a valuation if I don't plan to sell?

The truth is there's more to a valuation than just figuring out a price tag for potential buyers.

Think of it like getting a health checkup for your company. You wouldn't skip your annual physical just

because you're feeling fine, right? Similarly, even if you're not actively looking to sell, understanding the value of your business can provide crucial insights into its overall health and performance. This information is important for identifying potential pitfalls you can address to add value and to understand how you stand compared to the competition.

So, what do you need to know about valuations? Ask yourself these questions.

1. Will you consider selling (now or in the future)?

We'll start with the elephant in the room. The obvious reason you might consider getting a valuation is, of course, you are open to the possibility of selling your business. Before you approach negotiations, you need a clear picture of what you bring to the table. A detailed valuation gives you an accurate financial foundation for the conversation and places you in a position of strength.

2. Do you know where you stand? As a leader, you

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want to create the vision, and you can't do that if you don't know where you stand today. As your business grows, it's important to realize what you've accomplished and how the business has shifted. A valuation is essentially a scorecard of how you've played the game of business so far.

This scorecard helps you understand your company's financial standing and uncover potential areas for improvement. By analyzing various aspects of your company, such as growth potential and operational efficiency, you can identify areas where you can enhance and even create value.

It's like shining a spotlight on both the strengths and weaknesses of your business, allowing you to make more informed decisions about investment, expansion plans and day-to-day operations.

3. How can this benefit my team? We all know retention is a huge issue for the industry. But what does that have to do with a valuation? One of the best ways to keep and attract good team members is to give them a piece of the pie. Whether it's a profit-sharing or an equity-sharing plan, you need a clear financial picture to be able to build a healthy incentive plan.

So, if you're considering adding an equity-sharing plan for key employees or family members, you have to know the size of the pie you're sharing.

4. Where do I start? Now, you might be thinking, "But isn't getting a valuation expensive and time-consuming?" Thanks to advancements in technology and the availability of online valuation tools, obtaining an assessment of your business's worth has never been easier or more affordable.

At McFarlin Stanford, we've worked on hundreds of valuations for landscape businesses, so we have seen first-hand how truly enlightening and powerful this information can be. A valuation can provide peace of mind, especially during uncertain times, and the knowledge to make you confident that you're building a valuable legacy that will stand the test of time. Knowing the true worth of your business can offer reassurance and stability whether you're navigating economic downturns, industry shifts or other challenges.

It's not just about putting a price tag on your company; it's about gaining valuable insights, optimizing performance and being prepared for whatever the future holds.

Have any more questions? Feel free to submit your questions anytime. I'm here to help! 📧

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BY PHIL HARWOOD

The author is a senior advisor with Tamarisk Business Advisors. Reach him at phil.harwood@tamariskadvisors.com

'Tis the season to update snow contract templates



If you're in the snow business, you know that it has become a year-round endeavor, with important tasks to be done each month of the year. One of those important tasks for spring is to revise your snow contract templates. This may include contract templates for your sales, service partners, seasonal employment, etc.

Closely related to this task is updating your snow estimating model so that pricing is current for seasonal contracts (limited

and unlimited), retainers, per push, per visit, per event and hourly formats.

PRICING

Before the estimating season begins, estimating models require annual updating. Armed with another winter's data, 10-year averages, ceilings and floors need to be brought current. Production rates may be fine-tuned with additional data from last winter's events. And selling prices for labor, materials,

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“Before the estimating season begins, estimating models require annual updating.”



equipment and service partners all need adjusting to account for rising costs.

Many contractors have not yet fully brought their prices up to where they need to be. Lagging price adjustments erode profit margins, starve companies for cash and reduce the ability to reinvest. Costs for everything have risen dramatically in the last couple of years. Isn't it time to bring your prices in line to achieve your profit objectives?

CONTRACTS

Aside from pricing changes, spring is a great time to update the quality of your contracts. The snow business is inherently full of risk, but contractors take on even more risk by using contracts that are vague, ambiguous or unreadable.

It is still common today to see contracts written by ancient lawyers filled with legalese. It's easier to copy and paste contract language than to draft new contract language. However, isn't it time we put to bed the archaic legalese and replace it with plain language that everyone can understand? Drafting contracts in plain language is the new standard. It's time we get on board by updating our contracts.

While you're having your contracts updated into plain language, you will also want to consider the overall organization of provisions (clauses). These provisions fall into one of several categories: representations, warranties, covenants, conditions and actions. I often see contracts lacking in organization, making the contract difficult to understand. The use of clear headings promotes clarity and understanding.

Finally, snow contracts should be reviewed for missing provisions. There are more than 40 provisions that every snow contract should have. If you'd like a list of these, feel free to email me (phil.harwood@tamariskadvisors.com) for a complimentary copy.

In addition, if you're interested in learning more about snow contracts and sales, please visit SnowfightersInstitute.com to see our educational event lineup for 2024.

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FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Sarah Arms

OWNER / GENERAL MANAGER

U.S. LAWNS OF KNOXVILLE

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KNOXVILLE, TENN.

1 Tell me about the businesses and how you got into the industry.

Jacob, my husband, and I are owners of U.S. Lawns of Knoxville and U.S. Lawns of Pigeon Forge. We bought two existing businesses just over two years ago. We handle commercial landscape maintenance. We also do a little bit of construction, install, a little bit of irrigation and a little bit of snow removal. We were excited to get into the industry, having known a little bit about it, but we've crafted our existing businesses into the U.S. Lawns model and also who we are as people.

2 Your dad, Ken Hutcheson, president of U.S. Lawns, connected us. How has joining the franchise system been beneficial to you and Jacob?

I wouldn't trade the world for being a U.S. Lawns franchisee. It's the amount of support that we have from the home office and corporate. I don't think we could have transitioned into this without guidance and support. Obviously, the work isn't done for you by any means. You have to live it, to learn your way. The first year, Jacob lived it more on his own and I was in the backseat managing books while I was still coaching. I hopped in full time in January 2023. That's when we both went full steam and turned it into what we needed it to be.

3 You said a word that caught my ear — coaching. You coached collegiate rowing before this. Can you apply anything from coaching to what you're doing now?

Yes, 100 percent. I started my career in coaching. I was an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator (at the University of Tennessee) for 12 years. The key things that I think have helped is I know how to manage a good amount of people. In rowing, you're managing 60 to 80 athletes every morning between injuries, success, whatever it might be, along with recruiting worldwide. You also figure people out pretty quickly and you can figure out

a team dynamic. That's one thing I could sense right away when I stepped in. You have to be willing to manage a lot of things being thrown at you all at once. Rowing is very similar. This is a team too. You're out in the grind every day with each other.

4 Do you have a most memorable day at work?

This might feel a little harsh, but within my first week of starting, I drove a whole crew back to the shop and fired them for smoking weed in the truck. That was the turning point of creating the culture that I wanted. These were guys with experience in the industry, and I had to let them all go. We were virtually down to no employees. We built it from the ground up at that point. I hired the right people and we trained every person here to do the right thing at the right time.

5 Do you and Jacob have a family, and what do you all do for fun?

We have three boys. We have a 9-year-old and 4-year-old twins. Our 9-year-old plays baseball. Our twins are getting ready for kindergarten next year. Jacob really enjoys fishing, and the boys keep us pretty busy. I must say I'm pretty engrossed in this right now; we're training for a relay marathon just to have something to do, something to work for. You can't ever put away the competitive nature. It comes even with the business. 🏊‍♀️

BEST ADVICE

"We don't always have to like each other, but we have to respect each other. That is one thing that I tell my guys at least once a week."



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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.



Why learning to succeed is a two-way street

When I was 21 years old, my company was closing in on \$400k in revenue. While there was no social media back then, people still talked. At one point, another landscaper in town spread the rumor that I came from money and that my dad was backing my business. His point was that if he had that kind of backing, he could be where I was, too.

It's kind of beside the point for me to defend myself here, but in case you're wondering, my parents were never in a position to back my business financially. I certainly did have some advantages, but that wasn't one of them.

So, back to my point: I think we can all learn more and get further when we celebrate the success of others instead of criticizing, tearing down or assuming they may have a leg up that we don't have. Let's see what they're doing and if we can learn something from their approach.

Through my work at The Grow Group, I've met many young, impressive entrepreneurs who have outpaced my own metrics. I also work alongside many talented young people at Grunder Landscaping Co (GLC).

Here's what I see them doing that's making them successful:

THEY DON'T SHY AWAY FROM HARD WORK

This proves true generation after generation. Sometimes, there isn't a shortcut available; the only way forward is to just muscle through it.

“I think we can all learn more and get further when we celebrate the success of others instead of criticizing, tearing down or assuming they may have a leg up that we don't have.”

It's not easy, and success is usually not linear. From the outside, it may look like, “Oh, things always just work out for them,” but the truth is usually that they make things work out.

THEY TRY NEW THINGS

Whenever I spend time around young people, I'm inspired by their openness to new ideas and willingness to learn. As we get older, we get more stuck in our ways, which can be a trap. Seeing new ideas and trying new things is something we all should be constantly doing, even if some of the ideas don't work.

THEY HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

On my own team, the most successful team members are the ones who have the right attitude. Brent, who will be our top salesperson this year at GLC, started out in production. We moved him from production leadership into a sales role several years ago. From watching the way he works, I can tell you the secrets to his success:

1 He loves what he does. He is so passionate about plants and making properties look their best, it's contagious and it leads to sales.

2 He does what's needed. He comes in early so that he can leave early to make it to his kids' sports games and takes great care of our clients. He writes more thank you notes than anyone else on our team (except me) and it shows in his sales numbers.

He beat my record for company sales, and I learned a lot from working alongside him.

If you're young and trying to make your business work: so many of us have been exactly where you are. You have so much potential, and I see the hard work happening to get your business going. If you'd like to share your progress, I'd love it if you emailed us at grow@growgroupinc.com or sent us a DM on Instagram ([@growgroup_](https://www.instagram.com/growgroup_))!

And if you're, shall we say, “experienced,” like me, let's do our part to pass on the wisdom that the generation before us shared. Let's look for ways to learn from the young people around us, and let's be the type of mentors we would've wanted.

P.S. We have trips set up to tour my facility at Grunder Landscaping Co. this fall. See how we've set up our yard and shop and learn from my team and me! [growgroupinc.com/glc-fall-field-trips](https://www.growgroupinc.com/glc-fall-field-trips)

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