

Amount of equipment owned by landscape contractors.

\$3,744 per year per firm, with a total market figure of \$17,400,000 based upon 4,700 firms. Most chemical buying takes place in March. However, a significant amount of chemical buying occurs in April, May and September. Chemical buying is not as winter-oriented as is equipment buying.

The median number of full-time landscape staff members was three. The median number of seasonal or part-time workers was six.

The annual gross revenue of contractors responding was \$173,718, with a median figure of \$100,000. Projecting the average to the magazine's qualified circulation in the market provided a total revenue figure of \$800,000,000. Projecting total market revenue using 7,000 firms gave a figure of \$1,216,026,000.

When asked what they charged for various services the following rates were obtained:

sod—average 27¢/sq. ft., median 25¢/sq. ft.

seeding—average \$71/1000 sq. ft., median \$50/1000 sq. ft.

hydromulching — average \$52/1000 sq. ft., median \$40/1000 sq. ft.

Aerating — average \$19.50/1000 sq. ft., median \$11/1000 sq. ft.

Advertising expenditures are greatly centered around Yellow Page advertising. Eighty-four percent of the respondents use the Yellow Pages at an average cost of \$900 per year. More than half advertise in newspapers at an average annual cost of \$1,200 and a median cost of \$300. Direct mail and brochures are used by a fifth or more of the respondents. The average spent for direct mail was \$1,000, with a median of \$500. Brochures cost an average of \$500, with a median of \$200 per year. Other types of advertising used are radio (10 percent spending an average of \$1,200), television (4 percent), and trade journals (7 percent for an average of \$275). Seventeen percent indicated costs of selling in person for an average of \$1,100 and a median of \$500.

The respondents to the survey have a good feeling about the coming year. Nearly three-fourths expect an increase in business this year. Seventy percent reported gains averaging more than 20 percent in 1977.

WTT

Type of Equipment	% who own this type	projected # of pieces owned by 4660 contractors	projected # of pieces owned by 7000 contractors
aerator	41%	2960	4470
backhoe	35%	2320	3500
bulldozer	12%	920	1390
cultivating disks	26%	1800	2720
fork lifts	16%	760	1150
hydromulcher	18%	1120	1690
tractor mowers	59%	5970	9010
manual mowers	75%	25,700	38,800
rototiller	70%	6090	9190
sod harvester	17%	1200	1810
pick-up truck	84%	8770	13,200
dump truck	76%	7490	11,300
flat-bed truck	9%	1040	1570
tree spade	13%	840	1270
trenchers	12%	720	1090
tractors	57%	6130	9250



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# SOLO

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# CONTRA COSTA: GENERAL LANDSCAPING AND HYDROSEEDING

Landscape contractors in the Oakland/San Francisco area have contended with drought for nearly three years. Until recently, lack of rainfall placed a damper on business, but Ken Gerlack (CLCA), president of Contra Costa Landscaping Inc., in Martinez, discovered some relief by being one of three Bay Area contractors offering hydroseeding for erosion control.

The rain finally returned this winter and Gerlack, and vice president Burt Harrington anticipate a boom this spring.

Contra Costa depends primarily on commercial construction and maintenance for its \$750,000 business volume. Nearly 90 percent of construction is derived from bidding on public and private work. Currently, construction represents 40 percent of gross revenue, maintenance 35 percent, and hydroseeding the remaining 25 percent. Maintenance

**Athletic fields** and park areas are two specialties for Contra Costa.



nance business should jump with favorable growing conditions this year.

Gerlack and his permanent staff of 12 keep tabs on new construction by subscribing to a local construction newspaper and participating in the local builders' exchange. Since most work is based on architectural specifications, only a small amount of design work is necessary.

Contra Costa's seasonal staff numbers 25 from March through October. During the off season, Gerlack does much of the hydroseeding work to maintain a healthy cash flow.

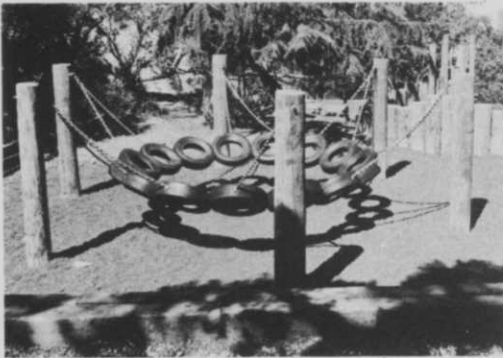
In the Bay Area, exposed soil from any type of construction is highly subject to erosion since the topography is hilly and the rainfall great. Consequently, the revegetation market is larger than normal and hydroseeding is playing an increasingly significant role in it.

Contra Costa does relatively little residential work, primarily large estates. The Bay Area is one of the last holdouts of the estate gardener. There are a significant number of very wealthy homeowners in the San Francisco area who invest more than \$200,000 in a home. A small percentage of these still have full-time gardeners and many have part-time gardeners.

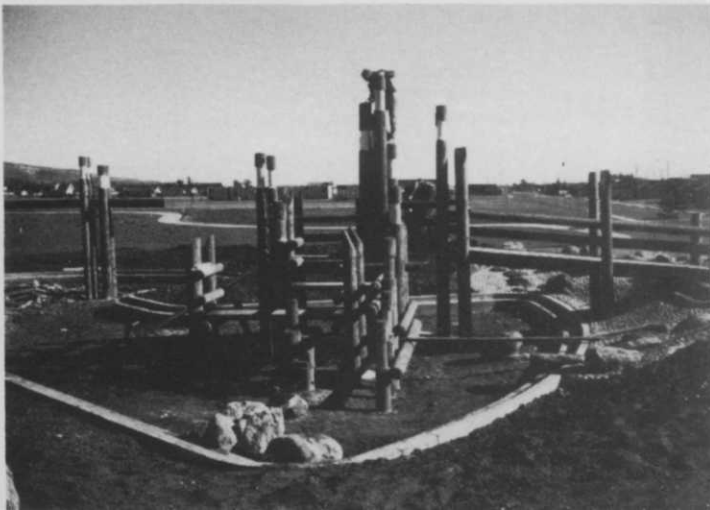
Another factor is the large number of uncertified, generally untrained individuals who, because they are enamored by outdoor occupations, are willing to do basic maintenance chores at below standard rates.

Types of work subcontracted out by Gerlack are large earth moving, much of the irrigation and drainage installation, and structural jobs such as construction of patios, decks, sidewalks, and fences.

The company has not experi-



**Playground equipment** should be a part of the park, not just structures placed there. Here are a few of Contra Costa creations.





...the tough one,  
for total vegetation control!

**ELANCO**



- Less pounds last longer !
- Gets most tough weeds and most brush others leave behind !
- Gets most tenacious vines, brambles and woody plants !
- Is remarkably resistant to leaching and lateral movement !

## Acceptability!

For the past several years, SPIKE has been tested in actual field situations with commercial equipment. When applied in accordance with label directions, SPIKE will result in a high level of long lasting total vegetation control.

Test plot demonstrates dramatic result of single application of SPIKE. ▶



## Durability!

Commercial field use has demonstrated that at recommended application rates SPIKE remains effective longer than most other products tested, and permits lower application rates in succeeding years. Long-term control prevents regrowth for extended periods of time.

Missouri test plot treated with SPIKE shows residual control 2 years later! ▶





# Capability!

Five years of development and more than three years of extensive nationwide on-site testing in non-crop areas have proven SPIKE

highly effective in the control of a wide spectrum of vegetation, including many of the so-called hard-to-control species. SPIKE effectively controls many tough perennials, as well as many woody brush and vine-type species that escape other control products.



Dead common mullein along right-of-way is a dramatic example of SPIKE's effectiveness on tough-to-control species.



Commercially-applied test plot demonstrates SPIKE's ability to eliminate persistent varieties such as Bouncing Bet.

# Suitability!

Because of SPIKE's features

- Less pounds last longer
- Gets most tough to control weeds and brush
- Gets most tenacious woody vines and brambles
  - Is remarkably resistant to leaching and lateral movement

... SPIKE belongs in your total vegetation program.

"Before" and "after" views of the same test plot clearly demonstrate SPIKE's ability to control brush and woody vegetation.



# Dependability!

... that's what all of SPIKE'S abilities add up to. SPIKE is a proven total vegetation control product that is truly tough on weeds! What's your tough vegetation control problem? Whatever it is, consider SPIKE an essential weapon in your chemical arsenal. Contact your ELANCO distributor for full details on SPIKE ... the tough one for total vegetation control!

**ELANCO**

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safer for your turf than many commercial fertilizers. When compared to a 12-4-8 fertilizer, it saves you two-thirds of the storage space and reduces labor by as much as fifty percent because you apply fewer bags per acre.

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## Contra Costa

enced a great demand for interior landscaping service although it has completed a number of inside jobs. Gerlack is especially proud of an indoor landscape he did for the Marin County Courthouse. The company does not aggressively seek indoor maintenance contracts at the present time.

One growing area for Contra Costa is maintenance of public athletic fields. Getting the fields in shape for the football season and repairing them afterward are two tasks more school officials are giving to professionals. Often, much of a school's athletic budget is derived from gate receipts of games played in its stadium. Consequently, the production of athletic contests is as much a business as it is a public service. Gerlack is currently working with a number of school systems for their stadium maintenance.

Contra Costa has a greenhouse for some of its plant stock. No retail selling of nursery stock or wholesale selling to other landscapers takes place.

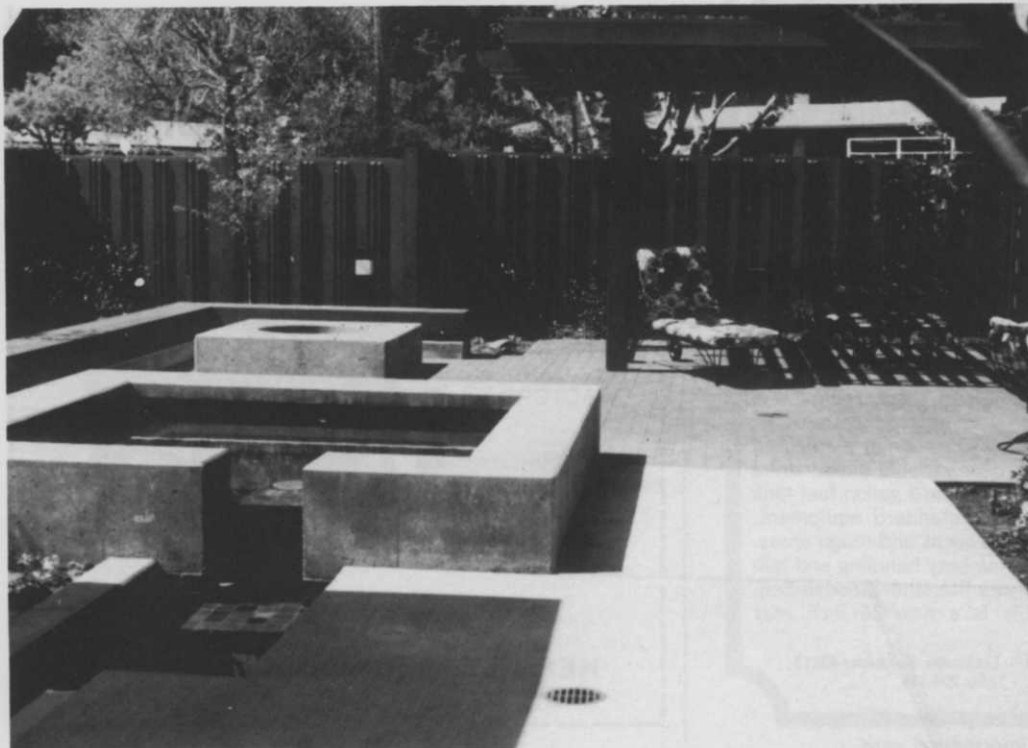
Shunning large inventories, Gerlack purchases most chemicals by the job. Except for fertilizer, he makes monthly purchases of herbicides, fungicides, pesticides, and conditioners. These purchases total roughly \$15,000 per year.

Equipment expenditure per year averages \$25,000. He buys all vehicles rather than lease them. An inventory of Gerlack's equipment shows the following:

passenger autos — 8  
pickup trucks (¾ ton or smaller) — 8  
dump trucks — 2  
tractors — 2 Massey-Ferguson 40 hp, 1 MF 65  
hydroseeder — 1 Finn  
riding mowers — 6  
push mowers — 6  
rototillers — 3 walk behind

1 tractor drawn  
dethatchers — 2 walk behind  
1 tractor drawn  
forklift — 1 tractor attached  
aerators — 3 walk behind  
1 tractor drawn

Gerlack estimated his repair and maintenance costs at \$5,000 per year. He keeps an inventory of problem parts such as belts, pulleys, etc. He does not keep a large inventory of backup equipment and stresses the importance of proper equipment care to his men. If a mower does break down Gerlack has to drive 70 miles to get service.



**Residential landscaping** entails combining manmade structures with nature's to provide a relaxing atmosphere.

## Contra Costa

When asked about prices for certain types of work, Gerlack said nearly all his prices are bid according to specifications and costs. Rates for sod installation, he said, can be as little as 20 cents/sq. ft. for large areas with little soil preparation or

as much as 40 cents/sq. ft. for small jobs with considerable soil preparation.

Contra Costa does little advertising. It carries an ad in the state's landscaping magazine for its hydroseeding service. Beyond this, it has

brochures for selling maintenance service. Most of the job seeking is done by staying on top of the local building scene to be included in all available bidding.

If Gerlack has one single concern, it is the abundance of untrained and uncertified landscape contractors in the area. He anticipates the number of such people to jump when the market takes off this spring. He is a certified landscape contractor and thinks anyone spending money on landscaping should check the credentials of any individual claiming to be a contractor before giving the go ahead. Gerlack dreads competing with the "have pickup truck, will do anything" firms. They are the only negative aspect of what he anticipates to be a banner year for the landscape contracting business in the Bay Area this year.



**Only three landscapers** offer hydroseeding in the San Francisco area. Contra Costa is one.

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Test plot demonstrates dramatic result of single application of Spike. ▶

MONTH

AFTER MONTH

AFTER MONTH



## Dependability!

... that's what all of Spike's properties add up to. Spike is a proven broad spectrum vegetation control product that is truly tough on weeds! What's your tough vegetation control problem? You should consider Spike an essential weapon in your chemical arsenal. Contact your Elanco distributor for full details on Spike ... the tough one for broad spectrum vegetation control!

### ...the tough one, for broad spectrum vegetation control

- Does your herbicide get the tough weeds?
- How long does your herbicide last?
- Is your herbicide as economical as Spike<sup>®</sup>?

Does your herbicide measure up to Spike? Maybe you should compare your herbicide with Spike granular in some other ways too.



also available as  
a 5% Granular.

## ELANCO

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# DISANTO COMPANIES: DESIGN, BUILD AND MAINTAIN

When DiSanto Companies moved into new and larger quarters in Cleveland two years ago, it renewed and increased its commitment to the landscape industry.

The DiSanto brothers, Dennis and George, decided it was time to expand their outdoor construction and maintenance business into the areas of design, lawn care, and interior landscaping. As a result, DiSanto is now in the top three in the Northeast Ohio market following a 30 percent increase in business in 1977 to more than \$750,000.

Short range goals are to purchase a large, local tree care company, increase its share of the lawn care market, and to continue to actively bid on both interior and exterior construction and maintenance projects.

Since last year, DiSanto has had a full-time landscape designer, Martin Pawlikowski, a graduate of the Ohio State landscape architecture program. Dennis DiSanto predicts that more landscape construction work will be under separate contract from the general building contract as landscapers develop their own design capabilities. The landscape work is often the last completed on a project and, if done improperly, can hold up acceptance and consequently payment to the general contractor. "If it's a sizeable project and the owners or the clients want to make sure the job is done properly, they will pull the landscape contract out of the general contract," Dennis says.

Landscaping has been a part of the DiSanto family for many years. Fred DiSanto, father of Dennis and George, was an estate gardener and exposed his sons to it. In 1959, the company was formed primarily for maintenance. The company's promise has been, "only what your turf and trees need and only when they need it. Some adjustment to this philosophy has been required for the lawn care division.

The company has its own greenhouse, but stays out of the retail



Putting the final touches on the zoo job are (l. to r.) George DiSanto, Dennis DiSanto, Carolyn Brown, and Martin Pawlikowski. The rewards of their efforts in exterior and interior design projects. (right)

