

cutthroat competition is understandable.

"It's fun doing those projects because they have the money to do it the right way," Wall says, grinning at the thought of a homeowner spending \$100,000 on landscape installation. "It gives the foreman a great sense of accomplishment."

The company does no maintenance work. But Wall will prepare a fertilizer and spray program for customers who don't know the proper procedure.

"I get upset when an owner invests three-quarters of a million dollars on a project and I drive by six months later and it's brown," Wall sighs. "It's a real shame."

#### Future plans

Tree Land's nursery carries about \$5 million in inventory. The company's future plans include further specializing in plant materials, with an emphasis on more salt-tolerant plants for oceanfront landscapes.

Down the road Tree Land also plans expanded mechanization. The company already boasts more than 100 pieces of equipment, including

hydraulic cranes, front-end loaders and water trucks. The company has purchased its own service truck.

The company recently opened its second landscape contracting office in Orlando.

The design and contract divisions rarely work together on a job. When they do, the sister divisions often

create masterpieces, like the Radice Corporate Center.

Of course, million dollar figures can be a real motivator to a company. But, when you can landscape for some of the world's richest people, it would just be boring to work any place else.

—Heide Aungst



Landscaping luxurious Palm Beach homes is all in a day's work.

## BEST IN THE NORTHWEST?



Rich Akerman, president of Northwest Landscape Industries, used to weigh 267 pounds during his college football days. He's down to a svelte 205 now.

Northwest Landscape Industries is enjoying success in 'The Silicon Forest' by keeping many high-tech clients 'in the chips.'

**W**hen you look for quality in the landscape industry, look to the Pacific Northwest, home of Northwest Landscape Industries.

A trendsetter from its birth 15 years ago, Northwest remains one of the nation's finest large-scale operations, thanks to a skilled work force and management with vision.

General manager Jim Wathey and president Rich Akerman became partners 14 years ago and have watched the operations grow with vigor each year. Today, revenues total \$6 million.

"Our overall goal for this company is to be in the \$10 to \$14

million range," says Akerman. "We don't want to get too big because it's fun now. We've gone through hard growth that has wiped some young kids out. Bigger is not always better."

Northwest has main offices in Tigard, Ore., a Portland suburb, and Seattle, Wash., and smaller offices in Portland and nearby Beaverton.

High-tech companies dominate the Portland area (Akerman calls it "The Silicon Forest").

"Here in the Northwest, we have something a lot of people don't realize—water," says Akerman, a native of California's arid San

# Buy Sevin® SL for this.



White Grub

## BEST IN THE NORTHWEST?

Northwest Landscape Industries is enjoying success in "The Silicon Forest" by keeping many high-tech clients in the chips.

Your reasons for choosing a turf insecticide could be summed up in two words:

**Kills grubs.**

Which, frankly, is reason enough to choose SEVIN® brand SL carbaryl insecti-

cide. Because, when it comes to grubs, no other turf insecticide is more effective.

We have the efficacy data to prove it.

But if that still isn't enough to make you a con-

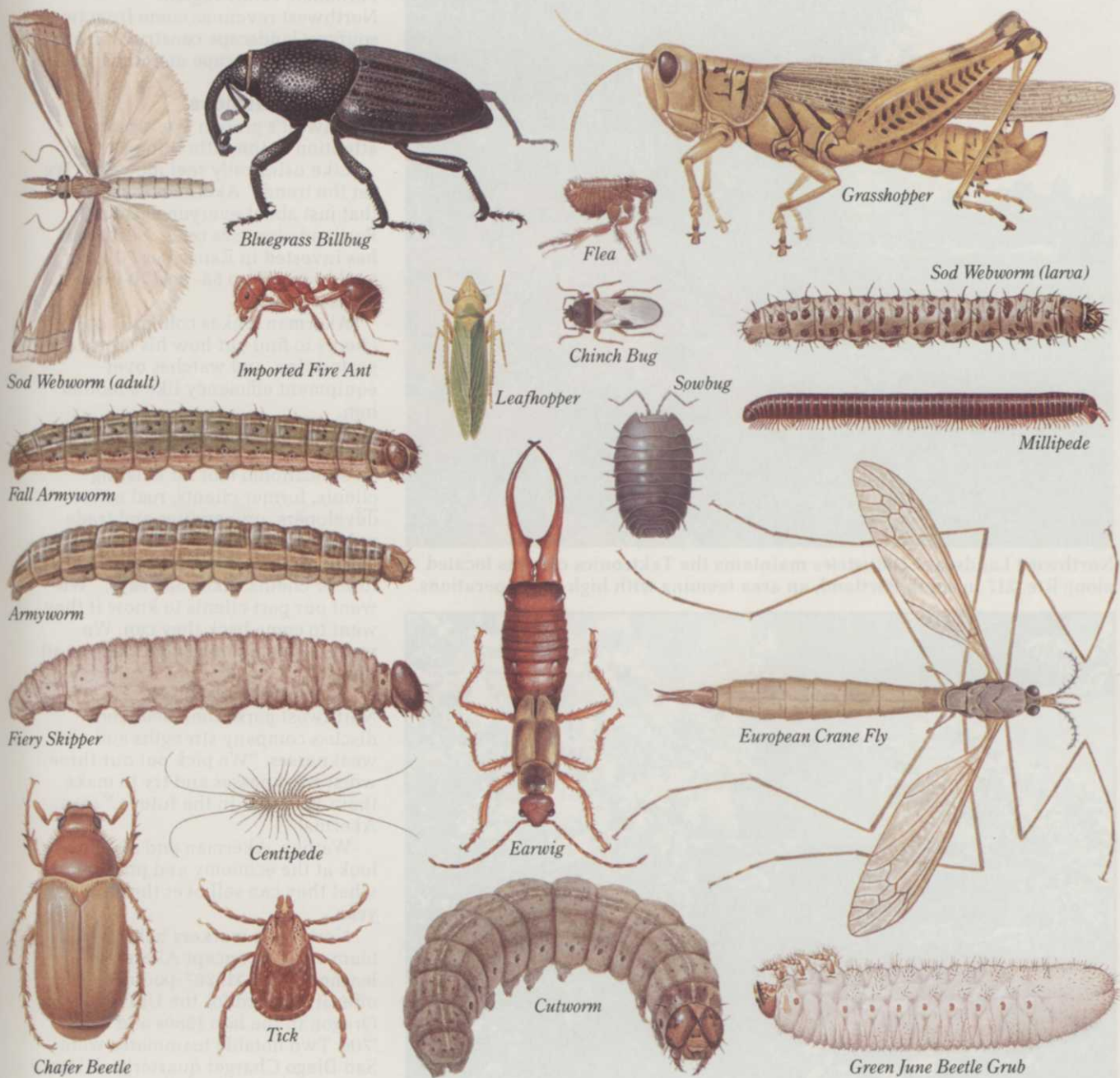
firmed SEVIN® brand SL user, consider this:

With SEVIN® brand SL carbaryl insecticide, you also get effective control of 27 other turf pests.

Including tough ones,



# Get these free.



like chinch bugs, billbugs, armyworms, cutworms, and sod webworms.

And SEVIN® brand SL carries a Toxicity Category III Caution label. Which makes it ideal for use on golf

courses, parks, lawns, or any turf area frequently used by people and animals.

So ask your turf chemicals supplier for SEVIN® brand SL carbaryl insecticide. It may be the best

example yet of getting more than what you pay for.

*From the turf care group at Union Carbide.*





## LANDSCAPE PROFILE



Northwest Landscape Industries maintains the Tektronics campus located along Rte. 217 in south Portland, an area teeming with high-tech operations.



Fernando Valley region. Northwest revenues come from two sources: landscape construction and industrial landscape maintenance.

### A unique business

Northwest's growth is a result of attention to the little things.

Like using only reel mowers. "We set the trend," Akerman says, noting that just about everyone else in Portland also uses reels. Northwest has invested in Ransomes 70-inch triplex and Toro 58- and 70-inch triplex mowers.

Akerman makes cold calls on clients to find out how his crews are performing, and watches over equipment efficiency like a mother hen.

Also, the company publishes a quarterly newsletter, "4 Seasons", as an educational tool for existing clients, former clients, real estate developers, universities and trade publications.

On sending the publication to former clients, Akerman says, "We want our past clients to know if they want to come back they can. We want our name in front of them at all times."

At the end of each year, Northwest personnel meet and discuss company strengths and weaknesses. "We pick out our three worst weaknesses and try to make them strengths in the future," says Akerman.

Wathey, Akerman and staff then look at the economy and project what they can sell over the next year.

Northwest workers believe in teamwork, a concept Akerman learned as a 5-11, 267-pound offensive guard for the University of Oregon in the late 1960s and early '70s. Two notable teammates were San Diego Charger quarterback Dan Fouts and NBC football commentator and former NFL star Ahmad Rashad.

### Dedication

"Our company is dedicated to providing quality products and services to our clients in the landscape industry," says Akerman.

Northwest is everywhere. Nike,

**Another impressive Northwest job—the Oregon Graduate Center research facility in Beaverton, Ore.**



Intel, Mentor Graphics, Tektronics—the company has many giant-sized clients. The buildings are sharp, the landscape superb.

"We only offer service and quality—you can't do anything else. People today sometimes don't get a lot of service but if you offer it, they'll spend the money," says Akerman, while preparing an urgent quote for a potential client.

Northwest prepares to better serve clients in the future by beefing

up the company's design/build services.

"We believe the future is in design/build and we're heading that way," says Akerman.

One way he's doing that is by hiring landscape architects as part of the team instead of competing against them. "That way they can have their business. We're not in competition." That attitude has helped growth in the design/build end.—by Ken Kuhajda

Daniels. "We've never been a company to dwell on anything. We just go after something else."

Daniels is a proponent of team management. And he has assembled a good team: chairman Art Davis, vice-president Scott Forrester, secretary-treasurer Scot Davis, contract administrator Dan Tamminga and vice-president David Lindorfer.

"Our people have to be the tops," Daniels says. "We can't settle for less. Those guys have pushed me to my limits. When my alarm goes off at 5:45 a.m., I know there's 30 or 40 managers' feet hitting the floor at the same time."

Top managers at Davis work 10 to 12 hours a day, five days a week. That kind of a schedule might burn out many executives. But not the people at Davis.

Tamminga, who is married and has one son, does like it, though, when things get a little slower. "You have a higher frustration rate with the long hours," he says. "And the family puts a lot of pressure on. But what keeps me going is that I know there's a breather at the end of the

## SHOOTING THE MOON

From zero to \$8.4 million in sales in just six years, Davis Landscape Contractors know no bounds.

**C**ontrary to the controlled growth of Northwest, Davis Landscape Contractors of Gaithersburg, Md. has blown the top off its growth chart. Begun in 1981, Davis experienced

total sales of \$8.4 million this past season.

"We haven't set a limit on what 'the moon' is for Davis," notes the company president and CEO Chris



Fairview Park, where Davis crews must cope with turf, tree, shrub and water management.





JOHN DEERE 48

⚠ DANGER ⚠  
Read the manual before operating this equipment.



# You're looking at 4 tough problems our walk-behinds are built to survive.

## And 4 more they're built to solve.

No slam to your staff, but most commercial grounds care laborers aren't exactly a sensitive group.

In fact, some of them give a new meaning to the term "normal operating conditions."

Which is why John Deere commercial walk-behinds are built the way they are.

Tough.

With welded and reinforced heavy gauge steel throughout the deck for long life. An under-belly shield to keep drive components protected. And heavy caster-mounted pneumatic wheels up front that stay on where

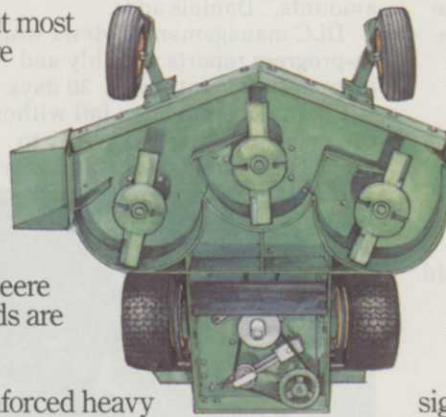
others snap off.

*Overlapping blade design provides a more uniform cut and helps eliminate stripping—even in wet mowing conditions.*

But standing up to tough conditions is only one thing a John Deere commercial walk-behind does well.



*Hand clutch steering allows independent control of each drive wheel for precise turning around obstacles. Seven speed transmission lets you match mowing speeds to changing ground conditions on the go.*



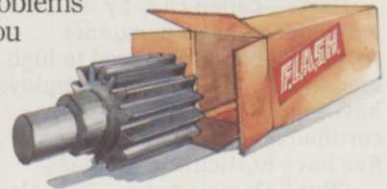
*The center-spindle-forward 48-in., 17-horsepower model shown here features a baffled under-deck design that improves air-flow for less windrowing and good bagging.*

They're also designed to give you one of the cleanest cuts in the business, too.

With a baffled under deck design that improves the airflow for less windrowing and good bagging. An overlapping blade design for cleaner cutting without stripping. Plus precise hand clutch steering for responsive turning in tight areas.

And to keep you cutting, crew after crew, John Deere's FLASH™ parts system can even get you temporarily out of stock items quickly. In most cases overnight.

Ask your dealer for more facts on his four commercial walk-behinds with cutting widths from 32 to 52 inches. See how a mower built to survive tough mowing problems can help you survive in a tough business.



*If your dealer doesn't have the part you need in stock the John Deere FLASH parts support system can fill your order fast. With most deliveries in 24 hours.*

Nothing Runs Like a Deere®



1837-1987  
**150**

Circle No. 117 on Reader Inquiry Card

## LANDSCAPE PROFILE

year. I sort of re-evaluate in the slow season."

Lindorfer, a newlywed, says, "We all approach the burnout, usually in the fall. If this was a 12-month season, we wouldn't handle the pace. January and February are the two most important months, when everybody can get recharged."

### \$1 million, 3 trucks

The Davises and Daniels started the company in Harrisburg, Pa. in 1980 with a \$1 million budget and three trucks. Gradually, the company's sphere of influence widened to Hilton Head, S.C., Gaithersburg, Md. and Raleigh, N.C.

The turning point was when Davis was awarded the \$300,000 Shady Grove Metro project in Rockville, Md. "We overcame, perhaps, the strictest and most complex governmental specifications in order to complete the job on time and within budget," notes Lindorfer. "The competition was expecting us to falter, but we didn't."

By 1984, sales exceeded \$2.3 million at the Gaithersburg branch alone, and \$3.4 million for the entire company.

### A working philosophy

Bases of the company's working philosophy are quality, fair price and performance.

"We always keep our word," notes Scot Davis. "If I have to pull a crew out of Harrisburg to make a deadline in Washington, D.C., I'll do it. And I have."

Davis—called DLC by its employees—has a personnel recruiting program geared to high credentials. More than 45 employees have college degrees. Six are certified landscape architects and five have horticulture degrees.

"But," Daniels notes, "DLC also has a lot of fantastic employees who don't have college degrees. The executive, white-collar and blue-collar mix in this company is very balanced. More importantly, we promote from within, so most of our employees know what it's like to have been at the end of a shovel at one point in their lives."

"We sell opportunity."

Growth like DLC's means, obviously, some radical financing. Daniels says that the company's strong track record—from the very beginning—of predictability and

dependability allowed DLC to secure short-term working capital when needed. "But equally important is the line-by-line analysis and breakdown which has consistently come out very close to projected amounts," Daniels adds.

DLC management reviews work-in-progress reports monthly and income statements every 30 days.

"Many businessmen fail without the understanding and ability to project and forecast why and when

they need cash," says Daniels.

"Our system has explicitly shown our people where they are and where they are heading," notes Scot Davis. "Our people have the information in advance to evaluate a problem and the tools and company support to react quickly to resolve them."

There is no secret to the success at Davis Landscape Construction: it's as simple as "people plus performance equals profit."

—Jerry Roche



The Davis management team: (from left) vice-president Scott Forrester, contract administrator Dan Tamminga, president Chris Daniels and vice-president Dave Lindorfer at U.S. Fidelity & Guaranty Insurance.



U.S. Fidelity & Guaranty Insurance, one of Davis's more valued accounts.



# Nourish Your Turf With **NITROFORM**<sup>®</sup>

Nourishing your turf with NITROFORM<sup>®</sup> assures better root development and healthier turf by providing six important benefits.

- 1** Consistent 38% nitrogen.
- 2** Sustained, predictable release by soil bacteria to provide nitrogen when needed most by roots and vegetative parts.
- 3** Provides organic nitrogen and carbon to enhance bacterial activity, even in sandy soils.
- 4** Non-burning to turf, trees, or ornamentals when used as directed.
- 5** Environmentally sound... resists leaching, even in porous soils.
- 6** Fewer applications a year are required.

For a complete information kit on nourishing and protecting your turf, join the NOR-AM Turf Management Program. Write to the Communications Department, NOR-AM Chemical Company, 3509 Silverside Road, P.O. Box 7495, Wilmington, DE 19803.

NITROFORM<sup>®</sup> is available as BLUE CHIP<sup>®</sup> or GRAY CHIP<sup>™</sup> for dry application, or as POWDER BLUE<sup>®</sup> or POWDER GRAY<sup>™</sup> for liquid application.

 **NOR-AM**  
NOR-AM CHEMICAL COMPANY

3509 Silverside Road, P.O. Box 7495  
Wilmington, DE 19803



IMPORTANT: Please remember always to read and follow carefully all label directions when applying any chemical.

Circle No. 152 on Reader Inquiry Card



## **THE GRADUATE**

Eldon Dyk left school to join Allen Keesen Landscaping. It was like 'graduating,' and Dyk is not sorry he made the switch.



Eldon Dyk (left) and Allen Keesen 'found' each other in 1981.

**E**ldon Dyk felt trapped. After 15 years as a teacher, coach and assistant principal on the high school level, he felt he wasn't getting anywhere. It was, he admits, his "mid-life crisis."

At the same time, Allen Keesen of Allen Keesen Landscaping, Denver, Col., was toying with adding a maintenance division to his already-successful design/build division.

Five years ago, Dyk and Keesen found each other. The result has been a growing company.

Dyk, who grew up on a Montana farm, visited Joe Marsh and Rod Bailey, both successful landscape contractors, before he even sat behind his new desk. The market was not easy to learn, but he had a head start because he knew how to deal with people.

"I'm a people person in terms of dealing with labor and clients," Dyk notes now. "That's something I did as a teacher, coach and assistant principal."

Most of the clients own office buildings, though the list includes some homeowner associations and three residences.

"Homeowner associations are the hardest to deal with," Dyk notes. "They complain about the little things, picky things. But if they've got a good strong president or one person who will really take charge, we don't have much of a problem. None of those picky things get to my door."

Not very many of the landscapes are large, but all have irrigation.

Because land is so expensive in the fast-growing Denver area, business owners hesitate to buy much more than they need, hence a minimum need for landscape maintenance. "I bid things by the square foot, not the acre," Dyk observes.

A lack of rain around the "Mile-High City" also creates the necessity