

per acre over a five-year period. The cost per acre of an 11-gang pull-behind is \$1.73 compared to \$3.45 for a gas-powered 72-inch out-front rotary. This represents a 50 percent difference in cost per acre between the two mowing machines.

That percentage of savings on the 11-gang mower increases as the time period grows or if the mowing area becomes larger. For instance, the cost per acre for the same 80 acres over a 10-year period on the 11-gang unit would decrease by 22 percent to \$1.34.

The cost per acre for the gas-powered 72-inch out-front rotary would remain about the same over 10 years for the same 80 acres. This is

...a small machine can be more expensive to operate per year than a large one.

because a rotary machine by nature wears out faster than a reel mower due to its constant high rpm operation and impact-style mowing.

It is likely that a rotary mower would need total replacement over a 10-year period with the given mowing schedule. This would mean that the percentage of difference in cost per acre between the 11-gang pull-behind and the gas-powered 72-inch out-front rotary would increase to 61 percent over 10 years.

In the given example, each 25 cents saved in cost per acre turns into a \$10,000 savings over a 10-year period. Each \$1 saved in cost per acre turns into a \$40,000 savings over 10 years.

These results show that a small machine can be more expensive to operate per year than a larger one.

When figuring out a long-term budget, it may often be more economical to purchase a larger machine with greater horsepower and larger cutting width.

However, if only a small area of mowing is required, or where maneuverability around obstacles or in tight areas is important, a small mower or combination of large and small mowers will be more practical.

The main question when purchasing mowing equipment should be, "What can I get out of this machine in the long run?"

By knowing your mowing requirements, you will be better able to evaluate mowing machinery based on durability, life expectancy, fuel efficiency, quality of cut, cost per acre and cost per year. □

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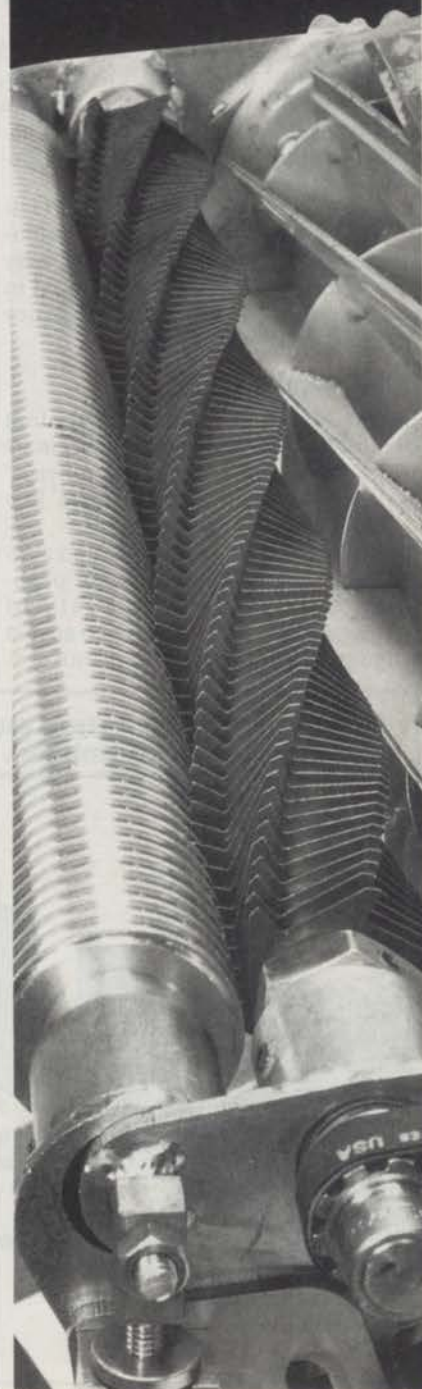
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HELP WANTED

According to an exclusive WT&T survey, today's cemetery manager faces a large problem in finding capable help. Low wages resulting from low budgets put the manager in an unenviable situation.

by Ken Kuhajda, managing editor

Labor, restrictive budgets and weather. Today's cemetery landscape manager faces problems in those categories, according to a recent exclusive WEEDS TREES & TURF survey.

Today's cemetery manager is faced with unique landscape challenges, from rows of headstones that require special mowing to turf that is constantly being dug up and reseeded because of grave digging.

The job is challenging, the headaches that accompany can be substantial, but the rewards are there. Why else would the average respondent in our survey have 15 years experience at his current cemetery?

'Train, train, train'

By far the most pressing problem noted by 33% of the 56 respondents was lack of quality labor. Employees' skill levels usually match the low wage, noted several managers.

One respondent was open to suggestions about his employee problem. "We have a high rate of employee turnover. We try to adjust wages so both the cemetery and em-

ployee are happy. We give all employees some degree of responsibility," noted the manager.

The same manager said he gives employees a daily list of tasks to be performed and an employee may leave once he completes the list.

Still, he has not met total success. "I'm open to suggestions," he said.

Another respondent said "keeping employees happy" is his biggest problem. He does that through "lots of listening, praise, and concern for their welfare."

Yet another respondent quells his labor woes in a different way. "I hire as many retired and handicapped people as possible," he said.

When asked what he does to combat his labor woes, one respondent said quite simply: "Train, train, train."

The overall picture

Our survey indicated an average of 14.73 years at the same cemetery for managers.

The survey also revealed:

- an average developed acreage of 65.3 and average total acreage of 107.5;

- an average of one part-time and eight full-time employees;

- an average yearly expenditure of \$2,237 on turf and tree care, including \$1,638 on pesticides;

- an average annual equipment expenditure of \$6,991 (in this category most respondents said expenditures depend on need and age of equipment).

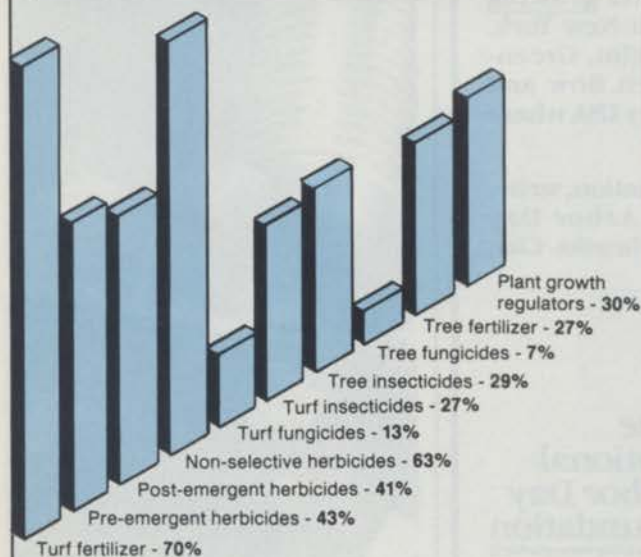
The survey asked managers what types of chemicals they use.

Their responses: 70% use turf fertilizer; 43% use pre-emergent herbicides; 41% use post-emergent herbicides; 63% use non-selective herbicides; 13% use turf fungicides; 27% use turf insecticides; 7% use tree fungicides; 27% use tree fertilizer; 29% use tree insecticide; and 30% use plant growth regulators.

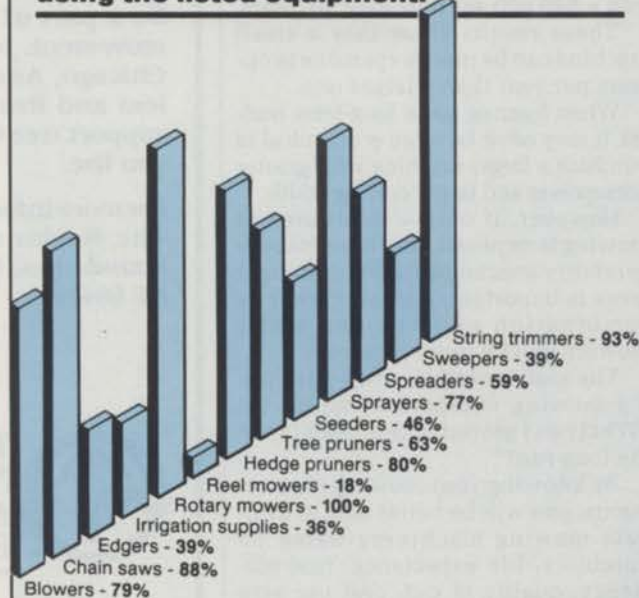
"Most chemicals discolor or harm bronze memorials," said one respondent. "Other than spraying with 2,4-D, we don't use chemicals."

Another listed broadleaf weed control as his biggest problem. He uses chemicals under trees, around shrubs, ivy, and head stones, but says "thorough coverage is close to impossible. Also, the trees pick up

Percentage of cemetery managers using the listed chemicals.



Percentage of cemetery managers using the listed equipment.





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the chemicals."

And one manager has drastically increased productivity through chemical use. "In the past we used edgers to clean but that is time-consuming and costly. We are now using post- and pre-emergent herbicides. This is a one-man job opposed to the three men we used with edgers."

The survey also asked about equipment use. Every cemetery manager surveyed used at least one rotary lawn mower. The results in other categories: 79% use blowers; 88% use chain saws; 39% use edgers; 36% use irrigation supplies; 18% use reel mowers; 80% use hedge pruners; 63% use tree pruners; 46% use seeders; 77% use sprayers; 59% use spreaders; 39% use sweepers; and 93% use string trimmers.

The smallish budget

Several respondents listed inadequate budgets as their biggest problem, pointing to a lack of knowledge among the people controlling the purse strings.

Said one: "This is a church-owned cemetery. The biggest problem is making the trustees realize the cemetery is not a poor cousin. We do the best job we can with the equipment supplied. I talk to every lot owner I

can and suggest they increase their endowment for lot care."

Said another: "We just don't have enough money to hire good help."

Added a third: "Limited funding and the age of the cemetery are our biggest problems. Cemetery maintenance is labor intensive. We are constantly searching for the most efficient methods available (like) eliminating

Perhaps another challenge facing cemetery managers is dealing with people in times of grief.

trimming, using proper equipment, and using chemicals to reduce man-hours where possible."

In addition to limited budgets, respondents mentioned weather as a huge headache. "The weather is quite a problem," said one. "By morning, all your plans can change." He said he has a back-up plan in case of poor weather.

Weather can be problematic for

Midwest and Northeast managers when they prepare for their biggest day—Memorial Day.

"Preparing for Memorial Day weekend, our biggest and most significant day of the year, begins in early spring as soon as the weather and grounds allow," said one manager. "Numerous other spring tasks must be performed within this crucial time period, while at the same time, we must keep pace with our present obligations."

A Midwest manager said trying to keep the cemetery looking its best for Memorial Day is his greatest challenge. "We hire extra help and pray that the weather cooperates. Then we hope that the mowers and trimmers don't all break down at once."

Another said weather creates problems when using liquid chemicals for weed control. "You have to play the game with nature's rules," he wrote.

Perhaps another challenge facing cemetery managers is dealing with people in times of grief. One manager related a lesson he has learned. "We realize people come first and then the maintenance."

The survey received a 28 percent response rate. **WT&T**

CEMETERIES: A different type of landscaping

A feeling of comfort is the aim of memorial park superintendents. That means attention to fine details, like well-manicured headstones and trees.

OAKWOOD MEMORIAL GARDENS



Jack Sloane

Time marches on. Archibald Stadium in Syracuse, N.Y.—where football greats Jim Brown, Ernie Davis, Jim Nance, Floyd Little, and Larry Csonka used to romp—has been razed. The Carrier Dome has been “raised” in its place.

And literally in the shadow of the new dome lies Oakwood Memorial Gardens, where president Jack Sloane realizes that time, indeed, marches on.

Sloane, a 40-year cemetery veteran, will soon take with him the halcyon memories of sunny autumn Saturdays and Ben Schwartzwalder's Syracuse University football teams. In two months, he's turning operations of Oakwood Memorial Gardens over to son Greg.

Sloane's face crinkles with a smile and his eyes light up remembering the Orangemen. “Friends would always ask to park at the cemetery so they could walk to games. So I saw most of the games, because somebody always had extra tickets in exchange for a good parking spot.”

Oakwood has the longer history (Oakwood was established in 1859, the university in 1870). And the cemetery's 200 acres sport 300 varieties of trees and shrubs, including a medisequoia tree whose seed came from Tibet and an out-of-place bald cypress which is normally indigenous to semi-tropical areas.

“The State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Sciences uses our cemetery for teaching,” says Sloane. “One year, they found gypsy moths and they had the state come in and spray for us.”

Maintenance of the cemetery landscape is not easy, mostly because of vertical markers but also because of trees, shrubs, and rolling hills.

“One year, a mower salesman told me his machine could mow anywhere. I told him to try one of our hills, so he brought his mower out. I never heard from him again,” Sloane remembers, the smile returning.



Tulip-lovers would appreciate Oakwood's landscape, where 2,500 tulips make their annual spring appearance.

Another problem is the soil: clay over shale that drains well but is so hard that very little grows well.

Oakwood maintenance crews man seven Excel Hustlers and one new Ferris Co. (Onieda, N.Y.) 60-inch riding mower. Twenty-one-inch Lawn Boy push mowers and plenty of string trimmers are also used by the eight-person summer crew.

Though Sloane hasn't used pesticides in the past, they have been implemented recently.

“We've started a program for weed control,” he observes. “We had a company fertilize and spray 2,4-D this spring.”

“We're also going to try some grass retardants on some of the older hillsides.”


“The last three or four years, too, we've been using Roundup around the vertical markers,” Sloane adds. “We have kids with sprayers following our trimmers.”

Because of its reputation, Oakwood always displays plenty of flowers. “This year, we've planted more than 2,500 geraniums, 500 narcissuses, 2,500 tulips, and \$1,000 worth of petunias and marigolds,” Greg notes.


The 40 years working for cemeteries (33 at Oakwood) have been good to the elder Sloane. He's met many notables, including Eleanor Roosevelt, who attended her son-in-law's funeral at Oakwood. Jack has also been president of the New York State Cemetery Association (1966) and the Syracuse Kiwanis (1967). He is current president of the New York State Turfgrass Association.

“I've enjoyed every bit of my career,” he concludes, wistfully looking out his office window to the cemetery's landscape. “The nice thing is that you meet a lot of people and you're not tied down to a desk.”

continued on page 41



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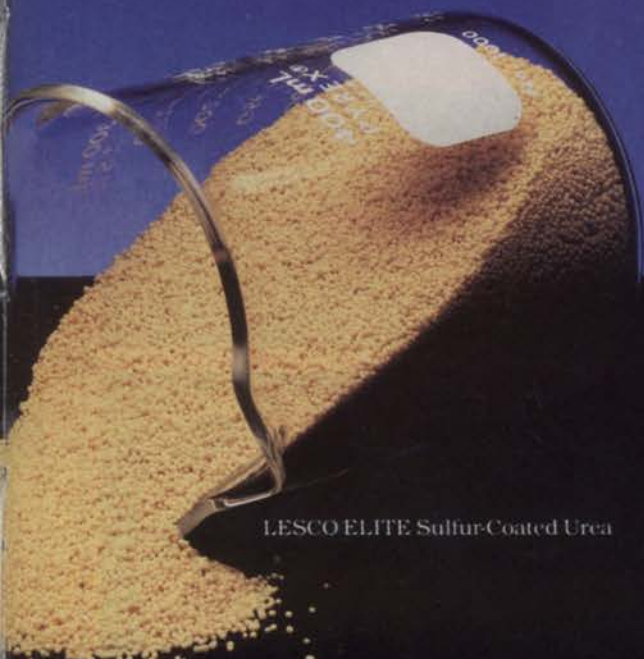
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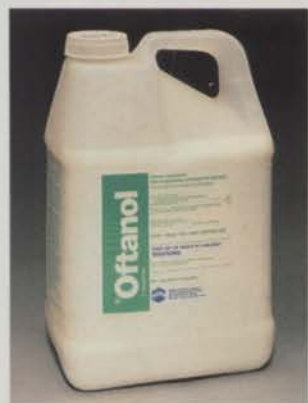
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