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Circle No. 121 on Reader Inquiry Card

Breeders develop colors (varieties) within a series to achieve similar traits, like plant growth habit, height, size of bloom and blooming period—for both greenhouse (pack) and outdoor performance. By choosing varieties within the same series, you won't be surprised to find one variety six inches and another 12 inches tall.

The transition bed

Another important bed, located between the clubhouse and No.1 tee, became known as the "transition bed." This informal 1,850-square foot shaded bed created an effective transition from the formality of the entrance to the natural setting of the course.

According to Clay, "The plants created a friendly, laid-back, relaxing at-

Early ordering makes it easier to remember what was ordered and how well each variety fared the season before.

mosphere that added to the enjoyment of the game especially for those who are social versus serious players."

Forty flats of mixed colors of begonias and 20 flats of mixed colors of coleus were used. Several reasons this bed appeared informal include:

- coleus looks natural, "woody;"
- mixed colors generally appear informal; and
- the bed was not designed in a rigid straight line, but instead portrayed a meandering effect.

Other ways to achieve an informal appearing bed might be to incorporate annuals among perennials. Or combine a number of species, colors, textures and flower forms together.

Some plants, like coleus, creeping zinnia, cornflower, gazania, rudbeckia, kochia, nicotiana, snapdragons and zinnias just naturally look casual.

To design a sun-loving informal bed, consider using canna lilies, spider flower or hibiscus in the background. Then incorporate a mixture of rudbeckia, African marigolds, nicotiana and/or ageratum in the foreground.

The 1000 bed

While bedding plants were strategically planted throughout the 170-acre course, the grande finale certainly became the logo bed placed



Findlay Country Club horticulturist Susan K. Crosley, left, with Shirley Vlasich, FCC's women's club tournament champion, 1989 and 1990.

near the last green.

To create a final, spectacular visual image that members and guests will long remember, consider transplanting bedding plants to form your golf course or corporate logo. This approximate 10-by-20-foot bed was not only highly visible, but it achieved added interest of a 3-D effect by planting the letters in 25 flats of 18 inches tall red salvia with 10 flats of four-inch-tall white sweet alyssum for the background.

Use a spreading annual outside the lettering, such as ageratum, lobelia, low growing impatiens, cascading petunias or vinca. For a more rigid annual to form the letters, consider transplanting celosia, dahlia, dianthus, geraniums, marigolds, ornamental pepper or primrose. Note that some of these species are short and others tall, that some require cool and others hot weather, and that some prefer sun while others bloom best in

part-shade.

Susan's dreams for a bigger and better 1991 are wholeheartedly supported by the country club's board of directors; her flower bed budget has been increased 50 percent.

Looking back

While many aspects of designing, transplanting and maintaining the 22 flower beds were thoroughly enjoyable, it was not always easy going for Sue. Here are some practical lessons she learned:

1. Start out small if: a) having flower beds is new to you, no matter how much of a horticulture background you have; b) this is your first year at the job site so you can learn more about the growing conditions, watering systems, etc; c) you just moved from another part of the country; d) you don't have an automatic watering system.

2. Prepare the beds before the plants are to arrive so that when the plants do arrive, they can be planted right away.

3. Don't take more flats than can be transplanted within a short period of time, especially if you don't have an ideal location to hold over the plants.

4. Check the water and soil for pH. Check the soil for possible nutrient deficiencies and porosity.

5. Amend the soil several weeks before transplanting.

6. Avoid growing too many species for the first time. Here too, learn the idiosyncrasies of each species.

continued on page 64

20 Low - to - Medium Maintenance Annuals that can be grown almost anywhere in the country.

Species	Spacing	Height	Light	Moisture	Temperature
Ageratum	5-7"	4-6"	S,pSh	a-m	a
Amaranthis	15-18"	18-36"	S	d	h
Begonia, Fibrous	7-9"	6-8"	S,pSh,Sh	a	a
Celosia	6-8"	6-15"	S	d	h
Coleus	8-10"	10-24"	Sh,pSh	a	a-h
Dianthus	7-9"	6-10"	S,pSh	a	any
Dusty Miller	6-8"	8-10"	S,pSh	d	h
Geranium	10-12"	10-15"	S	m	a-h
Gloriosa Daisy	12-24"	18-36"	S	m	h
Hibiscus	24-30"	48-60"	S,Lsh	m	a-h
Impatiens	8-10"	6-18"	pSh,S	m	a
Impatiens New Guinea	10-12"	10-12"	S,Lsh	m	a
Marigold, French	3-6"	5-6"	S	a	a
Ornamental Pepper	5-7"	4-8"	S,pSL	m	a-h
Petunia	10-12"	6-12"	s	d	a
Portulaca	6-8"	4-6"	s	d	h
Salvia	6-8"	12-24"	S,pSh	a-m	a-h
Spider Flower	12-15"	30-48"	S	d	a-h
Sweet Alyssum	10-12"	3-5"	S,psh	a-d	a
Vinca	6-8"	12-24"	S,pS	any	h

Light: s = sun
sh = shade
pSh = part Shade
Lsh = light Shade

Moisture: a = average
d = dry
m = moist

Temperature: a = average
h = above
85°F
c = below
75°F



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7. Before growing a large bed of a species and possibly a variety that has not been grown in the area before, try it out on a small scale in a inconspicuous area.

The Professional Plant Growers Association offers these suggestions:

● Communicate your needs to your growers.

● Tell your grower the dates you want the bedding plants and how they are to be transported.

● If you require specific varieties and/or cells per flat or pot sizes, make this clear when ordering the plants.

● If you are not certain which species or varieties will do best in the location intended, ask your grower for advice. They are very knowledgeable and can provide valued suggestions.

● Order early. Most successful landscapers place their orders between July and early November. One advantage to early ordering is it's easier to remember what was ordered and how well each species/variety fared the season before.

● Whenever shipments arrive, "take stock" immediately. Report any damaged or missing plants immediately. Your grower, like you, wants your order to be right.

● Water the plants right away to reduce transportation stress.

● Locate the plants in a somewhat shaded area away from strong winds until they can be transplanted.

● Keep in mind the standard "formula"—that one person can plant approximately 25 flats per day—to help determine the number of people needed to transplant the bedding plants as soon as possible after delivery.

(To obtain a comprehensive booklet about annual bedding plants and ideas for their use in the landscape, order "The Professional Guide to Flowering Annuals." This 28-page book is available through the Professional Plant Growers Association, P.O. Box 27517, Lansing, MI 48909. It contains useful design ideas, plus charts outlining planting, spacing and herbicide tolerance of most bedding plant annuals.

Include your address and a check for \$2 when ordering.) **LM**

Kathy Zar Pepler is a horticulture public relations consultant and writer for Yoder Brothers, Inc. and the Professional Plant Growers Association. With 21 years experience in the horticulture field, she has managed one of the largest garden centers/florists in the country, was the national spokesperson for the gardening and interior landscape/floral industries and was the executive director for All-America Selections.

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SURVIVING IN A TROUBLED ECONOMY

In Part One of a four-part series, our green industry analysts reveal what it takes to stay on top in a time of increased competition and economic recession.

by Ed Wandtke and Rudd McGary, Ph.D.

Survival.

In the business world, this word conjures up a scenario of economic doom and gloom. In the green industry, however, survival has more to do with keeping up with change and competition than fluctuations in the Dow-Jones. So while this series of articles is driven, to some extent, by the economic conditions that we are likely to encounter in the coming years, it's important to note that there are other important factors to take into account when discussing survival in the 1990s.

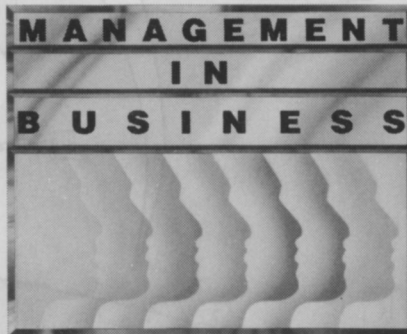
Numerous standard economic indicators today point toward an oncoming recession. We believe it's more realistic to think of the upcoming economic period as a slowdown—not a full-blown recession. The result of this slowdown will be that consumers will become more selective about what they buy and how often they buy it. Consequently, the next 18 to 24 months will be a time of opportunity for the well-run company and a time of disaster for companies that are managed poorly.

Where to look

In a slow, even downward-spiraling economy, one of the first areas to lose consumer support are auxiliary services, which include the landscaping and lawn care industries. Companies that have targeted upscale accounts are less likely to be affected by a slowed economy and will fare better. Therefore, your marketing efforts should be geared toward residential and commercial accounts that are somewhat insulated from a slowing economy.

Another area of concern in a turned-down economy is your productivity. Many companies run "fat" during prosperous times yet don't realize it until more difficult times emerge. Managers should be aware of the numbers needed to run the organization and how to manage them.

The professional landscaper can do little to stem the tide of a slowing



economy, but factors closer to home may be impinging on your profitability. For example, in many markets there is a preponderance of landscaping firms, causing market saturation.

Saturation strategy

Saturation explains why we're now seeing larger firms buying accounts from smaller companies rather than pursuing additional marketing efforts. In some areas, it's cheaper to buy companies than to launch a marketing campaign.

In saturated markets, survival is a way of life. It doesn't matter if the economy is up or down; there is so much competition that every day is spent just trying to get by. Low-balling is a common practice for these organizations. Good companies don't need to sink to this level. They realize that in the long run, low-balling will lead to nothing but problems.

Long-term growth in a saturated marketplace depends on sound management, marketing and operating decisions. Mistakes like cutting essential budget items, inaccurate pricing, or laying off important personnel will have disastrous consequences for a firm trying to survive stiff competition.

Follow trends

Lastly, green industry companies battling for survival need to remain aware of where the industry is headed. For example, a recent trend in the industry has been the move to-

ward multiple service offerings. Many prudent, aggressive companies carefully chose those services it can provide profitably.

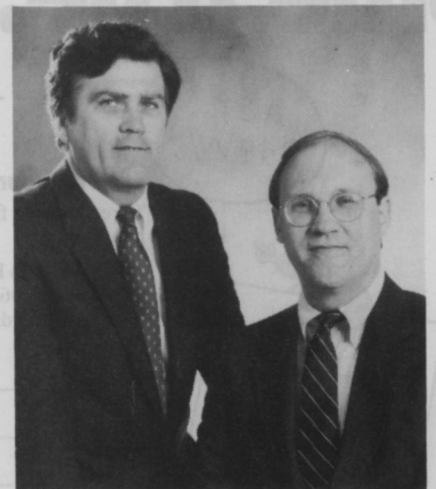
If you bring on a new technician who happens to be skilled at tree service, why not begin marketing that service to your customers? A lot of companies do this with a variety of combinations.

A common pitfall is when service combinations don't make sense to the consumer. Make sure your service mix reflects the consumer's wants, then deliver each in a manner that leaves room for profit.

Remember that surviving in the 1990s goes beyond worrying about the state of the economy. A slowdown is only natural, and there's nothing you can do about it. Use the opportunity to take a closer look at your organization and find ways to do what you do leaner and better.

In upcoming articles, we'll focus on strengthening your marketing efforts, operations and budgets. It is our intent to not only help you survive what may be lean years, but to actually grow in spite of them. **LM**

Next month: survival marketing



Ed Wandtke and Rudd McGary, Ph.D., are senior consultants with AGMA Inc., Columbus, Ohio. Wandtke focuses on operational and financial questions, while McGary is a marketing specialist.

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Common Weeds in Turfgrass

Bunch Broadleaf	Spreading Broadleaf	Annual Grassy	Perennial Grassy
Dandelion ¹	Chickweed	Crabgrass ¹	<i>Poa annua</i> ⁴
Plantains ¹	Knotweed ¹	Goosegrass ¹	Tall fescue ²
Others	Henbit ¹		Nimblewill ²
Wild garlic ³	Speedwell ³		Quackgrass ²
Nutsedge ²	Spurge ¹		Dallisgrass ¹

¹ Controlled by annual application of herbicides.

² Glyphosate kills weeds and turf.

³ Requires repeated treatment. Underground bulbs make control difficult.

1. Weed control is most effective when done in:

- September and October
- mid-summer
- late spring
- early June

2. Apply herbicides:

- one day prior to mowing
- immediately after mowing
- 24 hours after mowing
- timing is not important

3. Weed elimination becomes evident within:

- three days
- one week
- two to four weeks

4. Crabgrass thrives well during:

- mid-summer, when hot and dry
- mid-spring, when warm and rainy
- late fall, in cooler temperatures.

5. Two applications (5-7 days apart) of organic arsonates can selectively kill: (multiple answers)

- crabgrass, goosegrass, chickweed
- Poa annua*
- sandbur, barnyard grass and foxtails
- lovegrass and nimblewill

6. In warm winter areas, *Poa annua* germinates during:

- June and July
- October through May
- August and September

7. Name the weed pictured below:

- nutsedge
- spotted spurge
- speedwell
- common chickweed



8. Aquatic weed treatment is most effective during: (multiple answers)

- very early May in southern areas
- August, when in full bloom
- very early June in northern areas

ANSWERS

1)a; 2)a; 3)c; 4)b; 5)a,c; 6)b; 7)c; 8)a,c