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Janet Hartin's stronghold is her objectivity.

since 1953. The service offers either a half-day or a full-day consultation for a minimal fee.

The consultation consists of a tour of the course by one of 10 regional agronomists, a discussion of all maintenance, an evaluation of individual problem areas and a written report.

"We're not trying to second-guess the superintendent," says Bill Bengeyfield, national director of the Green Section. "We're there as an employee of the course trying to form a conduit of information. We've helped superintendents sell ideas to their greens committees many, many times."

Each of 9 regional agronomists visits approximately 150 courses per year.



Bill Bengeyfield says Green Section "absolutely unbiased."

The Green Section consultants are unique in that they do not sell products, but are provided as a service to golf. "Our ace in the hole is that we're absolutely unbiased," Bengeyfield comments.

Business consultants

"Business consultants for advice in the industry are very limited," notes Wandtke, who with Dr. Rudd McGary writes a monthly column for *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*. "The biggest problem is that most business advisors are not really experts in the industry and don't know consumer or commercial-driven businesses."

Wandtke points out that his clients use All-Green's expertise in one of four ways:



Bob Moeller promises individual attention.

1) for a particular project, like installing an accounting system;

2) for a one-shot "task," like a sales training seminar;

3) on call, as a 12-month-a-year consultant; and

4) on an informal basis as a member of the company's board of directors.

A final note

In your position as a landscape manager or golf course superintendent, you have to deal with turf problems, business problems and people problems. It is the rare person who can be an expert in all areas. When a problem arises that you don't feel qualified for, don't be afraid to admit it.

Then seek out a consultant. **LM**

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western landscape construction**



**environmental care, inc.
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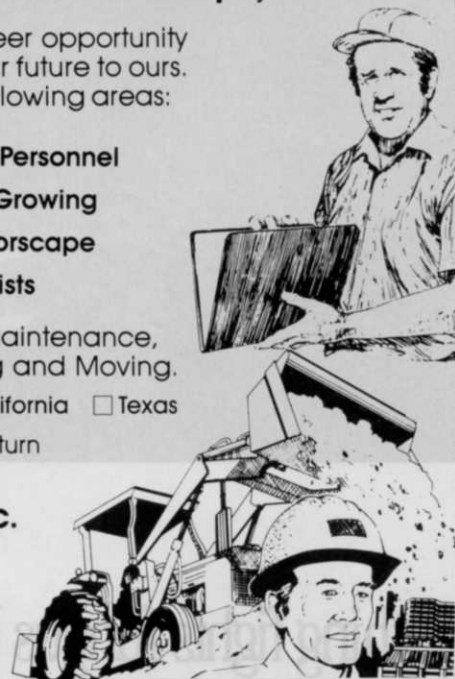
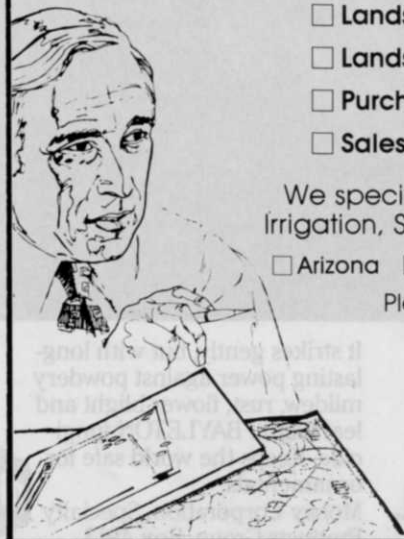
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Circle No. 256 on Reader Inquiry Card



A diving platform lined with marigolds and tubs of flowers floats in front of a flower-laden boathouse on Canandaigua Lake in New York.

'WILD' FLOWERS

Planting flowers doesn't have to be boring. Creativity and color can liven up any landscape.

by Ann Reilly, *Bedding Plants Inc.*

Stubborn traditionalists will plant flowering annuals in beds or borders, as edgings or mass plantings. Those a little more adventuresome will spot planters along walkways, on the porch of the clubhouse, as barriers in the parking lot.

But those who really want to have fun with flowers will let their imaginations run wild and plant annuals into anything that will hold media, plants and water. Creativity will show up in the planting of logos and colorful geometric designs.

Theme parks across the country are filled with animals and fairy-tale figures made from flowers. But you don't need to be a theme park to benefit from this type of planting. Americans love color...they love the unusual.

Wherever the public gathers, they

love to see something unique, something different. So whether you're in charge of a park, shopping center, restaurant, hotel or commercial building, if you want to make a positive impression on the public, have fun with flowers.

On Canandaigua Lake in upper New York state, a diving platform lined with marigolds and tubs of flowers floats anchored in front of a flower-laden boathouse. The containers are PVC, and the media is an inorganic one that drains water quickly so the plants cannot be over-watered.

This particular planting is made of "Living Wall Gardens;" you can buy these pre-made modules or make them yourselves.

All the plants need is occasional feeding.

The Floating Gardens of Xochimilco in Mexico City may not be your goal by a long shot, but how about a float or two of flowers to attract interest in your pond or lake?

Containing color

Container gardening has been popular for centuries. Did you ever think about having fun with unusual containers?

At Buchardt Gardens in Victoria, B.C., annuals flow over the sides of an old rail car settled in a valley where it can be viewed from above. Floral managers have taken the whiskey barrel concept further and planted gardens into inner tubes and sawed-off garbage cans. Discarded drainage pipes work perfectly as planters, too.

Old Bethpage Historical Restoration planted a two-century-old children's wagon with flowers popular at the time. I've seen plantings in old work shoes, and, even in discarded toilets (an appropriate spot for the variety Royal Flush). As long as it works, use it!

PVC pipe has risen in popularity as a container over the last few years. It can be cut to length, stood on end, and provided with a base to keep it stable. It is then drilled with holes all around

and filled with young seedlings. It will not take long for the plants to grow and fill in and the entire planter to become a tower of flowers.

Soil-less media are used in the container with extra gravel at the bottom for weight and to ensure even drainage. Be sure drainage holes at the bottom are sufficient to prevent water-logging.

PVC pipe of larger diameter can also be laid on its side and an opening cut into the top for a planting. Drainage holes should also be cut into the bottom and a bracing system (which could be bricks on either side) set in place to prevent rolling.

Besides the container itself, it's where you put it that can be appealing and fun.

At Rockefeller Center in New York, a restaurant is set up in summer on the ice skating rink. Geraniums are planted on the roof of the restaurant where they can be enjoyed from street level.

In Kalamazoo, parking meters are camouflaged with containers on each side (perhaps a bit unfair to the unknowing parker). Bathtubs filled with flowers sit in front of restaurant windows from Brooklyn, N.Y. to New Orleans, La.

Empty tree stump? Don't remove it; fill it with flowers! Want a carpet of color on the side of a patio, but can't find a low, flat planter? Set plants directly into a bag of potting media, water, and watch them grow.

When you can't find just the right thing, make it yourself. This is especially useful in creating animals and other topiary forms or in making vertical gardens.

Forms can be created, with wood if necessary as an interior support, and molded to shape with chicken or tur-



Annuals flow out of a planter at Buchardt Gardens in Victoria, B.C.

key wire. Fill the form with soil-less media and push the plants into place through the holes in the wire. Vertical gardens are especially useful in areas where space is limited, but a mass of color is desired.

The recommended medium for any type of container planting is a soil-less mixture of 50 percent organic material, such as peat moss, and 50 percent inorganic material, such as perlite or vermiculite. Some floral managers substitute compost, leaf mold or fine bark chips, if available, for peat moss. Sharp builders' sand can be used instead of perlite or vermiculite; the good news (and the bad) is that sand is much heavier.

This would make the use of sand undesirable in hanging baskets or in large containers that would need to be moved from time to time. However, for small containers that are in a spot where wind might blow them over, the addition of sand would stabilize them.

Care of container plantings is relatively easy and low in maintenance requirements. You can work with

your local greenhouse or bedding plant supplier to have mature plants ready to burst into color at proper planting time, which would be around the last frost date in your area.

Carefully caring

After filling the container with the potting medium almost to the top, simply transfer the flowering annuals into the container, planting them at the same depth at which they grew in the pack or flat.

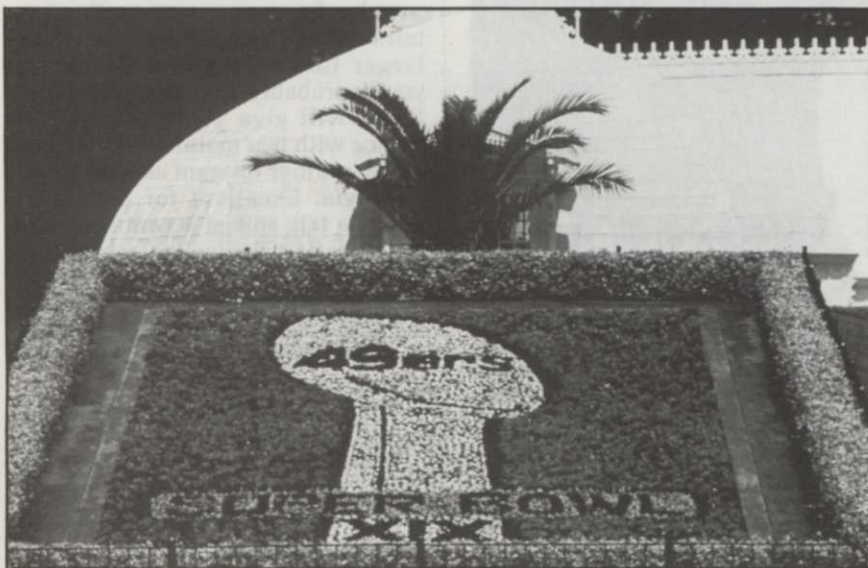
Since containers are most effective when they create a mass of color, it would be best to overplant them slightly—but without crowding. Water after planting and watch them grow!

Once every week or two weeks, include a soluble fertilizer when you water, following label directions. It is better to feed once a week at one-fourth strength than once a month at full strength to achieve more even growth. If light hits the container unevenly, rotating it a quarter turn every week or so will also help to keep growth even. If the container is very large, you might want to consider placing it on a caster or a turntable to facilitate rotation.

How often you water depends on the size of the container and the weather conditions. The larger the container, the less often you will need to water. When it becomes very hot or very windy, water will be needed more often.

If your containers can be reached by your normal irrigation, you won't have to give it a second thought. Hanging baskets and containers on the clubhouse patio will probably have to be watered by hand. This can be made easier with use of a water wand at the end of a hose, with an extender to reach hanging baskets.

With the proper selection of plant material that self-cleans (impatiens, begonia, ageratume, nicotiana, sweet alyssum), you won't have to consider



Designs and logos require no more care than normal plantings.

Keep A Great Thing Growing AMERICA TREE CITY USA

Go ahead, reach for the apple. Take a crispy crunch. Trees are vitally important to the survival of our planet. They provide us with oxygen...and an apple to eat. They give us shade on hot sunny days. They create pleasant places to relax and get away from the hustle and bustle. They are great places to play.

The National Arbor Day Foundation is dedicated to the planting and care of trees. Our nationwide urban forestry program, Tree City USA, is designed to help hundreds of American cities large and small care for their trees.

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The
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clipping off faded flowers. If you use plants like geraniums or zinnias, cut the blooms away as they pass their peak to keep the container neat and in maximum bloom.

Designated designs

Another fun thing is planting flowered designs. Everyone is familiar with the friendly face of Mickey Mouse that welcomes millions to Disneyland and Disney World each year. The city of Denver plants its name in front of the capital building each year.

Last year's Expo in Vancouver saw its logo planted outside the main entrances. Commercial firms often plant their logos on a hillside in front of the administration building. Some parks plant geometric designs just for fun.

Designs and logos require no other care than normal plantings, except that a sharp eye must be kept to make sure one plant doesn't start to encroach on another plant's spot. When choosing plants for logos and designs, select compact, low growing ones in colors that are highly contrasting. Good examples are the red, yellow or green-leaved alternanthera; red, pink or white begonia; silver dusty miller; or blue ageratum.

When planning and planting logos and designs, it's best to plant them on the side of a hill or create a berm so the logo will be more visible to passersby.

Here are some annuals that can be easily adapted to the aforementioned uses:

Pansies. Use in spring or fall where summers are hot or all year-round in more temperate climates. They prefer sun as long as it's not too hot or dry. Look for the weather resistant F1 hybrids when selecting varieties.

Petunias. Versatile petunias are so popular for many reasons. For containers, you can select one of the larger flowered grandifloras, but you'll probably find that the multifloras will give you better performance with less maintenance and are more weather tolerant as well.

Salvia. Excellent for containers where a tall, spiked accent is needed in sun or part shade. Red, white, purple or salmon varieties are available.

Sweet Alyssum. Fragrant spreading plants with white, rose or violet flowers. Like sun, heat and dry conditions.

Vinca. Weather-, heat-, pollution- and sun-resistant.

Zinnia. Use these colorful annuals in the sun where air circulation is good to avoid mildew, a problem with zinnias. Use the low-growing zinnias in containers to take advantage of their compact habit.

LM



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MARKETING MANUEVERS

As the landscape management market grows more competitive, companies need to gather more information to stay alive.

Here are some points not to be overlooked.

by Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke

Many companies in the green industries are excellent at collecting operating and financial information. Productivity, cash flow, financial strength and overall operating efficiency are addressed by most good managers of green industry organizations.

The marketing function and the information needed to successfully manage this function are extremely important areas that often are not tracked with the same amount of efficiency found in other operating areas.

As the green industries grow more competitive, collecting at least some basic types of marketing information becomes more important.

The key elements can be broken into two categories:

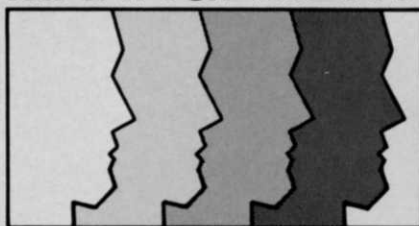
- external information (information concerning potential customers) and
- internal information (tracking of performance of various aspects of marketing).

External information

Outside information needed for planning marketing consists of demographic and geographic factors.

Demographic factors worth tracking in the residential market are aver-

MANAGEMENT



IN BUSINESS

age income, home value and median age of your current customers. These will help you to determine those customers you should target for the upcoming year based on last year's performance.

(This information is available through mailing houses, marketing survey companies and government publications.)

If you are working in the commercial side, you should be looking at the types of companies for whom you work, their size, and the key personnel involved in making the buying decision for that type of company. This will help you to put together a marketing plan to target companies similar to those you already service. This helps your source credibility in making new contacts, and gives you a good sense of the costs involved in working for the types of companies you now service.

Geographics will help you determine areas that see your vehicle and workers fairly often. In the residential market, the presence of your vehicles acts as both an advertising piece and gives a good sense of source credibility.

In the commercial area, your vehicles and workers can be seen on the property, and this also acts as both advertising and building source credibility. You should be aware of the geographic considerations of your current customer base because of factors other than marketing.

From an operating standpoint, you can tighten up your routes, have less travel time, and be able to get high productivity from your applicators

and workers. This will also affect your monthly and yearly financials since you will be more productive overall.

Once you have information on demographics and geographics, you should combine them to see if any current buying patterns occur.

Servicing a next-door neighbor or business is generally the best way to increase your sales. By knowing where you are and who you service, you can take excellent advantage of your customer base.

Internal information

Within this marketing information you should find ways to better control your sales and advertising efforts.

Servicing a next-door neighbor is a way to increase sales.

Some key figures should be collected in order to look at your overall marketing efficiency.

1. How was the lead generated? You should ask any customer calling how they heard about your company. This is not a completely accurate way of getting information since it relies on consumer recall. But it at least will yield some patterns, hinting whether your advertising dollars were well spent, and thus creating a basis for planning next year's campaign.

2. How many sales calls did your sales force make in a given period? (Day? Week? Month?) This will give you the average amount of time taken to contact a customer. You can then determine the need for a larger or smaller sales force.

3. What was the closing (conversion) ratio of the sales people? This, in addition to No. 2 above, will give you an idea of how effective a given individual is as a salesperson. Some people will have a high closure rate, but see few people. Some will have the reverse.

For a company to be successful,
continued on page 108



Wandtke and McGary are senior consultants with All-Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. McGary focuses on marketing and management issues. Wandtke focuses on operations and financial questions.



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Dow Sales representative Barry Brown discusses insecticide treatments with Ford supervisor John Brugeman.

AF-FORD-ING A DECENT LANDSCAPE

The landscape manager at a Ford Motor Company office is an advocate of 'integrated' pest management, 'integrating' enough herbicides and insecticides to do the job.

John Brugeman covers a lot of ground in the course of a year. He's responsible for maintaining the 750 acres that make up the Ford Motor Company's Research and Engineering Center located in Dearborn, Mich., just outside of Detroit.

Like most top companies, Ford takes pride in its landscapes and devotes considerable time and resources to project a quality image. The company's Research and Engineering Center employs about 20 technicians and supervisors who report to Brugeman. His budget is about \$100,000 per year for fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and replacement plants.

"Our landscape includes a wide variety of shade trees and ornamental

plants, such as hawthorns, crabapples, hibernums and evergreens," says Brugeman. Japanese and English yews and junipers are also found there, although in limited numbers. The greenswards are composed of a bluegrass blend along with some perennial rye and fescue.

Of the 750 acres, equivalent in size to four golf courses, about 200 acres are Grade A and Grade B lawns.

"Grade A is highly maintained turf, usually irrigated," he explains. "Grade B is also highly maintained, but has no irrigation."

Brugeman, a 20-year Ford employee, is an advocate of integrated weed and pest management. "I probably place more emphasis on cultural

practices than most landscape managers," he says.

Weed control

"By maintaining healthy turf through proper application of fertilizers and aerification, we can eliminate many weeds. With frequent, high mowing we have a nice looking landscape," he says.

In spring, Brugeman's staff spot sprays herbicides for dandelions and other weeds. In late August, or even into October, they will spray the whole area to catch a broad spectrum of weeds.

"If we do a good job in the autumn, what's left in the spring is minimal.

continued on page 92