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TORO

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landscape management. The lab isn't an isolated farm, as it is at many schools. The lab is the entire campus...or, rather, the campus is the laboratory, open to the creativity, and occasional mistakes, of its students.

Waseca began as an agricultural high school in the heart of corn and soybean country. The University of Minnesota took over the facilities in the early 70s and started a 1200-acre experiment farm, along with the technical college.

The 110-acre campus may be one of the smallest campuses in the system, but with the recent decline of agriculture, it's a haven for landscape management students.

The campus currently is going through a re-design and students are involved in all aspects. In August 1986, students seeded 12 acres with a conventional rye and bluegrass mix. Last fall, students designed campus roadways and, in the spring, lined them with little leaf lindens and Summit ash.

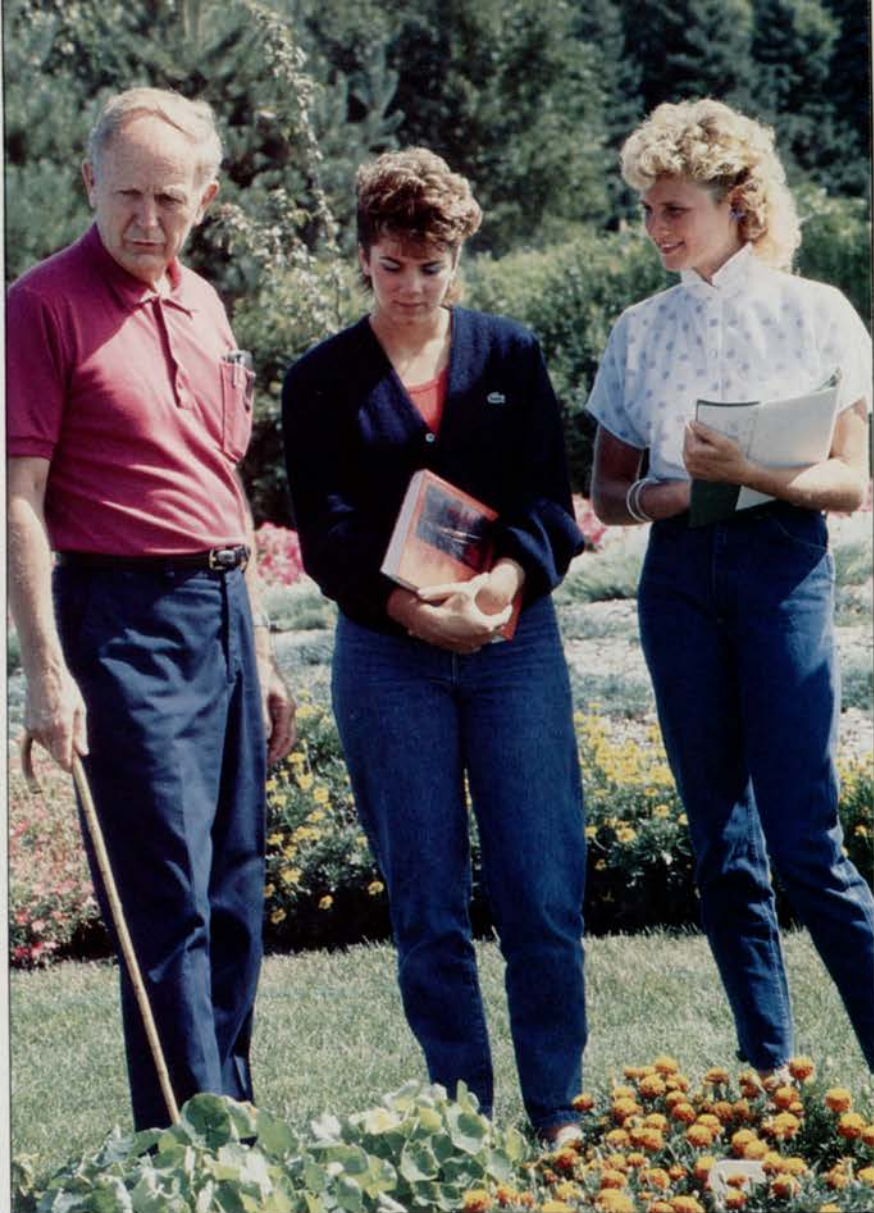
Students or crew?

Despite the majority of work being done by students, a buildings and landscape crew of seven (superintendent, two gardeners, three buildings and grounds personnel, and a technician) oversees the campus. "There's no definite break-down," says landscape manager Jerry Nelson. "When they're not doing it, we do it."

The budgets are even kept separate. Plant materials used by students come from the educational budget, but plants used by the landscape crew come from maintenance budget.



John Ball: "In my class, I'm God"



The campus is the laboratory at UMW. Professor Phil Allen instructs students.

Nelson's crew is responsible for general maintenance of the campus and athletic fields, including a football field, two practice fields and two softball fields.

The crew concentrates on the athletic fields, horticultural gardens and front entrance, which is the focal point of the re-design. Only the entrance is irrigated, although some irrigation will go into the garden area as it's built.

"Usually a faculty member decides what needs to be done and when it needs to be done and coordinates it with the landscape supervisor," Pedersen explains.

When the two departments cross, they don't always agree. "There's a lot of plant material that I would not get if it weren't for the horticulture department being here," Nelson says. "There's a lot I don't think is real hardy. But we usually talk it over."

Often, what a class leaves unfinished, the Horticulture Club picks up on, so students can gain even more experience. And, what the Hort Club leaves undone, work-study students and the maintenance department will come in and finish.

Nursery students grow much of the plant materials used on campus in six on-site greenhouses. "We label everything someplace on campus," Pedersen says. "We try to duplicate it once or twice for testing."

An example is the juniper garden which incorporates three samples of several species, all pruned differently. "Quite frankly, you can lecture about these things forever and you can even demonstrate, but it's not until students stand out there by themselves that they really learn," says Pedersen.

During the two year technical program, students learn plant materials, landscape and hardscape

continued on page 24

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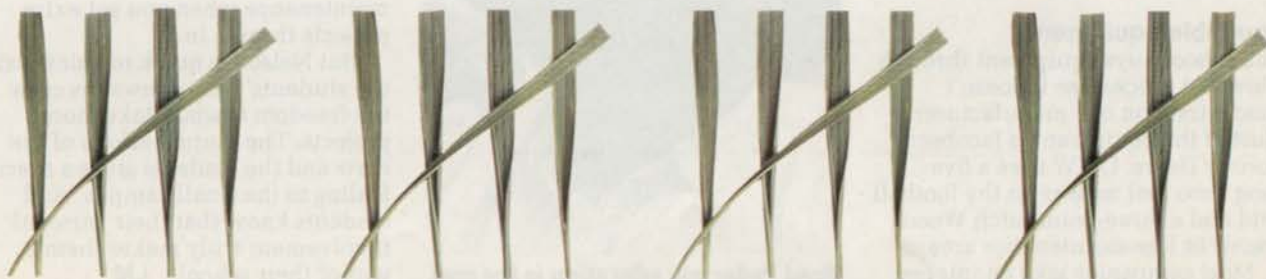
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design, equipment, and the business of bidding for jobs. Books and lectures, of course, are significant, but take a back seat to the hands-on training.

Students design and maintain what's known as the "free form" garden. The gardens blaze each spring with bright colored annuals mixed in with perennials and groundcovers. Students have learned hardscaping by installing different patio paving systems, a gazebo and retaining walls. Future plans include building a waterfall and installing nightlighting.

"The gardens were cornfields the year I came," Pedersen says. He started at UMW in 1973 as landscape supervisor. Only one class had gone through the program. Pedersen worked on a masters degree nights and became an instructor in '78.

Besides the gardens, students work extensively with turf. The campus has 32 turf plots (250 sq. ft.) and a golf green.

Trimmin' trees

Students go so far as to prune trees on campus. UMW has at least 53 species of trees on campus, along with its own arboretum.

"Students start working on the sycamore or oak because they're forgiving trees," explains John Ball, a UMW professor who climbs trees along with his students. The liability crisis is threatening the arboriculture industry today. That can be a crisis to a college class.

"In my class, I'm God," Ball says. "They get one mistake...Well, they don't even get that."

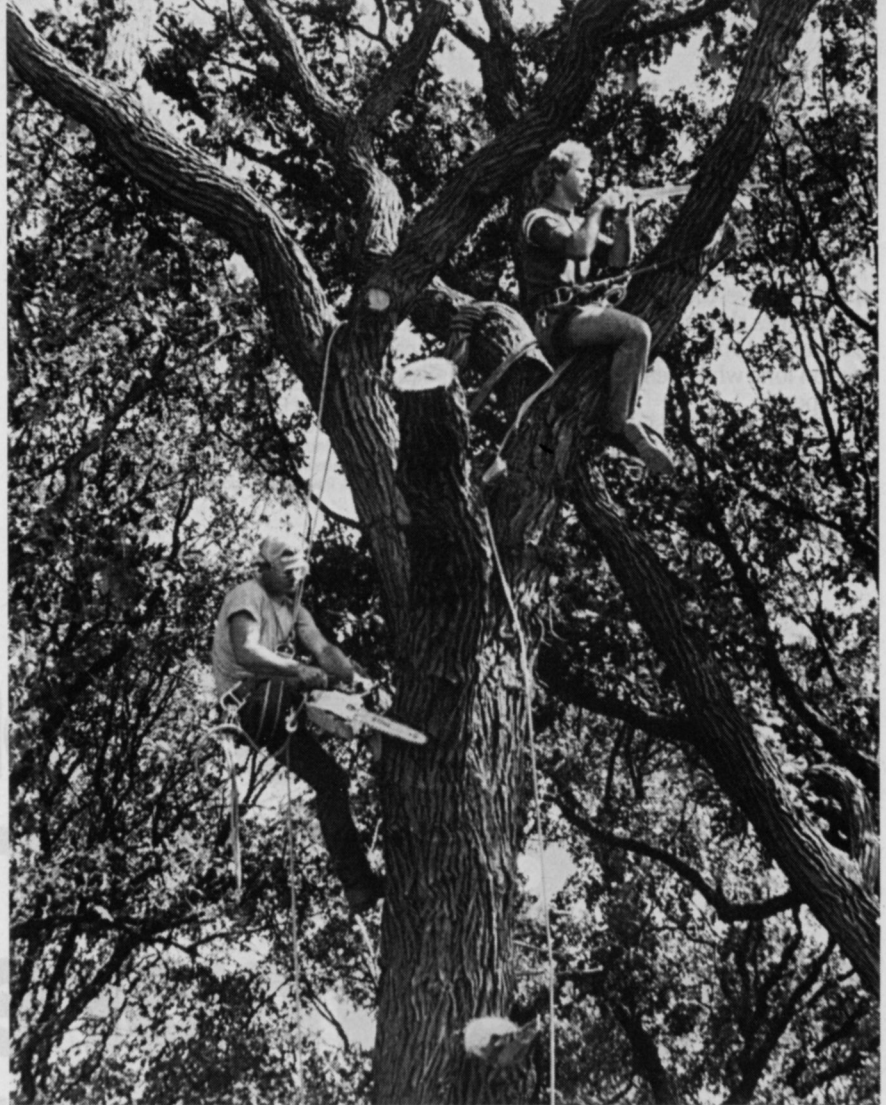
"One way to control students' tree pruning is to use electric chain saws," Ball says. "They're lightweight, easy to start, and I can unplug them to get their attention."

Students also are assigned specific areas to maintain, which they work on about 20 hours a week. Most of the 65 acres of turf on the campus gets fertilized twice a year, spring and fall, with nitrogen. The landscape crew mows manicured areas twice a week at two inches in the spring and once a week at 2 1/2 inches in the heat-stressed summer.

Equitable equipment

The school buys equipment through a low-bid process, so it doesn't concentrate on one manufacturer. Most of the equipment is Jacobsen, Toro or Deere. UMW uses a five-gang Toro reel mower on the football field and a three-point hitch Woods tractor in low-maintenance area.

Most companies take an interest



Despite the liability crisis, UMW students still prune trees.

in exposing students, their future customers, to various equipment. Jacobsen has loaned equipment to the school, and Cushman gives UMW a three-wheel truckster each year. Toro, located in nearby Minneapolis, puts on irrigation seminars each year.

"I think it's good for students to

get on different mowers," Nelson says. "When they get out, that's what they'll need to know about."

The school actively participates in its own Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program.

"We use very little insecticides," Nelson says. "We use nothing on a preventative basis. We spray only when there's a problem and we've been lucky."

Nelson uses Trimec for weed control twice a year, hitting areas harder with the fall application.

With the campus growth and re-design, Nelson's job is anything but boring. "The biggest challenge is the new construction going on," he says. "You can't concentrate on maintenance when you get extra projects thrown in."

But Nelson is quick to point that the students' help allows his crew the freedom to undertake more projects. The mutual efforts of the crew and the students gives a special feeling to the small campus. And students know that their personal involvement truly makes them a part of their school. **LM**



Brad Pedersen: education is the goal



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FALL MARKETING

Some companies have had great success marketing services in the fall. Before you start up such a program, here are some tips to follow.

by Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke

For most green industry companies, spring is the most active marketing time. Opportunities exist for a fall marketing system that could be helpful to green industry companies, whether they be lawn care, tree or landscape services.

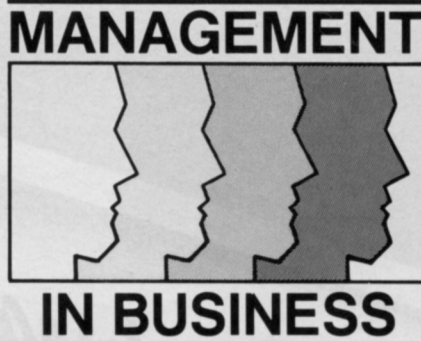
In the North, tree services can generate revenue for the winter months, and marketing can reflect the possibility of pruning at this time.

Southern areas have various opportunities for landscape and maintenance services in the winter months. But for the most part, fall marketing doesn't deal with raising revenue for the winter; rather it is done for both fall and next-season purposes.

Given the fact that fall marketing has been successful for some companies in various parts of the country, here are some of the keys to helping put together a strong fall marketing program:

1. Define the marketing's objective. If it is for extra sales in the fall, then you will approach it one way. If it is for generating fall revenue and for next-season customers, you'll approach it differently. (Examples later.)

2. Don't use the same materials for fall marketing that you used for your regular spring marketing. Some companies simply take the same mailing materials and telemarketing scripts and use the ones left over from spring in the fall. It doesn't work very well, if at all. You should include something



Fall marketing is done for both fall and next-season purposes.

that points out the benefits of your service over the winter months. If what you are doing in the fall doesn't help, why are you doing it?

3. Define your current customer base. This means that you need to know their geographical location as well as their income and their home values. By assessing these three simple pieces of information, you will be able to go the next step.

Information such as this is found in two places. For the location, check your own routing cards. For the demographic materials, look either to the library or mailing list companies. Both have the information. At the library it's free but time-consuming. With the mailing list companies, it's fast but costly.

4. Use your current customer list as a model for your fall marketing. Generally, people with similar buying patterns use such services. The best way to profile your next customer is to define your current customer base. This is especially true in the fall, when you have been servicing the next-door neighbors or people who are demographically the same, for the entire season. In the fall they can evaluate your work visually and get referrals from people who have been serviced.

If you've done your job well, these people will generally help you get new customers. If you haven't, you've

got more troubles than worrying about fall marketing anyway.

5. Be more liberal with incentives in the fall. But this statement is true only if you are trying to get people who will take both the fall and next-year services. If you are simply trying to generate a few fall sales, you shouldn't do anything out of the ordinary. If, however, you can get these people to become next-season customers, you can afford to be a little more generous with your offers. Then you won't have to spend time in the busy spring season to attract them, and you will have some extra revenue in the fall.

6. Start the marketing activity right after Labor Day. You want people who are going to be next-season customers to have a chance to work with your company this year. If you wait until October to do your marketing, you may be unable to actually provide them with your service. It is always better if a consumer has had previous service. And starting after Labor Day will help you provide them with a sample of how you operate your business.

Fall marketing should be focused not only on raising some extra revenue in the fall time window, but also on getting the customers to remain the next season. The keys are knowing your own current customer base, and using that knowledge to help target your customers for fall marketing. Most people buy services because someone else they know does also. This should be a key in the green industry marketing plans, but it's often overlooked. Don't do that in the fall marketing.

Finally, make sure that you use different materials from those used in the previous spring. Just because you have some brochures left over, a little free radio time from a barter arrangement, or an old telemarketing script, doesn't mean that you should use them in the fall. Planning to do your fall marketing early (as opposed to a rush of activity in September or October when you want a little more revenue) will help you design a marketing program to fit your company and help you be more profitable in the upcoming year.

LM



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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On Design

Intriguing Interiors

by Heide Aungst, managing editor



The IBM atrium and bamboo garden have received international acclaim as the largest interior bamboo garden in the world. Architect Edward Larrabee Barnes of New York, N.Y., designed the garden in 1982. Everett Conklin of New Jersey installed the project. But by the time John Mini of John Mini Landscapes Ltd., City Island, N.Y. took over maintaining the project in May 1984, problems had set in. Ammonium hydrofluoric cleaning compound contaminated the soil. The plants were under-nourished and infested with spider mites and common bamboo fungus. The 275 bamboo plants (all 30 to 40 feet tall) were about 75 percent browned out. Mini worked with experts from Rutgers University and the New York Botanical Garden to implement a healthy management program. The first step was to set up a permanent inventory at Tropical Ornamentals in Florida. Mini takes soil and tissue samples four times a year, and soil feeding is carefully calculated. The bamboo canes either are tied up or left to weep in a monofilament line, creating the desired canopy. Mini spends more than \$10,000 in maintaining the atrium. The project won a 1986 ALCA "Grand Award" for interior management.

John Mini Landscapes Ltd.: Circle No. 191 on Reader Inquiry Card.

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