



LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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2025 *LM* GROWTH SUMMIT RECAP

CLIMBING THE SUMMIT

Invited lawn care companies and event partners reached new heights at the 13th edition of the *LM* Growth Summit



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NEW AND IMPROVED

[NEW TOOLS]

What are you using?

Do you use a new, top-of-the-line mower? What about other turf care machines? We're investigating

the newest innovations in mowers and turf equipment, and we want to hear about what has impacted your operations the most. If there are big improvements to your machines that are helping you get the job done faster and more efficiently, let us know! Email associate editor Nathan Mader (nmader@northcoastmedia.net) for a chance to be featured in an upcoming edition of LM!

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The thrill of victory ...

As most of you read this column, the Winter Olympics will be taking place in the Italian cities of Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo. I know this because NBC showed me approximately 472 commercials about the Winter Olympics during my viewing of this year's NFL playoffs.

Now, don't confuse my not-so-subtle dig at the TV network with a lack of interest in the Winter Games. I've always been intrigued by the sports that are a part of the Winter Olympics, even though the majority of those were largely afterthoughts as I was growing up in Kansas City.

Sure, we knew about hockey — we had an NHL team, the Kansas City Scouts, for all of two seasons back in the '70s before they left town. And most of us knew someone who ice-skated or went on ski trips to Colorado with their families. But if you asked anyone in my group of friends to name their favorite winter sport, almost all of us would have answered "basketball."

So, where does my interest in the Winter Olympics come from? I'm sure my memories of watching the "Miracle on Ice" game between the U.S. and the Soviet Union have something to do with it. But more than that, I've always found myself interested in sports, music and cultures that are just a little foreign to what we're used to in America's heartland. And many of the events in the Winter Olympics fit that description perfectly.

I've always loved watching events like the luge and short-track speed skating and that one sport where they

“The 34 attendees representing 25 companies wanted to reach the highest level they possibly could, and they determined the LM Growth Summit was a great way to do that.”

cross-country ski and shoot rifles at the same time. I can't tell you I spend any energy at all following those sports outside of the Winter Olympics, but during those two weeks every four years, that is some must-see TV for yours truly.

I sometimes wonder how the athletes in these sports motivate themselves to do what they need to do to reach an Olympic level. I don't think many would argue that these are niche pursuits — even if you don't live in Kansas City — and the chances of landing on a box of Wheaties and cashing in on fame and fortune as a cross-country skier/marksman are slim at best.

Of course, I'm well aware that those who dedicate their lives to sports like these aren't probably in it for the glory or the money. They're obviously doing it to for the love of the game and/or for the love of their country. They're putting in endless amounts of hard work and dedication to achieve something that few others have achieved, regardless of the popularity of their endeavor.

I got to thinking about all that as we were putting together this month's

cover story on the LM Growth Summit (I bet you were wondering how I was going to bring things around to the landscaping industry, huh?). Because in the same way that these Olympic athletes dedicate themselves to improving themselves and achieving everything they can in their sport of choice, it was clear that a similar dedication was present among Summit attendees.

There was an obvious passion for improvement and achievement that you could see during the panel discussions that started each day, the personal meetings with the Summit's 13 industry partners, the networking opportunities throughout the event and even during the event's golf outing (although "achievement" might be too strong of a word to describe what most of us did out there). The 34 attendees representing 25 companies wanted to reach the highest level they possibly could, and they determined the LM Growth Summit was a great way to do that.

They might not have left Orlando with a gold medal, but those who came to the LM Growth Summit definitely walked away with a deeper network of industry colleagues, an improved understanding of the products and services available to them from the event's fantastic industry partners and, hopefully, a new favorite industry magazine. Our reporting on the LM Growth Summit begins on page 14. 

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD



MORE ONLINE

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

What's one preseason task or habit that you have seen consistently pay off for a landscaping business?

"Proactive equipment maintenance and service. This helps prevent costly breakdowns and delays during our busy season. We also pay attention to streamlining client communication and scheduling to lock in recurring revenue."



Landscape Professionals

Bryan Christiansen
Mariani Premier Group
Lake Bluff, Ill.

Troy Clogg
Troy Clogg Landscape Associates
Wixom, Mich.

Pam Dooley
Plants Creative Landscapes
Decatur, Ga.

Paul Fraynd
Sun Valley Landscaping
Omaha, Neb.

Mike Giese
Perfecturf Lawncare
Mt. Pleasant, Wisc.

Chris Joyce
Joyce Landscaping
Cape Cod, Mass.

Jerry McKay
McKay Landscape Lighting
Omaha, Neb.

Max Moreno
Nexus Management Solutions
Menifee, Calif.

Bryan Stolz
Winterberry Landscape
& Garden Center
Southington, Conn.

Justin White
K&D Landscaping
Watsonville, Calif.

Industry Consultants

Tito Caceres
Bloom Talent Solutions
Coral Gables, Fla.

Marty Grunder
The Grow Group
Dayton, Ohio

Phil Harwood
Tamarisk Business Advisors
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jeffrey Scott
Jeffrey Scott Consulting
New Orleans, La.



"Education and rest. We encourage our team to 'sharpen the saw' over the winter by learning, developing new skills and preparing for the season ahead. We also emphasize taking time away to recharge, so they return focused and energized for spring."

"Our off-season habit is to change. Our goal is focused less on the project itself than on building a team that is comfortable with change. That way, when a great idea comes along, we can take advantage of it. And most importantly, it is practice for those tough times when change is a necessity, not a choice."



"The Super Bowl is won with the basics, so retrain your team on your core systems and software, re-onboard each employee on how they can win the day. To support your team's incentives and gamification, play the penny game so they understand all the various costs that go into making a profit, including how profits are spent on taxes and reinvestment, etc."

"A great spring doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of thoughtful preparation done well ahead of time. Once the season begins ... it's too late to redesign the playbook. Now is the time to sell, produce and lead. Keep a list of what doesn't work as well as it should, and when the season winds down, let those lessons shape a stronger plan for next year."



"Get pay scale, cost-of-living and merit pay adjustments done before spring hits."



OUR MISSION: *Landscape Management* shares a comprehensive mix of content designed to stimulate growth and take our readers to their next level.

PROZISION

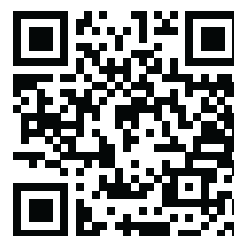
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Learn more at <https://powerequipment.honda.com/zero-turn-mowers>



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HONDA

LM GALLERY

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

1 The 19th Hole At the 13th annual LM Growth Summit, (from left) Bob Brower with Lawn Plus in West Alexandria, Ohio; Dani McFadden with PBI-Gordon and LM's Scott Hollister traded stories from their rounds of golf on the Palmer Course at Orlando's Reunion Resort.

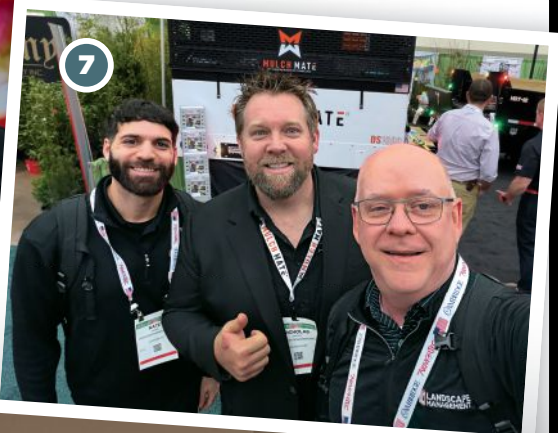
2 Golf GOATs OK, maybe not, but Hollister and his group — (from left) Justin Hatfield from Chesterfield Lawns & Landscapes, Dave Feist with Sipcam Agro and Joshua Stewart with Lawn Doctor of Baldwin and Mobile Counties — still had a heck of a time on the golf course at the LM Growth Summit.

3 Practice makes perfect LM's Editorial Director Seth Jones (left) snapped a selfie with John Perry, president of Greene County Fertilizer Co., on the driving range before the golf outing at the LM Growth Summit.

4 Terrific trio (From left) John Fowler with Amazing Grass in Bel Air, Md., and his wife, Carrie, caught up with Jones at a reception during the LM Growth Summit.

5 Expanding networks The LM Growth Summit benefited the event's partners as much as it did the lawn care operators in attendance. Pictured from left are Jeremy King, Kevin Lewis and Jason Hinkley — all with Ewing Outdoor Supply — joined Brad Hendrickson from Turfco for a quick photo during one of the evening receptions.





6 MANTS meet-up

At the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show in Baltimore, the *LM* team caught up with the crew for Atticus. From left are Hollister; Paul Fox, Mike Sorensen and Jane Stanley with Atticus; and *LM*'s Nader Hassen.

7 Mates at MANTS While at MANTS 2026 in Baltimore, Hollister and Hassen bumped into Friend of *LM* Nick Carlson (center), the founder and inventor of Mulch Mate.

8 Fantastic foursome (From left) *LM*'s Jones and Jim Cummins, national sales manager, made a trek to Sarasota, Fla., for a round of golf with the team from Numerator Technologies. The pair are pictured with

Numerator's Jim Turner and Carlyle Merring, the superintendent at Sara Bay Country Club.

9 Executive privilege Jones (right) spent some time in the Lone Star State for Jeffrey Scott's Executive Retreat in January. He's pictured here with Corine Koornhof with Jeffrey Scott Consulting and attendee Phil Schoggen, Schoggen-scapes, Clinton, Miss.

10 Masterminds Hollister (left) traveled to Northern California to spend some time with *LM* columnist and CEO

of K&D Landscaping Justin White as K&D played host to a facility tour that was a part of the Irrigation Mastermind Conference hosted by IrriTech Training.

11 Fore! The annual PGA Show in Orlando isn't the first place you'd think you'd find two landscaping luminaries, but Jones (left) ran into Paul Jamison at the event. The host of the Green Industry Podcast who also has a popular YouTube channel, Jamison is also a golf fanatic with a growing online presence in that space as well.

MANTS 2026 packs ‘em in

The annual nursery and grower event attracts big crowds and plenty of attention from landscape and lawn care pros **BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Tim Babikow has been a fixture in the nursery industry in the Mid-Atlantic region for more than 35 years.

He’s been the president of Babikow Wholesale Nursery in Baltimore since 1988, has served on the boards of numerous national and local industry associations and, last year, took a seat on the board of the annual Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS).

So, if there is anyone who can offer an authoritative opinion on that annual event and the value it can deliver to landscape and lawn care pros, it’s Babikow. And to those folks, he says if you haven’t been, you’re missing out.

“Landscape contractors, big or small, will get a ton out of MANTS,” Babikow said during the 2026 version of MANTS, Jan. 7-9 in Baltimore. “You can find tools. You can find equipment. You can find plant material, stone, basically everything that you would need to run a landscape company. There are even software companies here. There’s a lot to offer.”

Apparently, plenty of other folks agreed as MANTS 2026 attracted more than 10,800 industry pros to the Baltimore Convention Center. The trade show floor was sold out — there remains a waiting list of more than 100 companies heading into 2027, Babikow said — with 890 exhibitors showcasing new plant material, nursery stock, equipment, growing inputs, containers and operational solutions designed to help businesses run efficiently.

“MANTS is where the industry comes to do real business — compare, decide and commit,” said Vanessa A. Finney, MANTS executive vice president. “This year’s sold-out floor and expanded booth space tell a clear story. Companies are investing in face-to-face time with serious buyers, and attendees come prepared

to make decisions that enhance their operations.”

MANTS brings together owners, growers, buyers, suppliers and senior decision-makers from across the supply chain, with 84 percent of attendees authorizing or influencing their company’s purchasing decisions. The 2026 show also welcomed nearly 3,200 non-exhibiting buying companies.

“These were the busiest days we’ve ever had at a trade show,” said first-time exhibitor Claire Chambers, founder, Meadow Lab. “MANTS is enormous, in the best way, and filled with people who are genuinely passionate about plants, growing and new ways of doing things. The energy on the floor is incredible.”

MANTS will return to the Baltimore Convention Center January 13-15, 2027. For more information, visit mants.com. 



The 2026 Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show featured 890 exhibitors, and another 100 companies are on a waiting list for spots in the future.



More than 10,000 attendees packed the Baltimore Convention Center in early January for the 2026 Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show.

TruArc Partners acquires Schill Grounds Management

TruArc Partners, a private equity firm focused on middle-market investments in business services and specialty manufacturing, has acquired commercial landscaping provider Schill Grounds Management — No. 31 on the 2025 *LM150* list of the top revenue-generating companies in the industry — from closely held private investment firm Argonne Capital Group.

Founded in 1993 and based in Cleveland, Schill serves a diversified base of property managers, homeowners associations and commercial clients in the upper Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions, including Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, as well as Ontario, Canada.

TruArc Partners has prior experience in the commercial services space and will work with Schill's leadership team to accelerate Schill's organic growth, pursue add-on acquisitions and expand its customer footprint beyond the Midwest. Founder Jerry Schill will continue in his role as CEO of the company.

"TruArc's experience supporting essential services businesses, together with their collaborative approach, aligns well with our culture and objectives and make

them an ideal partner for Schill as we embark on this next phase of our evolution," said Schill. "I am thrilled to be partnering with them and look forward to taking advantage of the growth opportunities we see across our business."



Jerry Schill

In other recent mergers-and-acquisitions news:

- Visterra Landscape Group unveiled a strategic investment in Texas-based Liberty Lawn and Landscaping, a provider of commercial landscape maintenance services in the greater San Antonio–Austin corridor. The investment establishes Visterra's newest operational hub in Texas, enabling the company to efficiently serve all major markets across the state.
- Landscape Workshop has made three recent acquisitions. They acquired Luigi's Landscaping Co., a strategic addition that expands the company's South Florida footprint with a new facility in Broward County (Fort Lauderdale); Live Oak Landscape in Charlotte, N.C.; and Constant Care Grounds Maintenance in Kansas City, Mo.

- The Davey Tree Expert Co. recently added Natural Directions of Summerville, S.C., to its family of brands.
- LawnProPartners, majority-owned by HCI Equity Partners, acquired Massachusetts-based Sea of Green Lawn Care, which has served the north shore of Massachusetts and New Hampshire for more than 30 years.
- Massey Services, a provider of pest management services, acquired Cloud Pest Management of Oklahoma City.
- Memphis, Tenn.-based Hatcher Landscape Partners has acquired Green-View Partners, a landscape services firm headquartered in Raleigh, N.C. HLP is a newly formed commercial landscape platform investing in and operating brands in the lawn and landscape industry.
- Beary Landscape, in Lockport, Ill., has acquired Sun Valley Landscape and Snow, a provider of commercial landscape management and snow removal services throughout the Indianapolis metro market.
- Cut and Clean Landscape Services in Santa Barbara County, Calif., has acquired Miller Landscaping in nearby Lompoc, Calif. 

Rock Hill Capital leads minority investment in Weathermatic

Weathermatic has received a minority growth investment led by Rock Hill Capital, with co-investment from True West Capital Partners.

The investment will support Weathermatic's commitment to delivering value through advanced irrigation technology to landscape professionals, property owners and asset managers.

The investment comes at a time of significant change in the landscape and irrigation industry, as contractors face increasing labor scarcity, rising operational complexity and growing expectations from private equity-backed customers to scale efficiently and enhance margins. Weathermatic has long focused on helping customers do more with fewer resources. This partnership supports the company's mission to lead the industry through automation, remote management and technology-enabled productivity.

Weathermatic's growth previously had been

funded internally, reflecting a long-term approach to building the business. The company's leadership, values, operations and mission remain fully intact.

"We are entering a pivotal phase of growth, and this investment partnership strengthens Weathermatic's position to meet increasing demand for water-saving technology and irrigation operations software at scale," said Mike Mason, CEO. "Weathermatic has always been mission-driven, and this capital allows us to accelerate our product innovation roadmap to continue transforming water management and commercial irrigation operations."

Weathermatic's platform unifies connected irrigation controllers, cloud-based software and field services to increase labor efficiency for landscape professionals. Customers use Weathermatic's SmartLink controllers and software platform to decrease water waste, reduce operating costs and advance sustainability goals.

Promotions, company expansion at K&D

K&D Landscaping in Watsonville, Calif., has unveiled executive promotions and a geographic expansion into nearby San Luis Obispo County.

As the company celebrates its 40th year in the business, these changes align with K&D's philosophy of teamwork and putting the "right people in the right seats." The restructuring creates a foundation for scaling commercial construction, improving service quality and pioneering autonomous technology.

To support the demand for professional commercial landscape services in San Luis Obispo County, K&D is expanding its operations south. Leading this expansion on the ground is Juan Sotelo, the company's longest-tenured employee. With more than 35 years of experience at K&D, Sotelo serves as the maintenance supervisor.

IN OTHER LEADERSHIP PROMOTIONS:

● **Sean Laux** has been promoted from account manager to the new role of technology and innovation manager. Laux will lead the rollout of robotics, autonomous mowing fleets and data-driven operational systems.



Sean Laux

● **Katie Hsu** has been promoted to area manager in Monterey, Calif. Hsu will oversee operations in Monterey in her new role, supporting field teams and bettering the client experience.



Katie Hsu

● **Brian Gates** is transitioning from senior project manager to department leader of commercial construction. With commercial development demands on the rise, Gates will lead the division responsible for large-scale installations and infrastructure projects.



Brian Gates

"Reaching our 40th year is a proud milestone, but we are focused on the future," says Justin White, CEO of K&D Landscaping and a regular columnist for *LM*. "By expanding into San Luis Obispo with Juan's veteran leadership and elevating Sean, Katie and Brian, we are building a structure that can scale." 

PERSONNEL NEWS

CAT CEO TO RETIRE

Caterpillar's CEO, D. James Umpleby III, will retire as executive chairman and as a member of the Caterpillar board of directors effective April 1, 2026. At that time, CEO Joseph Creed will assume the role of chairman of the board of directors. Umpleby served the company for 45 years, including eight years as the CEO. Creed joined Caterpillar in 1997 and has held numerous positions of increasing responsibility across multiple divisions of the company, including chief operating officer and president of energy and transportation. He was appointed CEO and became a member of the board of directors on May 1, 2025.

TORRES TAKES REINS AT OTR

OTR Engineered Solutions (OTR) has appointed Oscar Torres as president and chief executive officer. Torres has more than 25 years of executive leadership experience in private equity-backed

organizations, with deep expertise in the aerospace aftermarket. He spent much of his career at Kellstrom Aerospace, a global distributor and technical services provider, where he advanced through senior leadership roles, including chief financial officer, chief operating officer and chief executive officer.

KALO'S CHAMPION TO RETIRE

Chuck Champion, who has served as president at Kalo Inc. for 30 years, will retire at the end of the first quarter of 2026, concluding a 38-year career with the company. The company, a supplier of specialty adjuvants and biological technologies for the agricultural, seed care and professional turf markets, revealed that Jonathan Barrett will take over the role of president following Champion's retirement. Barrett has held senior commercial and strategy leadership roles within the organization and has worked closely with Champion on long-term growth initiatives.



An award-winning performance

Giving back has been a core value at Allentuck Landscaping since its founding. Recently, those good works nabbed the company some well-deserved recognition

BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Editor's Note: "Time for Some Good News" is a feature that spotlights the good deeds, great people and positive stories in the landscape industry. If you have your own good news to share, reach out to Seth Jones at sjones@northcoastmedia.net or Scott Hollister at shollister@northcoastmedia.net.

Bruce Allentuck credits his parents for creating the spirit of philanthropy that has been a core tenet of his company, Allentuck Landscaping in Rockville, Md., since its founding in 1986.

"My parents set the example and did tons of community involvement," Allentuck explains. "And just growing up that way, (giving back to) our community has just always been really important, and we've always been very involved in it. It was just the way we were raised, so that set a good example for us."

Considering how dedicated the full-service residential landscaping company has been to those efforts, Allentuck's parents have a lot to be proud of now. From work on fully organic community gardens to providing grants to area grade schools for various landscaping and outdoor educational projects, Allentuck Landscaping has been front and center in giving back to their community.

And while Allentuck says he and his company don't pursue these efforts for the recognition, that's exactly what it got late last year when Allentuck Landscaping was honored with the 2025 Corporate Partnership Award from CaringMatters, a group the company has supported for more than two decades.

CaringMatters is a nonprofit with a campus in Gaithersburg, Md., that supports children, adults and families facing serious illness or grieving the death of a loved one. The team at Allentuck has long maintained and helped enhance the grounds in Gaithersburg, providing pro bono design, installation and

maintenance services, and most recently creating a new outdoor patio that serves as a peaceful gathering space for the community.

The award that was presented during a ceremony last November recognized the company's long-standing commitment to community service and its generous support of the nonprofit's mission to provide compassionate care.

"Humbling" is the word I've been using," Allentuck says when asked about receiving this award. "We honestly don't care if anyone knows about the philanthropic work we do or not ... but it was a really kind, sweet gesture, and it meant a lot to the members of our team who have worked at the CaringMatters facility for a long time."

"This partnership goes far beyond landscaping," says CaringMatters CEO Allison Stearns. "Allentuck's work has created spaces that truly embody the heart of our mission."

The connection between Allentuck Landscaping and CaringMatters began in an unlikely spot — the post office. "I met someone affiliated with

CaringMatters in line at the post office around the corner from us," Allentuck says. "We started up a conversation, she eventually mentioned what she did and said, 'You have to come see this place.' That's how it all started."

Allentuck Landscaping's philanthropic work has gone beyond its local community, too, primarily through the annual Renewal and Remembrance event in Washington, D.C., organized by the National Association of Landscape Professionals. Allentuck himself was an early volunteer at the initiative and has twice served as a chairman for that event, most recently in 2022.

"(R&R) is practically in our backyard and does so much good for the grounds around many of the national monuments. I'm just happy I've been able to give back," he says.

Allentuck is quick to point out that the values of giving back that have been baked into his company since the beginning aren't necessarily unique.

"There are so many companies in our industry that are doing really great things, so I don't think we're doing anything special in that regard," he says. "I think it's just part of this industry and the people that it attracts."

And he also has a piece of advice for other landscape pros looking to step up their own involvement in their own communities.

"This kind of work is a sacrifice, and it may cost you money and time. But if you're passionate about it and you feel like you're making a difference, it's going to be worth it," he says. ☺



Bruce Allentuck (seated center) with others from Allentuck Landscape at the CaringMatters award dinner.



**GROWTH
SUMMIT**

PEAK PERFORMANCE



The 13th edition of the annual *LM* Growth Summit delivered the goods for both the lawn care applicators in attendance and the event's industry partners

BY SCOTT HOLLISTER
LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

OUR PARTNERS



As a relatively new business owner, Jordan Almond is always on the lookout for opportunities to learn, to improve and to grow.

Almond is the owner of Local Lawn Pros in the Houston suburb of Magnolia, Texas. He's not necessarily a newcomer to the green industry — he took a high school lawn-mowing business and transformed it into a full-fledged, multi-crew lawn maintenance company that he eventually sold — but his time on the lawn care application side of the industry is relatively short. His company celebrates its second anniversary this month.

That's why he was so intrigued about the concept that powers the annual *Landscape Management* Growth Summit and why he was excited to be part of the event's class of 2025 when it gathered at Reunion Resort in Orlando, Dec. 8-10.

"The event was eye opening, for sure. It was great to get out of my market and expand my vision for what my small business could become," Almond says. "I really enjoyed meeting with peers in the industry who were much further ahead in their business journey. I was impressed and blown away by the openness and generosity of time I was afforded by some of the most successful lawn care business owners in the industry.

"I came back from this event inspired and motivated to build a bigger vision for my company and for me."

Almond was among 34 lawn care pros representing 25 companies who took part in the 13th edition of the *LM* Growth Summit. They were joined by 13 industry partners who shared their knowledge, insights and the latest products and services with attendees, along with members of the *LM* staff and their teammates from the magazine's parent company, North Coast Media.

The concept behind the event is relatively simple, but unique: The *LM* Growth Summit connects the leading suppliers in the lawn care industry with pre-qualified lawn care application professionals for networking, education and small-group meetings designed to improve business operations and build relationships within the industry.

Attendees either apply to be a part of the Summit or are recommended to attend by the event's industry partners.

"There is a lot of hard work that goes into hosting the *LM* Growth Summit,

Outdoor equipment demos like this one with Turfco highlighted the *LM* Growth Summit.



A chance to meet *LM* editors Seth Jones and Scott Hollister (top left), gift bags at registration (top right) and morning panel discussions were all on the agenda at the 2026 *LM* Growth Summit.

but the reward is so great," says Seth Jones, *LM*'s editorial director. "We're able to connect with our readers and our marketing partners on a much more personal level. We're able to learn from them. We make new connections, and in many cases, we make new friends. I'm so happy we get to host this each year — it's a great way to put an exclamation point on the end of a year."

» Inside the event

Reunion Resort — one of Central Florida's premier destinations that features 54 holes of championship golf, a 5-acre water park and a host of other amenities — once again played host to the *LM* Growth Summit. The event kicked off with a series of partner presentations — short rundowns of each participating company and what they'd be discussing in more depth in the coming days — which was followed by a welcome dinner and reception at Reunion's rooftop bar and restaurant, Eleven.

Breakfast and a series of educational panel discussions that focused on the cost and impact of callbacks and labor and staffing challenges started each of the next two days before giving way to the personal, 30-minute

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PHOTOS: LM STAFF



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meetings with the event's partners. A round of golf on Reunion's highly touted Palmer Course was also on the agenda.

Almond wasn't the only attendee to sing the praises of the *LM* Growth Summit after the event. Josh Rupani, the co-owner of Advanced Turf Pros in Yarmouth Port, Mass., attended the Summit with his brother and fellow co-owner, Shawn. He called the Summit "one of the most valuable industry events I've experienced."

"The small group format and direct access to vendors created meaningful conversations that went far beyond a typical trade show, especially the early insight into upcoming product lines," Josh Rupani says. "My biggest takeaway was the opportunity to build real relationships and spot innovations early — ideas I can apply by strengthening vendor partnerships, testing new products ahead of competitors and making more informed purchasing and growth decisions for my business."

The Rupanis weren't the only family team to take part in the *LM* Growth Summit. There was the husband-and-wife team of Dan and Lisa Turner from Custom Lawns in Avon Lake, Ohio (you can read more about the Turners and their experiences at the Summit in the March issue of *LM*), and the father-son duo of Mike and Sean Morin representing Morin Turf in Sioux City, Iowa.

"This was Sean's first Growth Summit and my second, and it was great to share the experience with him," says Mike Morin, who serves as company president, with Sean serving as vice president. "We were both impressed by the format *LM* created for interacting with sponsors. Engaging one-on-one regarding products and services was much more informative than visiting a booth at a traditional trade show. And the interactions with presenters, the dinners and the golf outing helped cement relationships that will be mutually beneficial for our business."

"I would encourage anyone considering attending to do so; you will come away better informed after a great overall experience."

» Lucky 13

The 2025 *LM* Growth Summit featured 13 loyal industry partners who connected and shared industry insights and information with the attending lawn care applicators. Learn more about these official Friends of *LM*.

3PG ADVISORS

3pgadvisors.com

Company representative: Jeff Harkness, CEO

With more than 28 years of experience and hundreds of successful transactions in the green industry, 3PG Advisors



is one of the most qualified and effective firms for matching entrepreneurs with equity partners or strategic buyers. Known for their industry expertise, 3PG Advisors have helped countless businesses navigate the complexities of mergers and acquisitions, organic growth and integration, resulting in the best possible outcomes for their clients. Their portfolio includes successful outcomes for landscaping, turf care, tree care, pest control, nurseries, snow and ice services, water management and other facility services companies.

Envu's Bill Roddy (center) and Ryan Madden (right) met with two *LM* Growth Summit attendees.

ATTICUS

atticusllc.com

Company representatives: Michael Sorensen, director, Western region; Rob Golembiewski, director, technical services; Paul Fox, director, account management

Based in North Carolina, Atticus is an American-owned chemical manufacturer of the pesticides you rely on. Atticus' professional non-crop division, known as EcoCore, engages diverse market segments with its growing portfolio of quality me-too chemistries, including turf and golf. Atticus' portfolio provides the tools to protect and beautify vital plant health and defend against pests. Relevant, simple and reliable. Atticus executes with decisiveness and a customer-centric strategy.

ENVU

us.envu.com

Company representatives: Bill Roddy, campaign activation manager – lawn; Ryan Madden, lawn national account manager

Envu was founded in 2022, a company built on decades of environmental science experience, for the sole purpose of advancing healthy environments for everyone,

Continued on page 18



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everywhere. Envu offers dedicated services in lawn and landscape, ornamentals, professional pest management, mosquito management, golf, forestry, industrial vegetation management and range and pasture. Envu collaborates with customers to design innovative solutions that meet their requirements today and well into the future. The Envu portfolio consists of more than 250 trusted and well-known brands. The company employs more than 1,000 people, operates in 100 countries and has four global innovation hubs.

EWING OUTDOOR SUPPLY

ewingoutdoorsupply.com

Company representatives: Kevin Lewis, technical services manager; Jason Hinkley, regional turf and ornamental sales manager; Jeremy King, Eastern Territory turf and ornamental sales manager

Ewing Outdoor Supply is a leading provider of landscape, irrigation, agronomic and outdoor living products, serving professionals and homeowners alike. Founded in 1922, Ewing has grown into one of the largest family-owned suppliers in the green industry, with locations across the United States. The company offers a wide range of high-quality products, including turf and landscape materials, water management solutions, hardscape supplies, lighting and outdoor living essentials. Ewing is dedicated to supporting sustainable practices and helping customers create beautiful, efficient outdoor spaces. Beyond products, Ewing provides expert training, technical support and business resources to help contractors and landscape professionals succeed. Known for its strong customer relationships and commitment to service, Ewing Outdoor Supply combines industry expertise with local community engagement to deliver trusted solutions for any outdoor project. Whether maintaining a golf course or designing a backyard retreat, Ewing is a reliable partner in outdoor excellence.

GREENE COUNTY FERTILIZER CO.

greencountyfert.com

Company representative: John Perry, president

Greene County Fertilizer Co. manufactures and supplies soil amending fertilizers for liquid lawn care, garden, turf, trees and agricultural use, specialty fertility products, custom blended programs, humic acids, biostimulants, bio-based fertilizers, soil surfactants, wetting agents and adjuvants. Products are made in the United State and can be bought and shipped direct. The company also provides field technical support and training.



Small-group meetings with industry partners such as Nufarm (top) and PBI-Gordon are key elements to the annual LM Growth Summit.

NUFARM

nufarm.com/usturf

Company representatives: Rod Marquardt, lawn care warm season market manager; Jamie Heydinger, lawn care segment lead

Established more than 100 years ago, Nufarm is recognized as one of the leading manufacturers and suppliers of plant protection worldwide. As a top supplier to the U.S. turf, landscape and ornamental markets, Nufarm offers solutions for every challenge, from innovations such as Anuew EZ, Velocity PM and Allstar, plus go-to products including Tourney EZ, SureGuard EZ, Celero, Escalade 2, Cool Power, Arena, Aloft, Pinpoint, Safari, TriStar and the 3336-brand family.

PBI-GORDON CORP.

pbigordonturf.com

Company representatives: Dani McFadden, product manager; Melissa McDonald, senior marketing communications manager

PBI-Gordon understands the challenges turf and ornamental professionals face and are there to help. As a nationally recognized leader in the industry, PBI-Gordon offers a full line of proven herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, growth regulators and specialty products designed to deliver reliable results. Whether you're managing golf courses, sports fields, commercial landscapes or residential lawns, PBI-Gordon's products are formulated to meet the industry's needs with precision and performance.

Continued on page 20

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- Backslope
- Z-Spray Junior
- Ferris Venture FS3100



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**2025
LM GROWTH SUMMIT
RECAP**



The team from Quali-Pro — Cal Hill (bottom right) and Chris Butcher — talk with Dan and Lisa Turner from Custom Lawns at the LM Growth Summit.

Continued from page 18

QUALI-PRO

quali-pro.com

Company representatives: Cal Hill, Gulf Coast territory manager; Chris Butcher, Southeast area manager

Quali-Pro, a division of Control Solutions Inc. (CSI) and part of ADAMA, benefits from ADAMA's advanced R&D and manufacturing expertise. This partnership allows them to develop innovative products and manufacture them in-house for exceptional quality and reliability. As a leader in post-patent formulations, Quali-Pro offers one of the industry's broadest portfolios, including herbicides, fungicides, turf enhancements, insecticides and nematocides. Its products are designed to meet the needs of lawn care professionals. With reliable supply and innovative delivery systems, Quali-Pro provides solutions to meet today's turf management challenges. Supported by university research and a team of experts, Quali-Pro delivers high-performance, cost-effective solutions with reliable supply and advanced delivery systems, helping customers stay ahead in an ever-evolving industry.

REALGREEN BY WORKWAVE

realgreen.com

Company representatives: Jason King, director, sales, pest and green; Joe Yacano, group vice president, enterprise accounts

With 40 years of specialized experience in the lawn care industry, RealGreen has built a comprehensive software solution to help run and scale customers' green businesses. Trusted by nine out of the top 10 lawn care franchises, RealGreen is more than just software — it's part of the team. The end-to-end platform seamlessly connects every

aspect of your business with advanced CRM, best-in-class dynamic route optimization, mobile application, customer portal, comprehensive payment and fintech solutions, automated communications, robust reporting, AI-powered marketing and business analytics and complete print marketing capabilities. Purpose-built for lawn care professionals by lawn care professionals, RealGreen combines four decades of proven expertise with a relentless, innovative drive: Its focus is firmly on the future.

SIPCAM AGRO USA

sipcamagrousa.com

*Company representatives: Dave Feist, director of marketing;
Stephen Kimball, key account manager*

Durham, N.C.-based Sipcam Agro USA is a part of the Sipcam Oxo Group, an Italian-based international network of agrotechnology companies formed in 1946. Sipcam Agro USA, launched in 1986, is a leader in the development, registration, production and marketing of a solid portfolio of plant protection products for agriculture, turf, ornamental and lawn markets. Sipcam Agro Solutions, a custom formulating and packaging plant in Mississippi, and Sipcam Agro Canada make up the North American footprint.



Steel Green was one of the industry partners showing off products in the outdoor demo area at the LM Growth Summit.

STEEL GREEN MANUFACTURING

steelgreenmfg.com

Company representatives: Caleb Myers, sales rep

Steel Green Manufacturing is an employee-owned company built on the values of quality, customer service, integrity and innovation. With more than 100 years of combined experience in the equipment industry, its team understands the needs of lawn care professionals, athletic field managers and golf course superintendents. Every machine built is designed with these operators in mind, crafted for durability, efficiency and precision. Proudly

Continued on page 22

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[♥ Adjuvant]

Continued from page 21

made in the United States, its spreader/sprayers are assembled in Lebanon, Ind., by people who take pride in their work and stand behind every product that leaves the shop. Steel Green is more than a manufacturer; they're partners in their customers' success, committed to providing reliable equipment, responsive support and continuous innovation that helps turf professionals achieve exceptional results season after season.

STINGER EQUIPMENT

stingerequipment.com

Company representatives: David Cook, CEO; Brian Moore, president; Dustin McGehee, vice president of sales

Stinger Equipment is the leader in turf renovation equipment, focusing on making equipment that is more productive, easier to use and requires less maintenance. An R&D company at heart, Stinger constantly pushes the industry forward with revolutionary equipment designs, including hydrostatic drive aerators and ground-metered spreader sprayers. The Quad-Aer features a patented hydrostatic drive that eliminates chains, sprockets, tensioners and hassles. The Gateway Applicator is a compact applicator big on features. Ground-metered spread and spray, One-Touch controls and product savings are just a few features that separate the Gateway. Proudly designed and manufactured in Kentucky; by professionals for professionals.

TURFCO

turfco.com

Company representatives: George Kinkead, president; John Kinkead, Southern regional sales manager

Turfco is a leading innovator in professional lawn



Getting to see equipment up close and personal, like this unit from Stinger Equipment, is one of the highlights of the LM Growth Summit.

care equipment, offering reliable, efficient machines designed to help turf care professionals achieve exceptional results. With a focus on precision, productivity and durability, Turfco's product line includes advanced ride-on and walk-behind aerators, spreader sprayers, topdressers, edgers and sodcutters. These machines streamline tasks like fertilization, weed control, seeding and topdressing, ensuring even application and consistent coverage every time. Turfco's user-friendly designs, including intuitive controls and low-maintenance systems, make them a favorite among lawn care professionals and turf managers. The company's commitment to innovation ensures its products meet the evolving needs of the industry, supporting healthier, greener lawns and beautiful campuses. Built to withstand demanding workloads, Turfco equipment is trusted for its performance and long-term value. Whether enhancing turf health for small yards or large corporate settings, Turfco empowers professionals to work smarter, not harder. 📷

PHOTO: LM STAFF

They said it...

“I think the biggest takeaway was how well everything ran and how much I got out of the event. You wish you had more time to be there and talk to everyone more. Everyone was so nice and friendly. Just go into it with an open mind and look at the other products and equipment available to get the most out of the event.”

— Dan Turner, owner, Custom Lawns, Avon Lake, Ohio



“The LM Growth Summit was incredibly educational and gave me valuable insights I can apply directly to my business. Beyond the sessions, it was also a fantastic networking experience — connecting with other industry professionals and sharing ideas was truly impactful.”

— Bob Brower, branch manager, Lawn Plus, West Alexandria, Ohio



“I was able to connect with business owners from across the country and meet with leading equipment and chemical manufacturers. This industry is filled with professionals who are genuinely willing to help, share guidance and offer insight on employees, products and strategies for success. The networking opportunities alone were priceless and made this an incredibly valuable experience.”

— Madelyn Mongioli, lawn care supervisor, Best Termite and Pest Control, Tampa, Fla.





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Staying the course

Commercial contractors are counting on a steady business environment and an expanding client base to fuel growth in 2026, according to an Aspire Software survey BY SCOTT HOLLISTER | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Commercial landscaping contractors are anticipating a stable, if not slightly improving, business environment in the coming year, according to the results of Aspire Software's 2026 Commercial Landscape Industry Report. Among the more than 1,000 respondents to the survey, 42 percent indicated they anticipated a stronger market outlook in 2026 than in 2025, while another 38 percent believed the 2026 market would be much the same as 2025.



When focusing on their individual businesses and plans for the new year, contractors said a focus on new projects (79 percent) and growing their client base (71 percent) would be their keys to growth. Adding new services to their menus, however, wasn't high on that list; 70 percent said they would not be adding any services to their existing offerings in 2026.

As it relates to growing and retaining clients, survey respondents added that maintaining a stable workforce, predicting cost increases and limiting delays would be keys to finding success in that area.

Here are some additional key findings from the 2026 Commercial Landscape Industry Report, presented exclusively as a part of a partnership between Aspire and *Landscape Management*. You can read the full survey report by scanning the QR code that accompanies this story. 



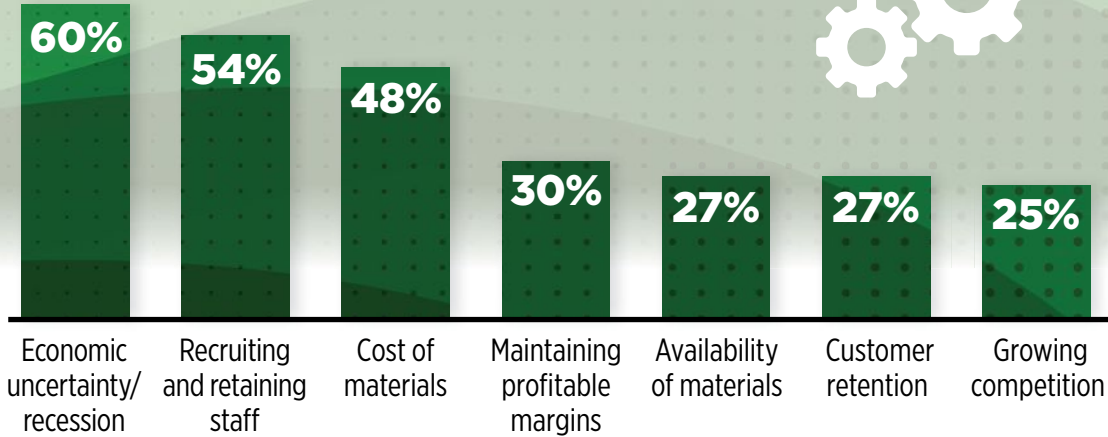
70%
Commercial
contractors
who say they intend
to **raise wages**
in 2026.

62%

Commercial contractors whose companies use **seven or more software solutions** to manage their businesses.



BUSINESS RISKS FOR 2026



59%

Commercial contractors who earn the majority of their income from **maintenance services**.

54%

Commercial contractors who say **client retention** is vital to their bottom line.

TOP 5 BUSINESS GOALS FOR 2026

- 1 **79%** Grow revenue
- 2 **71%** Acquire new customers
- 3 **54%** Retain existing customers
- 4 **43%** Recruit and retain employees
- 5 **42%** Improve cash flow

TOP 5 TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS FOR 2026

- 1 **31%** End-to-end business management
- 2 **26%** Employee training and certification
- 3 **25%** Process automation
- 4 **24%** Customer notifications
- 5 **23%** Smart routing



31%

Commercial contractors who plan to invest in **less-fragmented software solutions** to help streamline operations.

37%

Commercial contractors worried about **accurately forecasting job costs and profit margins** because of rising equipment and material costs.

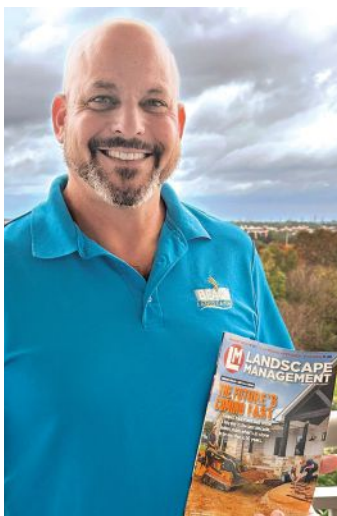
39%

Commercial contractors who report issues with **receiving payment on time**, contributing to persistent cash flow issues.

Trusted by Industry Experts, Essential for Your Business

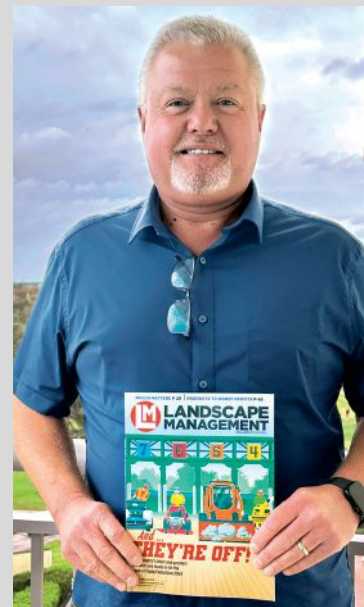
"I look forward to reading *Landscape Management* each month as it is a great resource to learn about industry trends, best practices, and new technologies and equipment. It has helped me gain new perspectives and, at times, given me the confidence that I'm on the right track."

— MATT FREEDMAN,
PRESIDENT
BEACH LANDSCAPING,
SURFSIDE BEACH, S.C.



"*Landscape Management* is packed with real-world advice that's easy to implement. It's helped us tackle challenges, work smarter, and keep our customers happy. If you're in the business, this is the resource you need to stay on top of your game."

— GARY MCCLUNG, OWNER,
GOT BUGS? TERMITE AND PEST SOLUTIONS,
CUMMINGS, GA.



Landscape Management magazine has been an invaluable resource for our business. Its comprehensive content

informs us about industry trends, innovative practices, and effective management strategies, directly contributing to our company's growth and success."

— MIKE MANSOUR,
OPERATIONS MANAGER
4EVERGREEN TURF
MANAGEMENT,
CRANSTON, R.I.



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MANAGEMENT**

Putting mosquitoes to work

Control that's always on,
so you're always earning.



**Add mosquito control that keeps working
between visits – and keeps revenue coming in.**

The In2Care® Mosquito Station uses a mosquito's own behavior to spread control into hard-to-reach breeding sites, offering continuous protection for customers and a simple, scalable add-on for your business.





What pros are saying

Lawn and pest professionals are already putting nature to work with the In2Care® Mosquito Station.

“Adding In2Care into our program was seamless. This is probably one of the easiest implementations we’ve ever done.”

– Jason Bishop, King Green

“I just think it would be a really good thing to add the In2Care product. Super simple introduction into mosquito control.”

– Blake Albertson, B&B Lawn Care

“I like the fact that In2Care’s service schedule is once every four to six weeks because that perfectly coincides with most people’s already existing mosquito programs that are monthly treatments.”

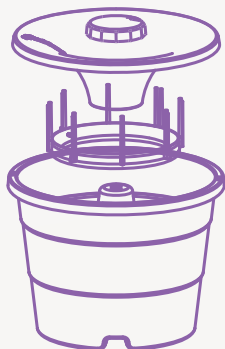
– Dr. Lucas Carnahan, PMI



Turn mosquito behavior into business growth

More customers are asking for mosquito service, not just a great lawn.

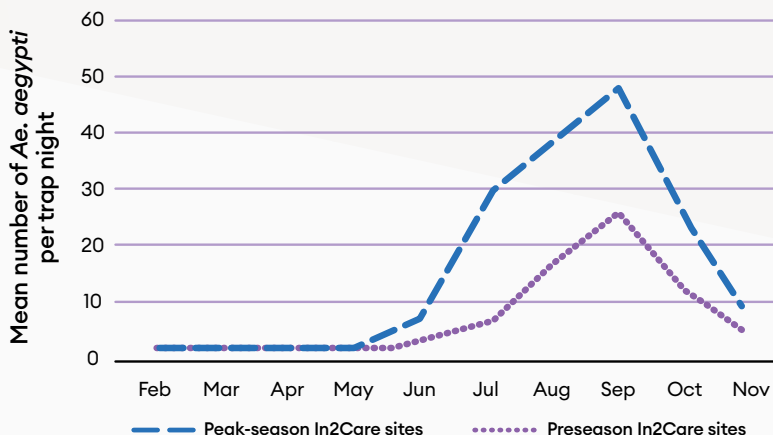
The In2Care® Mosquito Station gives you an easy way to say yes – without adding a lot of extra work.



- Mosquitoes spread control to hard-to-reach breeding sites
- Control keeps working between visits
- Simple to add to your already-existing monthly lawn services

Success you can count on

Deploying In2Care Mosquito Stations before mosquito season keeps levels lower than starting at peak season.





How it works:

1. Female *Aedes* and *Culex* mosquitoes are attracted to the station to rest and lay eggs.

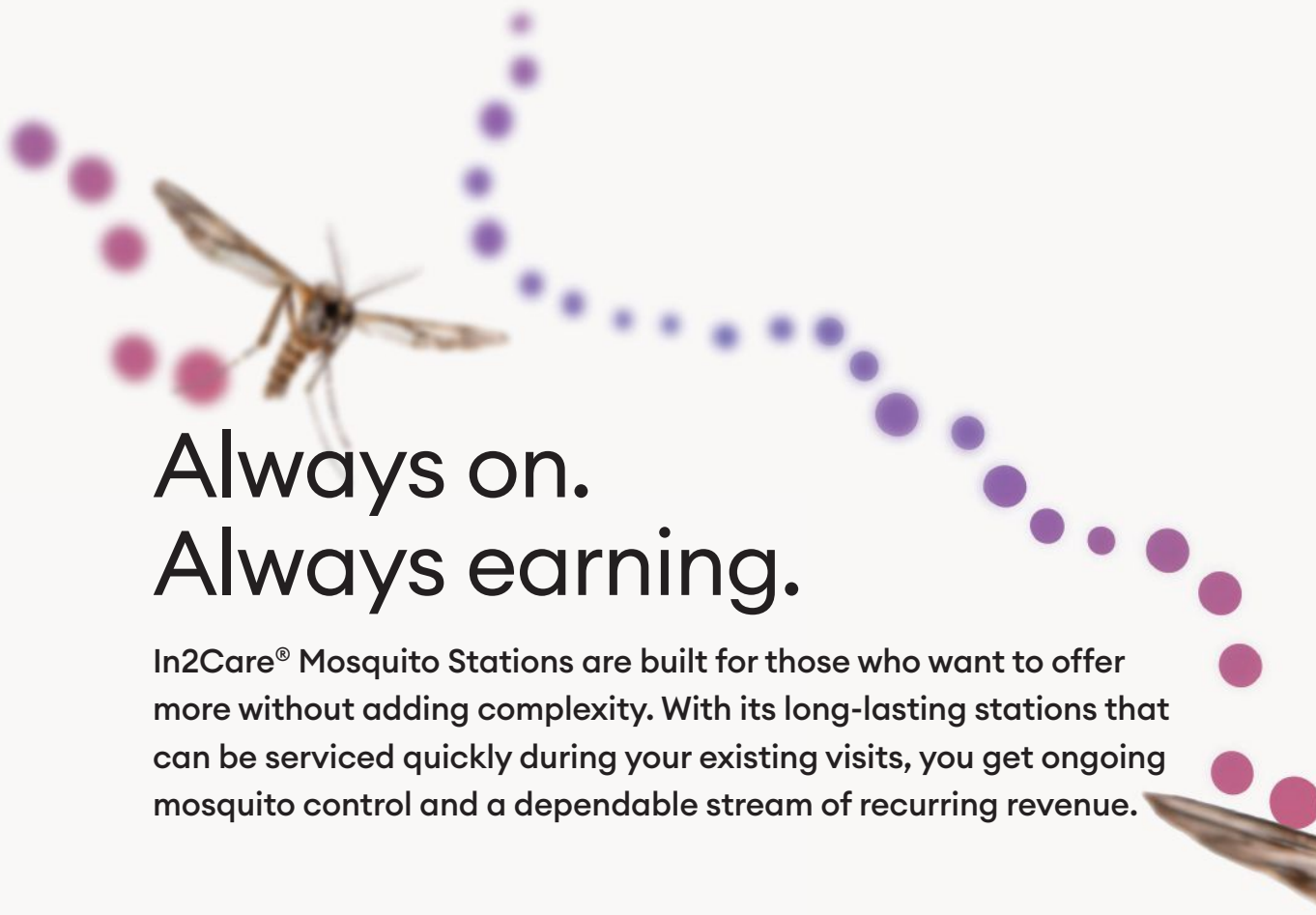
2. She lands on treated netting and picks up larvicide and a slow-acting bio-adulticide.

3. She carries these actives to other sites, where she contaminates water with larvicide.

4. Larvae in those sites are prevented from developing into biting adults.

A few days later, the bio-adulticide kills her, closing the loop.





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BUGGY BLUEGRASS BATTLE

A Q&A on the best ways to manage annual bluegrass weevils

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

QUALI-PRO

Annual bluegrass weevils (ABWs) are originally a northeastern bug that find themselves popping up around more parts of the country, spreading further into the Midwest and Transition Zone.

They're a tricky insect for lawn care operators to deal with, so *Landscape Management* talked to Nathan Nordstedt, Ph.D., technical services manager at Quali-Pro, about how to identify and treat this far-reaching foe.

For more information on ABW life cycles, scouting, biology and control methods, be sure to register for Nordstedt's upcoming webinar, "Building Your Annual Bluegrass Weevil Program," on March 5 at 2 p.m. EST.



Nathan Nordstedt

LM: WHAT ARE ANNUAL BLUEGRASS WEEVILS, AND HOW CAN LAWN CARE OPERATORS IDENTIFY THEM?

NORDSTEDT: ABW is one of the most destructive insect pests of short-mown cool-season turf in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, with increasing reports throughout the Midwest and parts of the transition zone. As the name suggests, they primarily feed on and damage annual bluegrass. While ABW can also affect creeping bentgrass, this usually only occurs under heavy pressure.

Adult ABWs are small; about one-eighth inches long, tannish-black beetles that mature to jet black and have a short, curved snout similar to billbugs. They're often mistaken for other small beetles, but their small size is a helpful clue for identification. The most reli-

able way to scout is to observe adults migrating across turf in early spring or use soap flushes to bring them to the surface for counting.

LM: WHAT DAMAGE DOES ABW CAUSE TO THE TURF, AND WHEN IN THE YEAR DOES DAMAGE USUALLY OCCUR?

NORDSTEDT: Most ABW damage is caused by larvae, not adults. Early instar larvae feed inside the grass stem, which disrupts vascular tissue and often shows up as wilted or stressed patches that can be mistaken for localized dry spot. As larvae develop, they move into the crown and roots, which causes the most severe damage and leads to thinning, yellowing and dead turf.

Damage usually begins in late spring after adults lay eggs, but it can continue into summer as additional generations develop.

LM: WHAT ARE SOME CONTROL OPTIONS YOU RECOMMEND TO HANDLE ABWs?

NORDSTEDT: The most effective strategy is a preventive application targeting migrating adults in early spring. This timing can be predicted using growing degree days, typically 120-170 GDD (base 50 degrees F, starting March 1), or by watching for forsythia shrubs when they are half gold and half green. Scouting along turf edges can also help confirm adult movement.

First application should ideally be an insect growth regulator (IGR) that impacts multiple life stages. Suprado (novaluron) is a strong foundational product because it disrupts larval development and reduces egg viability, leading to broad population suppression.



Above: ABW larvae actually do the most damage to turf by feeding inside the grass stem. Right: Proper identification is a crucial step since ABWs can often be mistaken for other similar pests.



About three weeks later, a follow-up application with an ingestion-based insecticide is recommended to target later instar larvae feeding in the crown. Doxem T&O (indoxacarb) fits well at this timing and adds a second mode of action for resistance.

In high-pressure areas, a second adult-targeted Suprado application during the next migration can provide additional control.

LM: ARE THERE ANY MISTAKES LCOS CAN MAKE WHEN CONTROLLING OR IDENTIFYING ABWs?

NORDSTEDT: One of the biggest mistakes is simply not realizing ABW is present. Without proper scouting, damage is often misdiagnosed as disease, drought stress or other insect problems, especially early in the season. Another common issue is treating too late, once larvae are already established inside the crown. There's also a tendency to rely heavily on pyrethroids because they're familiar and provide quick knockdown, but this usually leads to short-lived control and contributes to resistance problems. 🐛

SOLUTIONS THAT WORK

Weed control goes all natural

While traditional synthetic herbicides still rule the roost, a growing number of lawn care pros are turning to bioherbicides as a pest management option

BY GEORGE KEGODE, PH.D. | CONTRIBUTOR

Bioherbicides are gaining attention as lawn care operators look for alternatives to conventional chemical herbicides. These biological weed control agents use living organisms or their natural by-products to suppress or eliminate weeds. Unlike traditional synthetic herbicides that rely on chemical compounds, bioherbicides draw from natural biological interactions found in ecosystems.

According to Nick Christians, Ph.D., a professor of turfgrass management at Iowa State University, bioherbicides represent an important shift in how the industry approaches weed management. Christians has led research on corn gluten meal, one of the most well-known bioherbicide products available to lawn care professionals.

WHAT BIOHERBICIDES CONTAIN

Bioherbicides come in two primary forms. The first category includes microorganisms such as fungi, bacteria or viruses that attack specific weeds. For example, *Phoma macrostoma*, a fungal-based bioherbicide, controls broadleaf weeds in turfgrass and lawns. Similarly, *Xanthomonas campestris*, a bacterial-based bioherbicide, targets annual bluegrass in turfgrass. These microbial agents essentially act as biological pathogens, seeking out their target weeds and compromising their ability to thrive.

The second category consists of natural compounds, or metabolites, that plants or microbes produce to inhibit weed growth. Corn gluten meal falls into this category. The wet milling process of corn produces this byprod-

uct, which inhibits root formation in germinating weed seeds when lawn care operators apply it to turf.

Christians notes that corn gluten meal works differently than many lawn care operators expect. It inhibits root formation of germinating seeds but has no effect on established weeds, which makes timing applications critical for success. He adds that corn gluten meal provides up to 60 percent control of annual weeds such as crabgrass, foxtails and perennial weeds such as dandelion when compared to conventional herbicides.

HOW BIOHERBICIDES WORK

Bioherbicides control weeds in three general ways. They can infect the weed and cause disease that weakens and kills the plant. They can also produce toxins or enzymes that disrupt plant growth or metabolism. Additionally, some bioherbicides interfere with photosynthesis, nutrient uptake and cell structure.

Their target specificity makes bioherbicides particularly appealing for sustainable turf management, reducing risks to non-target plants and ecosystems. Companies generally produce them as biodegradable products with low residue concerns. Lawn care operators can also integrate them with cultural, mechanical or reduced-rate chemical controls in comprehensive or integrated weed management systems.

UNDERSTANDING THE LIMITATIONS

Bioherbicides typically offer a narrow

spectrum of control, which requires lawn care operators to identify weeds accurately. They often act more slowly than synthetic herbicides, meaning lawn care operators need to manage client expectations about results. Environmental conditions such as humidity, temperature and UV exposure can affect their performance, making application timing and weather monitoring crucial for success.

Christians emphasizes that lawn care operators need a good understanding

of when and how to use these products. In particular, applicators must know about species specificity, the best time to apply them and environmental conditions that ensure successful control.

For instance, some bioherbicides require specific moisture levels or temperature ranges

to activate properly. Because of these complexities, companies have developed products for the market relatively slowly as they refine their formulations.

Cost presents another consideration. Bioherbicides often cost more than conventional options, creating a niche market of environmentally conscious users willing to pay a premium for ecological stewardship.

WHY CONSIDER BIOHERBICIDES

Bioherbicides reduce environmental chemicals but won't entirely replace synthetic herbicides. Lawn care operators can incorporate bioherbicides into an integrated weed management program or offer them as a stand-alone weed control option for clients who want no synthetic herbicides on their turfgrass or lawns. 



Nick Christians

Kegode is an agricultural scientist and science writer specializing in crop and turfgrass protection and a regular contributor to *Landscape Management*.

PROTECT YOUR TURF

SIZE IT UP
Selecting the correct
size of dumpster
can save time and
money on a project.



Don't let it go to waste

Successfully managing yard waste around jobsites can benefit from advanced planning and specialized equipment BY CHRIS PICCIANO | CONTRIBUTOR

People hire landscapers to take care of their property, saving time and avoiding the need to own equipment. Being trusted to keep homes and businesses aesthetically pleasing means you and your employees must properly manage the waste.

It may seem straightforward, but failing to do so can lead to higher costs, wasted time and declining customer satisfaction.

DEVELOPING A WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

A cohesive plan keeps everyone aligned, ensures regulatory compliance, reduces environmental impacts and saves money.

Emphasize reusing materials like mulch and compost and create a plan for them. Especially if you plan on selling it, the mulch and compost must be cohesive.

You must also ensure that all your employees properly handle hazardous waste to protect their health and the public. This includes pesticides, solvents and fuels for equipment maintenance. Failing to do so can lead to long-term environmental and health damage.

Develop a plan that prevents contaminants from entering waterways. This reduces pollution and helps you avoid fines.

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DUMPSTER RENTAL

If you choose to use dumpster rentals instead of your own trucks, invest in the correct size. Larger jobs often require dumpsters to save time and avoid making

multiple trips. When choosing a dumpster, it's always better to overestimate.

The 40-cubic-yard dumpster is the safest option for a large job. Choosing a dumpster that's too small can result in multiple trips to the landfill, wasting time and fuel, and increasing costs for your business. However, if it's a small job like trimming a couple of trees or focusing on one part of the yard, a 15-cubic-yard dumpster should do the trick.

To get the most out of your dumpster rental, it's essential to cut waste as small as possible. The larger items should be placed first, and smaller loose items, such as bags with grass clippings, should be put on top.

Invest in some mobile shredders. If the job involves a lot of limbs and foliage, this saves time cutting them down and creates more space in the dumpster.

REUSE WASTE

Reusing waste will save space — and money — on fertilizer and mulch and can even generate a profit in the end.

The tree grindings from the shredder, combined with grass clippings, make great mulch. Mulch blocks sunlight, inhibiting weed growth and reducing the need for herbicides, saving time on waste management in the long run.

You can collect it and process it into compost to sell to gardeners, farms or other businesses. You can also turn wood waste, such as large tree branches or trunks, into firewood for sale. It's best to collect and dry it to sell during the winter season.

KNOW YOUR AREA

You and your team need to know the area you're working in. Understanding your area's vegetation and native plants' growth cycle helps enable planning for the amount of waste they produce.

For example, if you're in New England, you're probably going to be dealing with a lot of grass clippings, flower beds and various maple trees. If you're in Arizona, you'll be dealing with a lot of cacti and agave, which produce far less waste.

Know the local topography and proximity to water bodies. This prevents fertilizers, chemicals and organic waste from contaminating streams, rivers and oceans through storm drains.

Additionally, there might be local ordinances that you need to be aware of. Most cities and counties have specific rules regarding the disposal of yard waste. If waste is deposited on unauthorized public or private property, you'll violate local codes and be subject to fines. In some cases, if waste is dumped illegally on a client's property or it's left improperly managed, the property owner can face fines or be responsible for cleanup.

Managing waste when landscaping is pretty straightforward. Put together a plan, invest in necessary equipment like shredders and dumpster rentals, and know the area you're working in. Following these guidelines can help your business save a lot of money and time in the long run. 

Picciano is the president of Area Disposal in Scottsdale, Ariz., which specializes in making trash disposal easier by offering cost-effective dumpster rentals to landscapers.

THE BIG ONE

A grand oasis

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOCATION Phoenix, Ariz.

COMPANY Gothic Landscape

DETAILS Today, The Grand stands as a premier living community for residents ages 45 and up, featuring a large-scale maintenance job that Gothic Landscape has been tackling since the property's beginning roughly 25 years ago.

Nick DePasquale, executive vice president for Gothic Landscape, says crews need to maintain roughly 15,000 trees, 106 irrigation controllers, 583 homes, 542 acres of decomposed granite desert landscapes and more, all surrounded by pickleball and tennis courts, activity centers, pools, walkways and the roughly 17,000 residents that live there.

"The team on the job is so committed; they're so proud," DePasquale says. "They treat the property like it's their own — like they live on property — and that's really what makes us a success out there. Our team really cares and is focused on helping the residents."

With the many different aesthetics and areas to the community, a key challenge is making sure each part blends together into one coherent landscape, requiring each crew member to see the bigger picture and ensure all areas are fully serviced.

And amidst challenges like the brutal Arizona heat and difficult water restrictions, DePasquale says he's glad to have clients that prioritize their landscaping assets.

"They're so focused on preserving the park-like atmosphere and keeping the resort-style landscape, when a lot of people are just trying to cut budgets," he says. "They are focused on doing the right thing and improving the value of the landscape assets."

And with their long history of excellence on-site, Gothic won a gold award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program. 



PHOTOS: GOTHIC LANDSCAPE



Captions | **1.** The multiple pools add to the resort-style aesthetic of the property, requiring diligent turf and tree care to keep everything clean and manicured. **2.** The ever-busy Sonoran Plaza blends recreational areas with meeting space, and it's one of the many areas that show why extra attention to resident and crew safety is necessary. **3.** The recently redesigned veteran's monument was carefully planned, receiving multiple rotations of annual color per year. **4.** Of the 14 acres of turf on-site, eight of them have been converted to water-smart deserts. Red yucca blooms, purple prickly pear cactus and drought-tolerant shrubs are all standout heat-resistant plantings. **5.** DePasquale says there's about 12 crews servicing the property Monday through Friday. **6.** The Grand is home to four golf courses, and DePasquale says crews maintain the decomposed granite desert landscapes surrounding the courses.

PRODUCTS THAT WORK



↑ **TONE T1**

COMPANY: Whisper Aero
URL: toneoutdoors.com

Preorders are now open for the Tone T1 blower, which was featured at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES). The T1 is the company's first commercial product under its outdoor air management brand Tone. Powered by Whisper Aero's UltraQuiet propulsion technology, the T1 produces 880 cubic feet per minute (CFM) and 25 newtons of blowing force. At peak thrust, it operates at only 52 dB(A), which is approximately 60 percent quieter than the top battery blowers available today. The T1 also features a ToneShift five-speed control dial, with each mode setting an intelligent ceiling. The T1 comes with a 54-volt, 5.0 Ah lithium-ion high-capacity battery system.



DPAS-225

COMPANY: Echo
URL: echo-usa.com

Echo's new DPAS-225 powerhead will be available in the first quarter of 2026 and is designed to deliver power, performance and versatility with

one powerhead and up to 16 attachments, the company stated. It features an adjustable front handle with a rubber over-mold for enhanced comfort and control, along with a rear powerhead. The 56-volt battery powers a brushless motor designed to provide gas-like performance, while the tool-free coupler allows for fast, easy changes of the attachments. The integrated LED grip display provides status updates on remaining battery life at a glance. Among the available attachments for the DPAS-225 are nylon line heads, maxi-cut heads, brush-cutting blades, a power broom, a hedge trimmer and a pole saw blade.



ST131

COMPANY: Greenworks Commercial
URL: greenworkscommercial.com

The 82-volt Optimus 17-inch top-mounted string trimmer (ST131) delivers 30cc gas-equivalent performance in a lightweight, battery-powered platform built for commercial crews. Producing 1.3 kW (1.7 HP) of power, the trimmer weighs just 14 pounds, making it the lightest commercial option in its class while still handling demanding trimming applications. Powered by the CORE360 battery system, the ST131 provides runtime comparable to a full tank of gas, helping crews stay productive without refueling, emissions or engine maintenance. A top-mounted motor improves balance and durability, while the easy-wind spool system minimizes downtime during line changes. Designed for daily professional use, the ST131 has been commercially field tested for more than 1,000 hours, offering landscape contractors a proven, low-maintenance alternative to gas without sacrificing power or runtime.



KC501

COMPANY: Kress Commercial
URL: kress.com/en-us

The new KC501 41N DC backpack blower from Kress was designed for heavy-duty tasks, including fall leaf cleanup, large properties and municipal work. With a robust, durable design, the KC501 is outfitted with a stainless steel protection tip for nozzle durability, an adjustable hiking-style backpack for comfort and an LED control panel for simple level selection or cruise mode. Kress' brushless motor provides instant torque and gas-like performance while Kress MAXOUT technology ensures maximum power output for the entirety of the battery charge. Additionally, Kress QuietStorm alleviates sound pressure to 63 dB — about equal to an air conditioner or average conversation.



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INSTALLATION SOLUTIONS

From the outside in

An increasing number of landscape design/build firms are adding interior services to their list of offerings

BY MATTHEW OLSON | CONTRIBUTOR

Interior landscaping is a niche service category that once attracted some of the largest firms in the landscape industry, luminaries such as TruGreen and ValleyCrest (now part of BrightView). In the 1990s and 2000s, these companies built interior plant divisions and later scaled them back or sold them off, including the 2000 sale of TruGreen Interior Plantcare to what is now Ambius.

Now, two decades later, new interest is emerging in the landscape industry, highlighted by Yellowstone Landscape's 2024 partnership with interiorscape firm Greenery NYC.

Research on global plant care and interiorscaping services suggests a market in the mid-single-digit billions — around \$3.5 billion in 2024 — with high single-digit annual growth, implying the market could roughly double over the next decade. Growth is fueled by a mix of global and national providers, including Ambius and Planterra, and a large base of local interiorscape firms such as Greenery NYC.

Even with these growth projections, interiorscaping remains modest in scale compared to the roughly \$180-190-billion U.S. exterior landscaping industry.

PRIME TIME PLAYERS

Shane Pliska, CEO of Planterra, leads the second generation of the Detroit-based family business that has grown into one of the largest interiorscape service networks in North America.

Building on the company his parents founded, Pliska expanded Planterra

BRINGING NATURE IN
Interiorscaping services are growing due to interest in biophilic design.



PHOTO: PLANTERRA

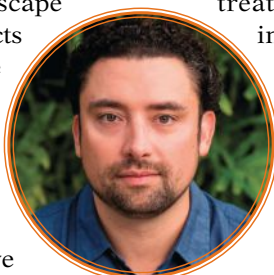
from a regional interiorscape firm into a national provider by combining centralized account management with local delivery through the Planterra Network, a partnership with owner-operated interiorscape firms. Planterra subcontracts service delivery to these local partners, who provide on-site expertise and long-term plant care for national clients.

“Specialization has allowed us to punch above our weight,” Pliska says. “Local owner-operators truly know each site and each client. That knowledge drives consistency and performance, always outperforming a corporate employee.”

Planterra competes for national interiorscape contracts with Ambius, a division of UK-based business services group Rentokil Initial. Rentokil built what is now Ambius through an international acquisition strategy spanning two decades from the 1980s to the 2000s, including the purchase of TruGreen’s Interior Plantcare division in 2000. Today, Ambius operates in roughly 16 countries.

In 2021, Ambius generated £141.3 million in ongoing revenue (roughly \$190 million). Since 2022, Ambius has been reported as part of Rentokil Initial’s broader “Hygiene & Wellbeing” category — alongside dental hygiene and cleanroom services — rather than as a standalone reporting segment, and pre-pandemic figures indicate modest, low single-digit annual growth in Ambius revenue over several years.

Interest in interiorscaping is increasing as biophilic design gains mainstream traction and workplace wellness becomes a core part of corporate strategy. Companies are turning to interior landscaping to meet these new demands.



Shane Pliska

THE ROLE OF INTERIOR LANDSCAPING

The modern interiorscape industry took off in the 1970s and 1980s during the rise of large indoor malls and corporate office buildings. Once treated as purely decorative, interior plants gained new importance after the pandemic as organizations looked for ways to support employee wellness and create healthier indoor environments.

“There’s a deeper understanding of wellness benefits of the human-nature connection and a desire to see nature thrive over time, not just die a slow death in a dark conference room,” says Rebecca Bullene, founder of Greenery NYC.

Bullene says Greenery NYC has seen increased attention from national firms looking to expand into interiorscaping and from clients who now view plant programs as part of their broader workplace strategy. Pliska also hears from private equity groups exploring the category but notes that traditional scale models rarely fit interiorscaping.

“They are attracted to the biophilic buzz and the corporate client names,” he says. “Once they understand the true size of the market and the limited number of midsize operators, the scale proposition shifts.”

Pliska takes pride in creating national contract opportunities for local interiorscapers through the Planterra Network and has no plans to sell the business.

GETTING INVOLVED

For exterior landscape companies, interiorscaping can appear to be a natural extension of existing offerings. Pliska cautions that the operational model differs significantly.

“There was a time when it was assumed that a landscape company could do interior work in the winter if there wasn’t much snow plowing. The difference is that interior landscaping is a year-round service. And the type of labor that goes on inside a building is different. So, it requires having two types of staff, along with different training, suppliers and equipment,” says Pliska.

Interiorscape contracts also tend to be smaller than exterior landscape contracts, even though the effort to win and retain accounts is similar. Volume and operational discipline are essential for long-term success. Yellowstone Landscape reinforces this point through its partnership with Greenery NYC, which operates as a distinct brand.

“We’re able to scale our biophilic design vision beyond New York. And for Yellowstone, it expands their portfolio into interiorscaping, giving them a competitive edge in offering holistic green solutions,” Bullene says.

She adds that collaboration has created opportunities for shared learning. “Working with leaders in the exterior landscape industry has helped us improve operationally and create more training and growth opportunities for our team.”

As interiorscaping evolves, industry leaders will likely be those who combine national reach with local expertise and who understand the intersection of design, wellness and long-term plant care. Planterra and Greenery NYC represent two distinct growth paths in a category that is rebuilding momentum after many years of quiet stability. 



Rebecca Bullene

Olson is a freelance writer specializing in the landscape, garden and horticulture industries.

HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

A poolside paradise

BY NATHAN MADER | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOCATION Dunedin, Fla.

COMPANY Landscapes by Randy Lee

DETAILS Situated in a quaint waterfront neighborhood, this coastal project renovated the home with four distinct areas.

On one side of the small seashell road that cuts through the front yard is the water and 200-foot dock, which was subcontracted out to receive modern upgrades, plus a newly installed brick pathway with a patio and fireplace. On the other side is the main house and the front yard, showcasing the revamped landscape with Florida-native plantings like muhly grass, cocoplum hedges and salt-tolerant green island ficus.

At the back of the property was the large garage and guest house, and situated in between the two structures was a pool area, which was completely renovated from a busy, '90s aesthetic. Randy Lee, the owner of Landscapes by Randy Lee, says there was a lot of work to get this courtyard-like area up to the latest standards.

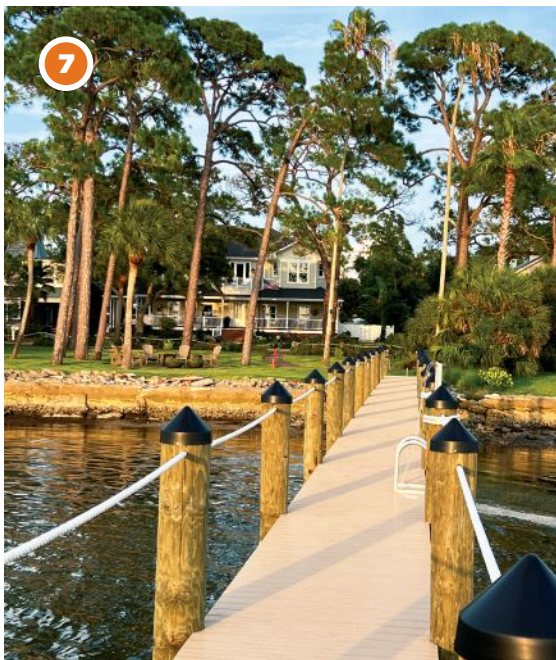
"On one end of it ... (the client) wanted to incorporate a large hot tub that it didn't have before," he says. "It wasn't just a cosmetic renovation; it was really structural."

The project was completed in December 2024, meaning one of the biggest challenges Lee's team faced was pushing through Hurricanes Helene and Milton, which struck in September and October, respectively that year. Despite these massive setbacks, the site's eventual completion won a gold award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program thanks to the multiple facets of this peaceful waterfront design.

"I think that's what really makes the property unique," Lee says. "You've got a lot of different areas to enjoy and use." 



PHOTOS: LANDSCAPES BY RANDY LEE



Captions | 1. Lee says one of the standout plants in the landscape redesign is green island ficus due to its salt and hurricane tolerance, making it a popular Florida choice. 2. Lee says the company does quarterly maintenance for gardening and fertilizing, as well as several seasonal color changes throughout the year. 3. A historic boat that transported immigrants from Cuba and landed at the client's previous Florida Keys home was transferred over to be a part of the new landscape design. 4. "(Another) thing that's kind of cool about that site is there's a lot of wildlife there," Lee says. "Up in all the big trees, you've got osprey and you've got eagles, so it's a beautiful setting." 5. A new connecting covered patio was installed from the garage and guest residence to the main house. 6. Lee says the team did the tiling, travertine decking, lighting and all the other basics to fully modernize the pool and new hot tub. 7. The 200-foot dock was one of the main features that needed repairs after the 2024 hurricanes.

FROM THE SOURCE

Quantifying the gas vs. battery debate

A new calculator can provide additional data points for landscape pros trying to make equipment purchase decisions **BY SAMUEL ADEYEMO | CONTRIBUTOR**

There is no better way to get a landscaping or lawn care professional worked up than by insisting that they should go electric. Or if they have gone electric, suggesting to them that they wasted money. And with good reason: With over \$10 billion a year spent annually on lawn and garden equipment, there is a lot at stake for landscapers to get right.

Generally speaking, supporters of electric equipment rave about lower maintenance costs, quieter operations and the benefits of less fumes. Gas-powered boosters like the cheaper upfront costs (especially when you account for extra batteries) and believe them to be more reliable and powerful.

AN OBJECTIVE CALCULATOR

We set out to help resolve this debate by building the industry's most accurate model to evaluate whether to buy battery or gas-powered equipment. We compared mowers, string trimmers and leaf blowers, and our calculator included:

- Equipment costs
- Historical gas and electricity prices by state
- Battery costs
- Battery capacity or runtime
- Details about the type and scale of business that you run
- And many other variables

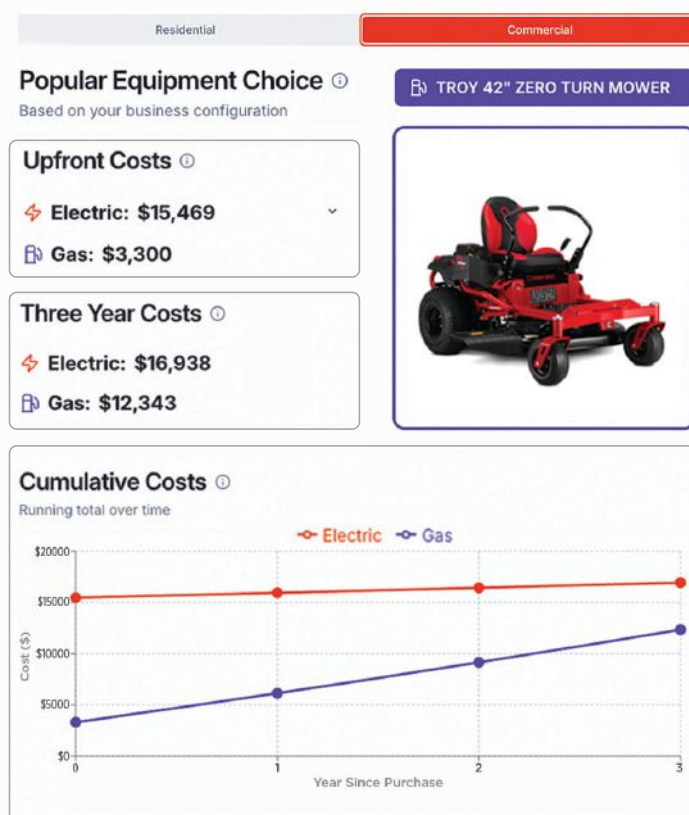
In building this calculator, we first calculated the total upfront cost of electric and gas equipment. Total upfront costs include the cost of the equipment itself, and in the case of electric equipment, also include the cost of the additional batteries you would need to make it through a full workday.

Next, we calculated the operating costs. This is where the cost of electricity and gas come into play, as well as the maintenance costs for replacing broken or worn-out parts (gas machines tend to have many more of these than battery-powered ones).

Finally, we predict the change in these prices based on inflation.

The result is a break-even over a three-year period, which seems to be the useful life of most equipment. Break-even is the upfront cost plus annual operating costs. In Fig. 1, you

FIG.1 Electric vs. Gas Lawn Mowers, Washington State



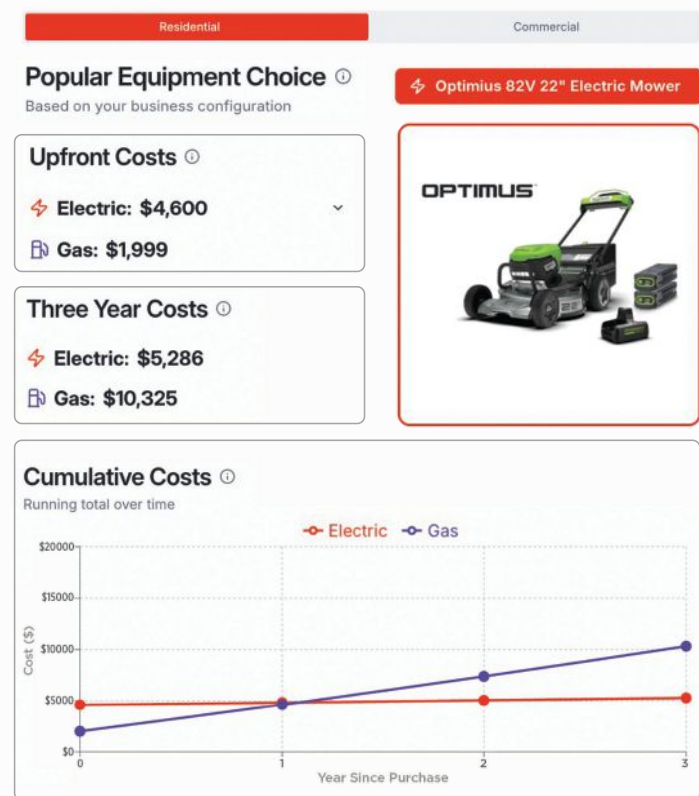
can see an example of the kind of results you would find for our home state of Washington.

RESIDENTIAL RESULTS

For residential properties (properties with less than an acre of land), we could not find a single state where it made economic sense to choose gas over electric equipment for mowers, trimmers or blowers.

And this was true with walk-behind mowers, as well, because these machines are quite efficient — you don't need a ton of extra batteries for them, and the savings on electricity pay for themselves in just over a year in most states (Fig. 2). Perhaps this is why I could not find a single gas-powered

FIG. 2 Electric vs. Gas Lawn Mowers, Florida



21-inch mower at Equip Exposition in Louisville last October.

COMMERCIAL RESULTS

The commercial sector is a little more mixed; for mowers, it almost never makes sense to go electric, for blowers it varies by state and for trimmers, electric wins across the board.

At this point in time, the cost of extra batteries (not to mention the logistics) for zero-turn mowers and similar large equipment outweighs the savings associated with operating them. So gas-powered equipment continues to win in those scenarios.

There is one exception: California. In California, it is always a positive investment to go electric.

You can try out the model and download the results for your state here: getduranta.com/resources/electric-vs-gas-calculator. ⓘ

Adeyemo is the co-founder and CEO of Duranta, an AI-powered software platform for landscapers and lawn care professionals.





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WATER WORLD

Rocky Mountain high

BY MIKE ZAWACKI | CONTRIBUTOR

LOCATION Estes Park, Colo.

COMPANY Alpine Gardens

DETAILS Alpine Gardens navigated extreme environmental and logistical hurdles to implement a multi-faceted irrigation strategy for its recent High Mountain Haven project in Estes Park, Colo.

According to project manager Brandon Vannest, to manage a 25-foot elevation change and the risk of uneven water distribution, the team installed a sophisticated drip irrigation system divided into distinct microclimate zones. These zones were specifically tailored to address varying light levels, heavy pine-needle soil accumulation and the specific needs of shaded versus sunny areas.

To ensure the long-term health of the landscape, Vannest says the team intentionally over-engineered the system by limiting drip line runs to 125 feet, which is roughly half the length used in standard installations. This approach extended to water volume, as each zone was designed to operate at only 75-percent capacity to account for future plant growth and increased water demands.

“You have to calculate what the water requirements are going to be in five years, and not necessarily the day that we install (the system),” he says.

Technical precision was further maintained by using a reduced-pressure backflow preventer and a Rain Bird ESP controller, which allowed for remote manual overrides when local valley weather data failed to match the property’s unique high-altitude snow and rain patterns.

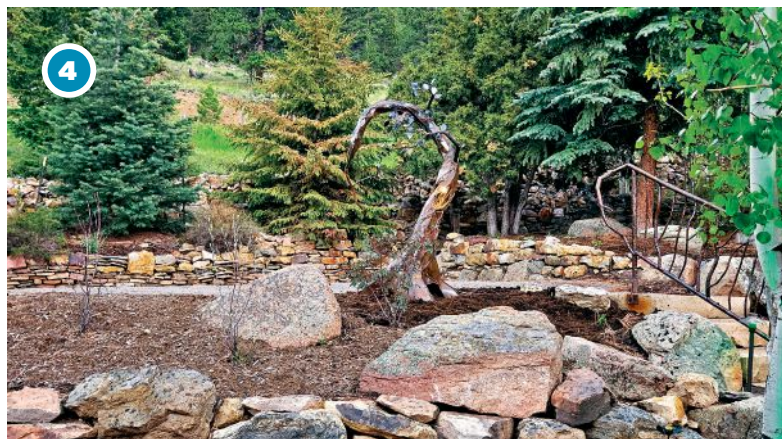
Sustainability and maintenance were also primary drivers of the irrigation design, Vannest says. The project utilized native, drought-tolerant and pest-resistant plantings to minimize water dependency. To protect the infrastructure from the area’s extensive hardscaping, Alpine Gardens installed 3-inch and 6-inch sleeves beneath all flagstone patios and walkways.

In 2025, the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) recognized Alpine Gardens with a gold award in its Awards of Excellence program for its work on the High Country Haven project. 

Zawacki is a Cleveland-based journalist and frequent contributor who has covered various aspects of the green, horticultural, sports turf and irrigation industries for the last 20 years.



PHOTOS: ALPINE GARDENS



Captions | 1. A multi-faceted irrigation strategy designed to successfully navigate extreme environmental and logistical hurdles was key to Alpine Gardens' work on the High Mountain Haven project, which earned the company a gold award in NALP's Awards of Excellence program. 2. An outdoor kitchen was the highlight of extensive hardscape work on the High Mountain Haven project. "We wanted to create an area of relaxation, a place that (the owners) can hang out, that they can just enjoy the space and the Colorado mountains," says Vannest. 3. Noting that the flagstone patios and walkways spanning the backyard could become permanent barriers to repairs, the Alpine Gardens team implemented an extensive sleeving strategy, installing 3-inch and 6-inch conduits beneath all hardscape elements. 4. To promote sustainability, the design at High Mountain Haven integrated an extensive palette of hardy, native plants suited to Colorado's unforgiving, arid, high-altitude environment. 5. Narrow mountain roads leading to the property restricted semi-truck access and prohibited staging areas, forcing the Alpine Gardens team to get creative in how they approached construction, Vannest says. 6. About 40 tons of landscape boulders were brought up the mountain for the High Mountain Haven project. 7. The project's primary water feature was this recirculating rock waterfall and stream system which was designed to mimic natural mountain runoff.

PRODUCTS THAT WORK

AM AUGER SPREADERS

COMPANY: Hilltip

URL: hilltipna.com/en

Hilltip is offering new extended auger models of its AM series combination spreaders. Designed for use on today's interchangeable truck bed systems, the extended auger allows the hopper to be positioned closer to the bulkhead of the truck for better weight distribution. Ranging in size from 2.0 to 4.2 cubic-yard capacities with polyethylene hoppers, the Hilltip AM series spreaders feature 6-inch stainless-steel augers for improved protection against corrosion and rust, and they can be powered by 12- or 24-volt dual motors. The hoppers include a vibrator and an inverted-V to help maximize material flow. For added versatility, AM series machines have integral liquid tanks ranging in capacity from 220 to 250 gallons. Pre-wetting nozzles, a dual spray bar and hose reel with a hand-held spray nozzle can be added for pre-wetting, anti-icing and deicing applications.

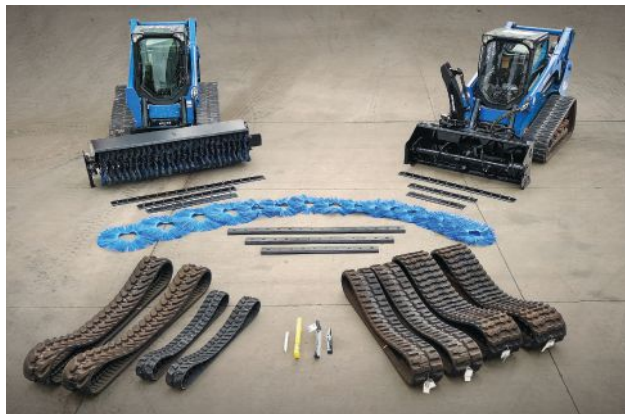


BLUE DIAMOND ATTACHMENTS

COMPANY: Blue Diamond

URL: bluediamondattachments.com

The Blue Diamond Attachments Parts and Accessories division is expanding its line of replacement work tool wear parts solutions for the snow removal industry, providing both end users and dealers access to a wide range of parts and accessories geared specifically for contractors in snow states. The solutions can be found and ordered 24 hours a day at the Blue Diamond Attachments webpage. The Blue Diamond Parts and Accessories division has ramped up its commitment to customers by offering a one-stop shop for all replacement needs, according to the company. Most replacement parts and accessories are in stock and ready to ship. Parts specifically available in the snow removal space include 100-percent poly broom wafers; ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene (UHMW) cutting edges; boron steel cutting edges; rubber tracks (compact track loader and mini skid-steer); and skid shoes for snow blowers and pushers.



M18 SNOW BLOWER

COMPANY: Milwaukee Tool

URL: milwaukeetool.com

The M18 snow blower is a new solution that aims to be one of the most powerful single-stage snow blowers on the market, the company says, enabling professionals to work faster while offering quieter operation and better visibility in demanding winter conditions. Powered by the Powerstate brushless motor, Milwaukee's new snow blower delivers 7.5 peak horsepower, enabling professionals to clear deep, heavy snow without stalling. This solution operates using two M18 Redlithium batteries and includes two additional battery terminals to extend runtime. When used with the included two M18 Redlithium Forge 12.0 batteries, this snow blower can clear 6 inches of average density snow for up to 11 car spaces or 500 feet of 3.5-foot-wide sidewalk. Designed for efficiency, this snow blower leverages a push-button start and a chute that is up to 40 percent wider. Featuring a rubber auger that propels the snow blower forward, this design reduces the strain of manual pushing through snow, a common frustration with metal augers, and ensures uninterrupted operation.



FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Scott Benson

PRESIDENT

BENSON LANDSCAPE AND DESIGN

VICTOR, N.Y.

1 What is Benson Landscape and Design, and how did it get its start?

I started Benson Landscape and Design in 1987, when I was a sophomore in high school. I did not have a truck, I did not have a formal business plan — and I couldn't even drive yet — but I had something that shaped the future of this company: discipline, vision and the belief that excellence creates opportunity.

My parents were executives with traditional corporate careers, and they encouraged me to finish college and secure a stable job in case the business didn't work out. But I never built Benson with a backup plan in mind. From the beginning, I believed that when you find a real problem to solve, deliver exceptional service and surround yourself with great people, you can build something meaningful — and help others grow and succeed along the way.

I started by servicing my neighborhood and hiring friends. Over time, it grew into a full-service company because we committed to delivering exceptional product quality with an exceptional client experience. We've always operated with extreme attention to detail — so much so that even today, my team says, "That's the Benson way." It's not standard service. It's craftsmanship, communication and follow-through at the highest level.

2 Any trends you're noticing with your clients?

Clients want more than just landscaping; they want a functional, private and restorative outdoor retreat. Since COVID, this desire for home-as-a-destination has grown, increasing demand for a full-service, trusted team to manage the entire process with attention to detail.

3 What do you and your family do for fun?

My wife and I really enjoy spending time with our family and making the most of life outside of work. We have three girls in our world, ages 14, 16 and 20, so life stays busy in the best way.

One of the things we enjoy most is traveling and exploring different parts of the world. It's how we recharge, create memories and stay curious. For me personally, travel is also a huge source of inspiration — I'm always paying attention to design, architecture, outdoor spaces and how different places create atmosphere and lifestyle. Those experiences often spark new ideas that I bring back into our work, helping us continue to elevate what we create for our clients.

4 What motivated you to join a peer group, and how do you like it?

I was first introduced to peer groups through Marty Grunder's GROW!, and later I met people like Jason New and Jim Cali who helped open the door to a whole new level of learning and leadership. What surprised me most is that the greatest value hasn't just been personal — it's been what has allowed me to do for my team.

Being part of a peer group allows you to share experiences in a safe, non-competitive environment, while also gaining exposure to stronger systems, better processes and more effective leadership habits. Peer groups have helped us build a stronger organization with clearer operational structure, better communication and accountability and better opportunities for our people.

5 Do you have a most memorable day at work?

One of the most memorable days of my career was a trip we took to Mexico a couple of years ago. We have team members from Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia who have been with us for more than 20 years. During the off-season, many return home, so we went and hosted a gathering — and more than 120 people attended, including extended family members.

What made it unforgettable was that they shared how working with us created real opportunities for them and their families. 🇲🇽

BEST ADVICE

"Never forget what it feels like to be the customer. Keep learning, keep improving and keep building people — because when your team grows and your standards stay high, you don't just build landscapes, you build trust and legacy."



DEFINING ROLES

#68

From current to prospective employees, Dupper Landscape narrows job descriptions to ensure the team's success **BY LAUREN H. DOWDLE | CONTRIBUTOR**

In the same way it targets the types of clients and projects to take on, Russ Dupper, president/CEO of Dupper Landscape, and his son Josh Dupper, vice president, also hone their team's job descriptions to set them up for success.

Landing at No. 68 on *Landscape Management's* 2025 LM150 listing of the industry's top revenue-generating firms, the Tempe, Ariz., company primarily focuses on commercial bid/build and maintenance.

RIGHT FIT

When the company started looking at its team's current pain points, Russ Dupper says it realized the management team needed a support staff to help with daily administration work as the company grew. Hiring the support staff gave management a better work/life balance, and it also allowed them to focus more on productivity.

Russ Dupper says they also broke down other roles into more specialized areas to minimize the types of tasks for each team member.

"We got really detailed and specific with the structure to minimize each task they had to do," Josh Dupper says. "When someone tries to do too many things, they don't do any of them well."

That strategy also applied to the company's hiring process.

"We started with defining what the roles would be and what that would require, so when we started hiring, we knew exactly what we were looking for," Russ Dupper says. "In the first interview, we were looking



The team at Dupper Landscape in Tempe, Ariz., No. 68 on the 2025 LM150 list.

for the knowledge, skill and ability of the person. In the second interview, we would look at whether they were a cultural fit."

STANDARDIZED SYSTEM

Dupper Landscape also looked for ways to streamline its other processes to keep its team members on the same page. The company created standard operating procedures for its desktop training, providing digital support to the team without requiring additional time from managers.

In 2024, they also began using Aspire software, and Josh Dupper says that addition was the biggest contributor to their growth.

"Going from having several spreadsheets to one enterprise resource planning system to capture all of the guys' time, ensure all of the hours were billed, and revenue was realized was one of the biggest factors to becoming profitable while growing," he says.

PLANS FOR GROWTH

The relationships the company has formed during the past 42 years of

providing quality work and honest pricing have created a solid foundation for future growth, as well, Russ Dupper says. His advice to other owners is to ensure they create a solid plan before trying to expand, like ensuring they have the right people and software in place. Using the right technology also allows companies to react in real-time, instead of months down the line.

"You need a budget, KPIs, job costs and reports so you can see how successful you are to make sure you're profitable," Russ Dupper says.

Looking ahead, Dupper Landscape is gearing up to open a new branch in the Phoenix metro area to grow the maintenance division, and Josh Dupper says they hope to open a second by the end of the year. The company is also open to making acquisitions if it finds the right fit. But no matter what strategic step they take next, it will be a well-defined team effort.

"One of our core values is teamwork," Russ says. "We don't do anything without engaging our team. That's a critical part of every decision we make in terms of growing the company and being successful." 

Dowdle is a freelance writer based in Birmingham, Ala.



Russ Dupper



Josh Dupper



GROWTH SUMMIT

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Reunion Resort — Orlando, FL



Being in the green space for 42 years, this was by far one of the best events. *Landscape Management* has a great format. The information both from the vendors and the other attendees was top notch. I am currently conversing with many of the individuals who I met there.”

— KEVIN SALTERS,
OWNER, ROOT DEVELOPMENT LLC



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BY JUSTIN WHITE

The author is the CEO of K&D Landscaping in Watsonville, Calif. He can be reached at justin@kndlandscaping.com.

Why even the best plans fail

Are you struggling with strategy? In today's world of artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, peer groups, podcasts, consultants and strong publications like *Landscape Management*, building a strategy for your business isn't hard. With the right tools available, you can sit down for 20 minutes, unload your thoughts into ChatGPT and walk away with a 10-page plan that covers vision, finances, operations, people and growth. There are also affordable operating systems and frameworks that teach business owners how to implement those plans step by step. Information is everywhere.

And yet, as I talk to landscapers about how 2025 went for them, I continue to hear the same story. The plans were solid. The goals were ambitious. The intentions were real. But the execution fell short. Great strategies were created, but they were never fully accomplished.

FORMULATE AND EXECUTE

The most common mistake I see is that people create a plan and then go right back to living the same life, yet they expect a different outcome.

This challenge is hard enough on a personal level. Think about how often people set goals around fitness, finances or personal development and fail to follow through. Now imagine applying that same challenge to a small team. Then expand it to an entire organization. As more people become involved, execution becomes more complex, and misalignment becomes more costly.

For the last 10 years, I have been studying and applying how goals are achieved. I have accomplished major bucket list items like becoming a pilot and helping grow a landscape

company from \$1 million to more than \$20 million in revenue. At the same time, I have failed at things that should have been simple, such as working out consistently or protecting time for personal hobbies.

Recently, while doing deep planning work for the year ahead, I was reminded of something that has been true for a long time. Most of us do not need more education. We already know what to do. We need to be reminded of what we already know and what already exists within us.

3-S FRAMEWORK

That realization led me back to a simple but powerful framework that reshaped how I think about execution. It is called the 3-S framework, introduced to me by Tony Robbins. It explains why even the best plans fail and what it takes to bring them to life.

The first "S" is strategy. Strategy answers the basic questions of what you want to accomplish and how you plan to get there. However, this is where most people stop, and that is the problem. Strategy is the least important part of the model.

The second "S" is story. Your story is the narrative you tell yourself about who you are, what you are capable of and what is possible for your future. If you are creating goals and strategies without addressing your story, you may be working toward outcomes that you do not truly believe are possible.

On an individual level, this shows up as hesitation, procrastination or self-sabotage. On a team level, it shows up as misalignment, lack of ownership and quiet resistance. If your team does not share a clear and compelling story about where the company is going and why it matters, even the strongest strategy will struggle to survive.

“If your team does not share a clear and compelling story about where the company is going and why it matters, even the strongest strategy will struggle to survive.”

The third "S" is state, and this is the most overlooked part of the framework. State refers to your physiological and emotional condition. It is your mindset and the way you feel in your body. Think about a recent moment when you felt confident, energized and unstoppable. Maybe it was after a great conversation with a team member, a meaningful client win or a personal accomplishment.

DON'T IGNORE STATE AND STORY

When you are in the right state, challenges feel manageable, decisions feel clearer and action feels natural. When you start with state, then reinforce your story, and finally set your strategy, your goals become anchored at a much deeper level. When this happens across an entire team, the effect multiplies through shared energy, shared belief and shared direction.

The final piece is sustainability. Getting into peak state is important, but staying there is what drives long-term success.

Execution is not about working harder or building more complex plans. It is about designing your life and your business so that progress becomes the default. Even the best plans fail when state and story are ignored. When they are aligned, strategy finally has something solid to stand on. 



BY BEN GANDY

The author is principal of Envisor Consulting. Reach him at bengandy@envisorco.com.

The steps to challenge complacent success

Jim Collins popularized the saying, “Good is the enemy of great,” in his book “Good to Great.”

It’s profound. It implies that to be great (a great company, a great person, live a great life), we can’t be OK with good. In fact, good will get in the way. Good must be challenged, dismantled and reset. Then it must be done again.

Challenging the good, leading change even when things are working — this is squarely in the center of leadership’s job. Managers can identify when things are not working and fix problems, but it takes leaders to disrupt the status quo and insist on change, even when things are working.

But how do we do it? What are the elements in leading change that minimize the chaos and pushback, optimize the opportunity, and keep the leader in the driver’s seat? Taking a leaf from John Kotter’s “Leading Change” business book, here’s a roadmap for organizational transformation.

1 Vision. To quote Simon Sinek’s “Start with Why” concept, leaders must be clear in their own minds why change is necessary and best for the organization. The reasons must be compelling and fact-based.

The leader must articulate a vision. What will it look like once we’ve gone through this change? How does this benefit our clients and the team? What will it look like if we don’t?

Building a compelling vision doesn’t need to be done in a vacuum, but it’s not to be delegated either. Leadership must set and control the vision.



2 Consensus. Be savvy. Who are the most influential people in the organization? This is not always those sitting at the top of the hierarchy. Approach these people first, share the ideas and invite feedback. You need the influential people in the organization to back you up behind the scenes as well as publicly. Ensuring they’re on board first is key to managing the message.

3 Strategy. Strategies are built by identifying the necessary actions, prioritizing them and sequencing the activities.

To the extent that the managers in the organization are competent, involve them in strategy building. Their knowledge is generally broader than the leader’s knowledge, and ownership of activities can be more easily pushed to managers if they participate in strategy formation.

4 Communicate. Once the initiative(s) have been identified, the vision created, consensus established and a strategy developed, communicate, communicate, communicate.

Create slogans, logos and bywords that carry the message. Include discussion of the initiative in all meetings — sales meetings, operations meetings, leadership meetings.

Overcommunicating has a small downside risk. Undercommunicating carries a huge risk.

5 Create wins. When developing the strategy, ensure we know what a win looks like. Without being disingenuous, capture early wins, even if they’re small. Celebrate these. Teams need to hear and understand what a win looks like.

6 Overcome the obstacles. Every initiative that gets launched has some unforeseen challenges, obstacles or consequences that threaten to slow, derail or impede the initiative. Leadership’s job is to acknowledge the obstacles and help the team overcome them.

7 Sustain. Once the initiative begins to bear fruit and become part of the way business is done, reinforce the change. Hold people accountable. Ensure the SOPs get written. Foster incentive plans to support it.

We have the privilege of working with companies around the country that are tackling change initiatives within their organizations, ranging from structural changes to changes in their sales processes to new ideas and applications in their operations.

Often, strong leaders can do a credible job leading change in their organizations, but there are other times when leaders struggle. Missing these steps is often at the root of failed initiatives. When initiatives fail, there may not be a reset button. The team has soured on the idea.

Leadership is a privilege; managing change well is mission — critical to success. In fact, this is the hallmark of great leaders — those who successfully transform their organizations to take advantage of today’s opportunities and meet tomorrow’s challenges. 



BY GREG HERRING

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

Change your trajectory in 2026

If you pay attention to the news, you will absorb negative sentiments about the economy. It is easy to let this information cloud your views. It happens to me sometimes, but then I see information that changes my outlook for the better, such as the results of the 12th-annual Herring Group Peer Benchmark Report. This year's study reminds me that businesses have the power to improve their trajectories.

In 2025, 150 companies participated in the Benchmark Report, representing 20,000 employees and totaling \$2.3 billion in annual revenue, which is coincidentally about the size of BrightView. The annual revenue of participating companies ranged from \$1 million to \$175 million.

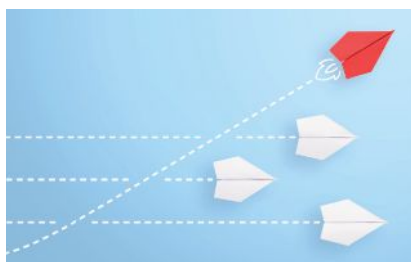
A few highlights:

- Revenue growth averaged 16.7 percent in 2025.
- During the Benchmark Report webinar, nearly nine-in-10 poll participants said they expect revenue to be up in 2026 over 2025.
- The average operating profit margin increased to 7.9 percent, up from 6.9 percent in the prior year.
- The percentage of companies with an operating profit margin greater than 10 percent increased from 31 percent in 2024 to 35 percent in 2025, a 13 percent increase.

At The Herring Group, we focus on operating profit margin as a key benchmark for success in landscape businesses. It is the single metric that measures customer satisfaction, management effectiveness and operational efficiency.

HIGHER VERSUS LOWER PERFORMERS

We divide the Benchmark Report



companies into two groups. One set has companies with an operating profit margin less than 10 percent (lower performers), and the other has companies with an operating profit margin greater than 10 percent (higher performers). The goal is to see what distinguishes low performers from high performers.

The average operating profit margin was 3.4 percent for the lower performers and 13.9 percent for the higher performers — a 10.5-point difference. Another way to think about it: Every time a lower-performing company earns a profit of \$100, a higher-performing company earns \$400 for the same work.

The increase in the percentage of companies with an operating profit margin greater than 10 percent was exciting to see. This number has increased every year, from 24 percent in 2021 to 35 percent in 2025.

Here is the question to consider: What is causing this increase in the percentage of high-performing companies? Because of our work with clients, we have a great view of what has been changing in the industry over the last five years.

First, the industry has benefited from great business management software like Aspire. Aspire helps organize the operations for a landscape company. In addition, the data that Aspire

captures can provide great insights into areas where a company is either highly profitable or unprofitable.

Second, there are many new niche software products that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Team Engine is a good example. It organizes, automates and increases the speed of the recruiting, hiring and onboarding processes. It also offers AI-driven, automated employee communication in English and Spanish.

Third, landscape companies have profited from industry-specific technology like Weathermatic's SmartLink system. This combination of hardware and software increases the efficiency and effectiveness of irrigation operations and improves employee satisfaction.

Fourth, the availability of outsourced professional services has enabled smaller companies to have the same level of resources as very large companies at a fraction of the cost. Examples include Covello, a professional bookkeeping firm, and The Herring Group for specialized financial leadership.

Finally, the increased participation of private equity firms in the landscape industry has brought a serious focus on improving processes and boosting profitability.

SEEING WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Interestingly, there were high performers in every size range, with every revenue mix (maintenance, snow, construction) and in every region of the country.

The high-performing companies find a way. They have a high-performance mindset, they use data effectively, and they execute diligently. 

RESOURCES

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GROW WITH GRUNDER

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.



Prepare now for the busy season ahead

We have 10 months of 2026 ahead of us, and I know a lot of us have long to-do lists for the year ahead.

At the time of writing, we're in the final preparations for our event, GROW! 2026, but by the time you read this, the event will be behind us.

My slides and remarks are all prepared, and I've seen a good portion of our other teachers' presentations, too. So, I can tell you with certainty that the people who join us in Dallas are going to be well-prepared to hit the ground running this spring. I also have some words of wisdom as you make your final preparations for your own busy seasons.

MAKE TIME TO BE DISCIPLINED

We know how March through July can get. Look ahead now and block time on your calendar to focus on the little things that add up to big things. This will vary by your role within the company but now is a good time to put thought into what's most important. What metric do you need to check in on daily or weekly? What task could you get done weekly that would set you up for success?

For my sales teams, for example, I think it's important that they're setting aside time to track their leads, practice handling objections and follow up with clients. What activities lead to sales being made, and are those on your calendar? If not, do it now, while it's fresh on your mind.

I also like to see them working on prospecting each week by sending

“We know how March through July can get. Look ahead now and block time on your calendar to focus on the little things that add up to big things.”

handwritten notes, messaging prospects on LinkedIn or attending community events. They're blocking out their calendars now so that the chaos of the busy season doesn't distract them from what's important.

Let's be in the fire prevention department, not the firefighting department. You know what to do, but you have to set time aside to do it.

ENSURE YOUR PROCESSES ARE READY

With new team members or a growing team, it's critical for companies to have standard operating procedures and documented processes in place. Teams need these for every crew to deliver the same quality of work with consistency.

It takes time to get to a place where everything is done. At GROW! 2026, Kevin Keim, an executive coach with our ACE Peer Group program, will share how teams can use AI to create documentation faster and supplement their training. We'll also have the folks from Greenius by Granum there, which is a tool we're using at Grunder Landscaping Co. to roll out on-demand training for our crews.

Training is an investment, not an expense. It's our No. 1 focus at GLC this year, especially sales training in

prospect screening, the selling process and especially the process of bidding and selling profitable work.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

If you're leading people in this industry, you know that every project and season comes with unexpected challenges. You can't always plan for them, but you can spend the early months of the year doing research to prepare for them.

In 2025, we took on jobs that were larger and more complicated than any we'd done in the history of Grunder Landscaping Co. Even with all my work at The Grow Group and the network of landscape pros that I have, we made some mistakes that could've been avoided if we had listened to other contractors who have done work like this before.

We all know what's coming when the weather warms up, and we need to be prepared to make hay when the sun shines. We can get organized now so that our sales team can maximize the jobs they close, our production team can use their hours efficiently and our leaders can do what's needed to support the team. The biggest opportunities present themselves in the next few months.

As you're prepping for the busy season — or once it arrives, and you're driving between jobsites and sales calls — make sure you're subscribed to my podcast, “The Grow Show.” We share tactics that can help landscape pros, and go into more detail about our in-person events. Find it at growgroupinc.com/the-grow-show-landscaping-podcast. 

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