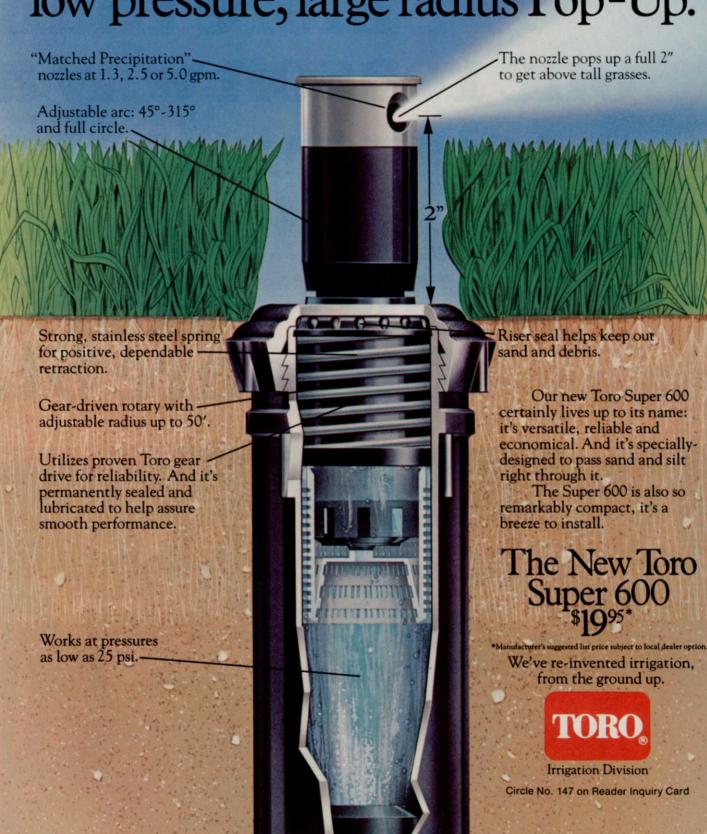
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Actual Size

Third in a series

There's usually more than one reason why a company is the leader in its field. For ProTurf, there are 61.

Fifty-four ProTurf Tech Reps provide invaluable advice and support to golf course superintendents throughout North America.



1-54

Experienced personnel

Key to the leadership status of ProTurf are the dedicated experts who work with golf course superintendents to achieve vigorous, high quality turf... the 54 ProTurf Tech Reps. Each is thoroughly trained in agronomy; turf management; grass, weed, insect and disease identification and the features and benefits of Scotts. professional products and services. Because of this background, the Tech Reps can help a superintendent develop a turf program that not only meets his course's needs, but also gives the most return for every maintenance dollar spent.

55 Full product line

More than 5,000 golf courses depend on ProTurf products specifically designed and research-tested for golf course usage: fertilizers, including specialty nutrient and regional products; fungicides; combinations of fertilizers and pesticides; seed, and application equipment.



56 Research expertise

Every ProTurf product is backed by more than 55 years of Scotts turfgrass experience. And, that knowledge is constantly being expanded by more than 120 full-time research specialists at the headquarters research center and five research stations across the country. They use more than 300 acres of test plots and 40 golf courses to study everything from plant pathology to equipment design and application. All, so you can have the most economical, convenient and effective turf products.

57 Seminars & tours

Each year, approximately 2,200 golf course superintendents take advantage

of the 38 seminars conducted by the ProTurf Technical Institute. Attendees receive the latest information on a variety of subjects to aid the professional turf manager in solving problems fast. Special attention focuses on understanding fertilizers and new products, plus the identification, prevention and control of insects and disease. When seminars are conducted in Marysville, the groups also tour Scotts research labs and test plots.



58 Technical communications

Although the Tech Rep is the key communication channel, ProTurf keeps its clients up to date by other means, too. ProTurf publishes two free magazines to circulate information to the industry: "ProTurf," directed to improving golf course turf management; "Turf & Grounds Manager," directed to turf managers of companies, apartments, athletic fields, parks and lawn service firms. Additional data are included in technical bulletins, product guides and general materials.



59 Special services

ProTurf maintains one of the most comprehensive soil testing programs in the Circle No. 141 on Reader Inquiry Card industry. Each soil analysis includes results and recommendations on the soil's physical characteristics (soil profile, water and air movement and thatch depth) and chemical characteristics (nutrient availability, nutrient deficiencies and chemical toxicities) in an easy-to-understand manner. During a year, more than 16,500 samples are received and tested.

Because irrigation water can have strong impact on turf growth and vigor, ProTurf also offers water quality testing. Each water analysis measures electrical conductivity, pH levels, sodium absorption and the amounts of chlorides, boron or bicarbonates.

No matter which test is done, your ProTurf Tech Rep will help you understand the results and proposed recommendations.



60 Budget planning

As a golf course superintendent, you face the challenge of maintaining your course within a given budget. Your Tech Rep will be happy to discuss your course's needs and make sound recommendations based upon your soil and water analysis results. He'll also help you decide what to do about drainage problems, nutrient and pesticide requirements and other turf-related subjects. Then, together, you can set up a maintenance program that exactly meets both your turf and budget needs.

A reputation of quality

ProTurf is the professional division of the O.M. Scott & Sons Company, the turfgrass industry leader.





Hydro-Scape carries 16 lines of irrigation equipment, sod, chemicals, but no large landscape equipment.

A second important reason for Hydro-Scape branching out into landscape products is the dual roles of the Southern Californian landscape contractor. Many of the company's customers do both landscape contracting and irrigation contracting. "Prior to us no other distributor carried both," said Larsen. In a typical transaction, a landscape contractor might first purchase his irrigation materials, then soil amendments, fertilizer, trees, edging and sod.

Even while Hydro-Scape strives to be a full-service distributor, it keeps an eve on business management at all times. A case in point was the decision not to carry turfgrass maintenance equipment. such as mowers and aerators. (Their landscape equipment line consists mostly of hand tools and spreaders.) "We don't have a service facility, so we carry very little maintenance equipment," said Larsen. "We have no inventory, but we will order items on special request. Basically, those items take up a lot of space and turn slowly."

With margins being squeezed slimmer and slimmer, Hydro-Scape turned to computers to fatten profits. They hit paydirt with their Nixdorf system. Their 3000 regular business accounts were programmed according to their method of buying, method of payment, volume and other categories. This simplified the pricing structure and enabled the customer to get the best discount possible. Inventory management was also made more cost-effective. "The system enabled us to buy faster and we found that the cost of our inventory dropped," said Larsen, "especially the price of plastics." Larsen stressed that they don't pick up the computer print-out and then order accordingly. "We still like the personal feel for inventory. We do a rough count on what we have, what we're ordering, and what we need."

Hydro-Scape opted for a Nixdorf system because they felt that the smaller computer firm was more responsive to their needs than the bigger companies they had contacted. The system they initially purchased was supposed to be sufficient for five years. After two years a bigger system was needed due to Hydro-Scape's speedy growth. "We're extremely satisfied," said Larsen. "With the help of some good programmers and a little patience, the performance has been terrific."

Though Hydro-Scape has diversified into landscape products, over 60% of its business is in irrigation. Their coverage of the market is impressive; in sprinkler equipment alone they carry no less than 16 lines, including Rain-Bird, Royal Coach/Buckner, Toro and Safe-T-Lawn. Some manufacturers were wary of having Hydro-Scape also carrying their competitor's products. (Rain-Bird only recently tapped them as a Southern California distributor.) Yet Hydro-Scape has a firm policy on which products they will recommend to a customer. "If the specs are set, we will not change them," said Larsen. "Otherwise we put together the best package for the job, even if that entails using components from different manufacturers."

With drought conditions becoming more prevalent in Southern California, irrigation sales might not be viewed as a growth industry. Yet in its typical fashion Hydro-Scape views the drought as another opportunity to do business. "The drought woke a lot of people up to improving their irrigation systems," said Larsen. "Customers are opting for drip irrigation systems and a more controlled spray. With today's solid state technology the spray at each valve can be monitored."

California's Proposition 13 caused some initial cutbacks in orders but business is back close to normal. Larsen told *Weeds Trees & Turf* that the government has found some alternative sources of revenue. "The tourist industry is very big here and there is a high priority on appearance," he said. "The government has a big investment in landscaping."

An interesting point made by Larsen is that sod sales are still strong in Southern California. Hydro-Scape is the largest distributor of Pacific Green/Nunes sod and there has been an increase in the sale of drought-tolerant sod. Selling sod and plant materials is one area where the company's ties with their landscape contractor customers has been an asset. "A lot of growers are wary of selling to contractors they are not familiar with," said Larsen. "With us as the intermediary, the growers is assured his money and the contractor gets his materials."

The company carries 16 different lines of irrigation equipment without favoritism.

Hydro-Scape maintains WATS lines in Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange county in order expedite transactions with the vast number of growers they do business. In that manner they can also avoid inventorying plant materials. The company views plant materials as a potential liability. With the Wats phone lines they can contact various growers and have them ship directly.



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GARFIELD WILLIAMSON DOUBLES PROFESSIONAL SALES IN FIVE YEARS TO NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

The ability to respond promptly to the needs of the consumer is the most critical quality of a distributor for John Zajac, the vice president and general manager of Garfield Williamson, a distributor of seed and allied products in Jersey City, NJ. "Flexibility is what gives us our place in the market," he stated in a recent interview with Weeds, Trees & Turf.

The key to maintaining flexibility to Zajac is keeping the company a manageable size. The larger the company, the more layers of management a customer must wade through to have a request fulfilled. At Garfield Williamson, the customer doesn't have far to go for a definite answer. "As opposed to a large corporation, there is only one step in our organizational chart between the salesman and a definite ves or no," Zajac pointed out. Garfield Williamson's seven salesmen, covering the New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut territories report directly to Zajac, who then contacts his staff members in the office.

The company has been service oriented since its inception one hundred years ago. The founder, Garfield Williamson, was among the first to tap the industrial market, approaching businesses and factories with the idea of beautifying their grounds.

The company was purchased in the 1930s by the Wagner family, who still control it today. The market remained more or less the same until the mid-forties. The business swung sharply toward retail after World War II as New York City dwellers spread out to the suburbs, creating the sprawling bedroom communities on Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut. Acres of well kept lawn were being supplied by a new specialized retailer, the lawn and garden center, who was in turn being supplied by Garfield Williamson.

The retail market nearly had the full attention of the company until, with the increasing affluence of the region, golf courses began sprouting up and homeowners turned to professional landscapers.

Service has become even more essential as sales to professional users grow in comparison to the retail sales. "In the last five years professional accounts have grown from 20% of our business to at least 40%," estimated Zajac. "With an activity as weather dependent as seeding, servicing the professional sector is a demanding job. We are able to prepare and deliver 700-lb of a special mixture in two days."

As part of this service, customers are asking the distributor to take their burden of inventory off their shoulders. Because of uncertain cash flow, they are letting the distributor act as their warehouse. Business cycles have proved the distributor can warehouse more cheaply because it has better inventory control. This requires more work from the distributor. A customer's initial order used to be the biggest portion of his needs. Now he requires frequent deliveries of smaller orders.

Zajac feels that the high value that the customer has placed upon his time also benefits Garfield Williamson. The increasing prevalence of a "time is money" attitude has pushed professionals to invest in the high grade proprietary grasses he sells. Zajac claims, Eclipse Kentucky bluegrass sells equally as well as conventional types of bluegrass although it costs almost three times as much. The contractor justifies the higher priced specialty grasses as insignificant monetarily when compared to the overall cost of the job.

Even the retail consumer has learned to appreciate special formulations and varieties of both seed and chemicals. A more informed public is now approached in much



GW vice president and general manager John Zajac (left), office manager Bill Lind (center), and warehouse superintendent Peter Matu.

the same manner as the professional. Advertising and packaging, using the names of the specific seed varieties, is being used for the first time on the consumer level. Garfield Williamson now advertises its Wonderlawn brand of consumer products in local print, TV, and radio as well as providing retailers with point-of-purchase aids.

Despite Garfield Williamson's success in both professional and retail markets, it is now competing with a growing trend where professionals form groups to buy directly from the manufacturers. Zajac dismisses this as a fad, although the activity is growing in the New York and New Jersey areas. "These groups are big enough to buy from the manufacturers, but not big enough to demand the kind of service they may need in the height of the season. Distributors may be able to help, but we are bound to take care of our regular customers first. This will probably cause a ripple in the industry and then even

Zajac is sure the position of the distributor is secure in the green industry as long as he doesn't overextend himself. "If your area gets too big, you can't effectively act as a distributor. We prefer to cultivate the 250-mile radius around New York city, our main market, more intensely than go further outward."

WEDSTRESSURF



'83 Manager's Guide to Equipment, Chemicals & Supplies

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1983 Manager's Guide to Equipment, Chemicals Supplies and Distributors







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57

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