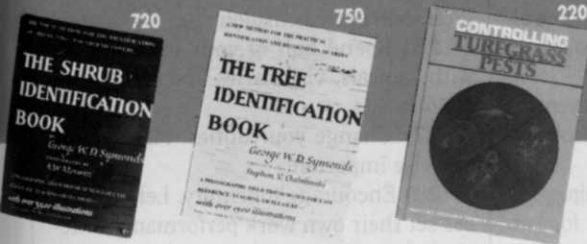


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COULD HAVE! LANDSCAPE

43 ways to bring luck out of hiding

If you want to get lucky, you've got to give luck a fair chance.

by Ed Wandtke

■ During this past convention season, I heard many green industry company owners speak about how lucky another company in their same market has been. Lucky because of significant profitability, high company recognition, great image or community recognition.

Are you a lucky person? How does luck happen? Can you be the beneficiary of luck? Or is luck just something that happens to other people?

For many owners, luck means being willing to try something new because it appears to be what customers say they want. For others, it may mean hearing about an idea that is working in another market, and then trying it. To other owners, it may be listening to, and then trying, the ideas of some adventurous person.

Taking a chance on something new or trying out another person's idea may be a way of finding luck. Try doing something different! If you are not trying something new every year, luck isn't being given a chance.

The following ideas are but some of the ways you can get out of the rut of boredom or repetition and into a new direction for your future. Luck can happen if you give it a chance.

1) Make decisions faster. The more you make, the better the chance of being right. Even if you are wrong, you can change your decision later.

2) Be impulsive. Try something new, even if you haven't examined all of its negative and positive consequences.

3) Start a new hobby, or reactivate an old hobby.

4) Wear a sport coat and tie to work. (Beware of employees who change their approach in dealing with you.)

5) Don't wear a sport coat and tie to work. Looking like one of your employees can improve relationships and informal communication.

6) Drive to work a different way for a while.

7) Go to the library today and select a

book to read. Finish it this week.

8) Spend a day with an industry consultant. It will seem like you've gone to school for a whole semester.

9) Visit an unusual place. Be adventurous. Desert, snow, mountain climbing, Grand Canyon, the Amazon River.

10) Take a vacation on a cruise ship.

11) Don't come into the office for two weeks.

12) Reorganize your business.

13) Give creativity a chance. Let others tell you how they wish you'd operate.

14) Don't listen to anyone. Trust your own instincts.

15) Listen to everyone. You never know where a good idea will come from.

16) Steal ideas! Try them and improve on them.



17) Team up with an unusual employee.

18) Start a new company training program.

19) Have an employee present a new training topic.

20) Pursue a failure. Procter & Gamble undertakes projects doomed to fail.

21) Make a new friend.

22) Evaluate old friends and acquaintances.

23) Share your company's revenue performance and/or "inside" information with employees.

24) Attend a business management seminar this year.

25) Spend half of your time with non-

employees. Vendors and distributors are a great source of information.

26) Spend half of your outside time with radicals, visionaries and other non-conformists.

27) Change your duties. Make someone else important.

28) Encourage ingenuity. Let employees set their own work performance criteria for a week.

29) Have a topsy-turvy day. Switch jobs for a day. Allow others to make one change in new position.

30) Activate curiosity. Have a hide-and-seek day for your employees. Use customers, personnel, company data, community locations, colloquialisms, slang, synonyms, nicknames. Let employees compete to find the answers.

31) Spend a day talking to your four largest customers.

32) Take on a community service project.

33) Start a company "hall of fame" for outstanding performances.

34) Vary your diet. Eat a different cereal each day.

35) Take your shoes off when at your desk.

36) Make coffee, or bring in donuts for all the employees.

37) Want to become creative. Go to a park and let your mind work creatively. It is difficult to get creative behind a desk or in familiar surroundings.

38) Avoid being average in all things.

39) Be the first to work in

the morning.

40) Come to work late.

41) Use your computer for all of the tasks one day.

42) Take a computer course.

43) Get a feel for the real workers at your company. Talk and work with various employees during the next week to see what they are doing, why they are doing it, and what is on their minds.

—The author is a principle at Wandtke & Associates Management Consultants, 2586 Oakstone Rd., Columbus, OH 43231. For more information, phone (614) 891-3111.

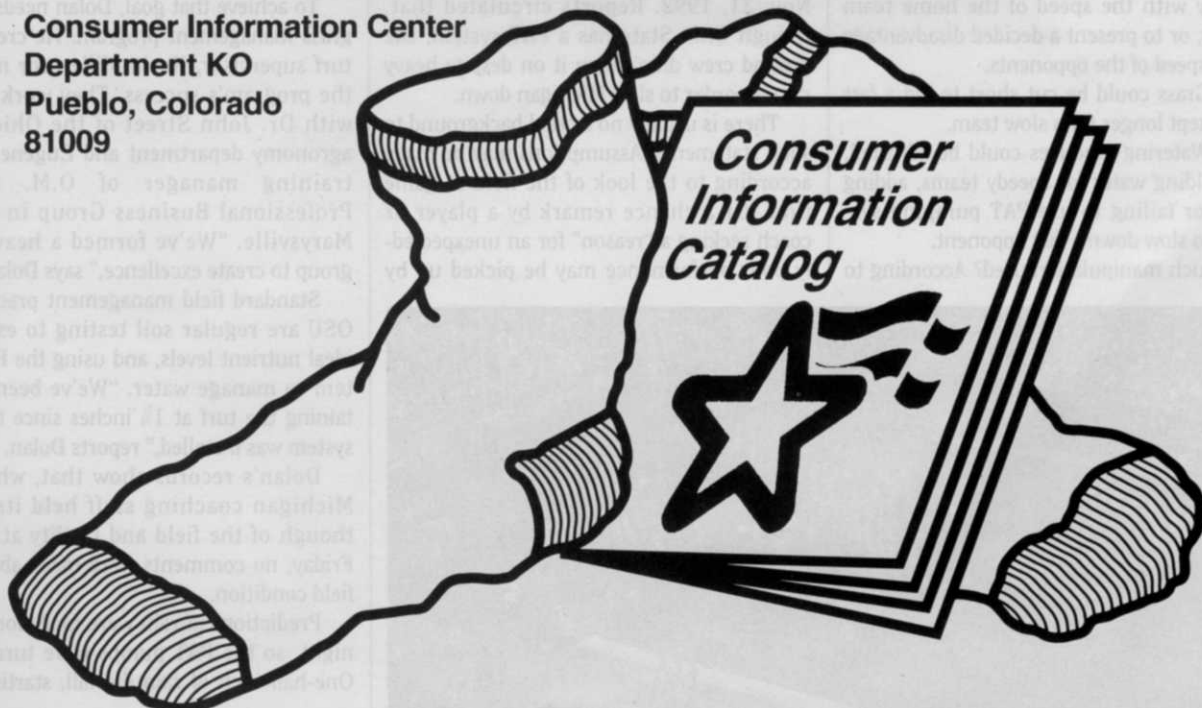
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Creating a 'home field advantage'

Is it the job of the athletic field manager to create equal opportunity for all athletes, or to make sure the home team has an edge?

by Steve and Suz Trusty

■ You hear it, occasionally from sports broadcasters, frequently from losing coaches. The playing field wasn't level. Some turf management practice was manipulated, perhaps unfairly, to give the home team an advantage. This charge is made most frequently at the college or professional level, yet it may surface at high school games, or in highly competitive inter-city sports.

Is such manipulation possible? You bet it is:

- Baseball fields could have specially beveled basepaths angled to comply with the speed and ability of the home team players.

- Baseball skinned areas could be kept hard-packed and fast, or slightly soft and slow.

- The length of the turf—for baseball, football or soccer fields—could be gauged to comply with the speed of the home team players, or to present a decided disadvantage to the speed of the opponents.

- Grass could be cut short to aid a fast team; kept longer for a slow team.

- Watering practices could be adjusted, withholding water for speedy teams, adding water or failing to use PAT pumping systems, to slow down a fast opponent.

Is such manipulation used? According to



reports, seldom, if at all.

The sports turf manager's prime objective is healthy, thriving turf that provides a safe, highly playable surface for the athletes. This objective is long-term. It extends over the total playing season. To alter optimum care procedures for one game jeopardizes that long-term objective, and puts in question the professionalism of the sports turf manager.

Why do these accusations persist? Perhaps because of sports broadcasters, journalists and coaches. For instance, many readers might have heard this "reason" given for the 13-13 tie game between Ohio State and Michigan universities on Saturday, Nov. 21, 1992. Reports circulated that, though Ohio State has a PAT system, the ground crew didn't turn it on despite heavy rain, in order to slow Michigan down.

There is usually no factual background to such statements. Assumptions may be made according to the look of the field at game time. Or a chance remark by a player or coach seeking a "reason" for an unexpectedly poor performance may be picked up by

the media as fact.

Ohio State athletic facilities director Mike Dolan has been in the sports turf management field for 35 years. He spent 10 years with the Cincinnati Reds before going to Ohio State.

"We're constantly shooting for field excellence," Dolan says. "We have established—and seek to retain—a solid, stable turf with good rooting. We want to maintain the field in ideal playing conditions."

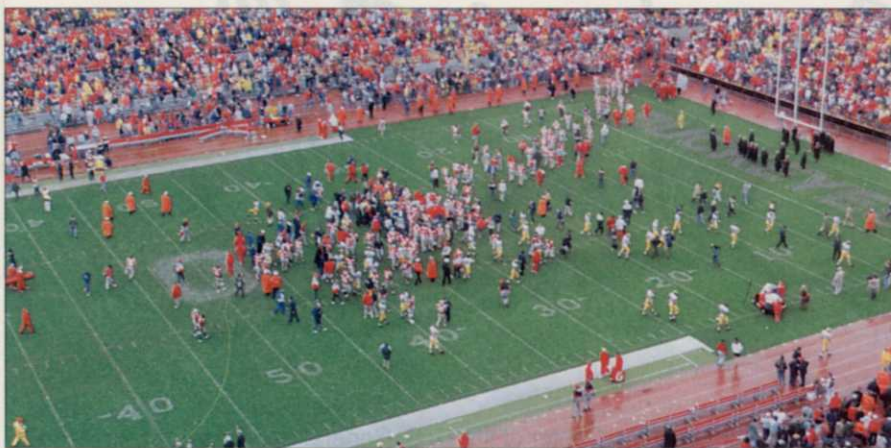
To achieve that goal, Dolan needs a good grass management program. He credits his turf supervisor, Kevin Miller, for much of the program's success. They work closely with Dr. John Street of the Ohio State agronomy department and Eugene Mayer, training manager of O.M. Scott's Professional Business Group in nearby Marysville. "We've formed a heavy duty group to create excellence," says Dolan.

Standard field management practices at OSU are regular soil testing to establish ideal nutrient levels, and using the PAT system to manage water. "We've been maintaining the turf at 1¾ inches since the PAT system was installed," reports Dolan.

Dolan's records show that, when the Michigan coaching staff held its walk-through of the field and facility at 2 p.m. Friday, no comments were made about the field condition.

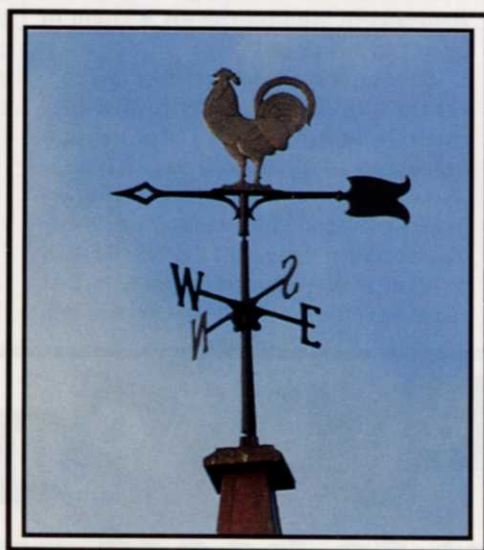
Predictions of rain were made for Friday night, so the PAT pumps were turned on. One-half inch of rain did fall, starting at 3

Before (top) and after photos of the Ohio State University football stadium on Nov. 21, 1992 show that the turf held up under extremely wet conditions.



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a.m. Saturday. The rains had subsided by early Saturday morning.

On Saturday, at game time, nothing yet was brought to the attention of the field grounds department by either of the coaching staffs. Dolan made a point of checking with the grounds superintendent, who had been on-site throughout the day on Saturday, to verify that fact.

"Most people thought the field was in good shape, the best of the three years since the natural turf was installed.

Comments were on what great shape the field was in, and on the good stand of grass," reports Dolan.

What most sports turf managers are concerned with, and in reality all that they should be concerned with, is that the playing field provided is safe and playable.

As Dolan says: "It's unthinkable that any professional sports turf manager would create a condition that might threaten the safety of an athlete or cause a problem that might be detrimental to the overall turf pro-

gram. It's our job to create an equal opportunity for all athletes for competition on a safe, playable surface. They all put their pants on the same way—and the all play on the same surface."

—The authors are partners in *Trusty & Associates*, which provides consulting services to the horticultural trade. Steve is vice-chair of the *Public Relations Committee of the Sports Turf Managers Association*, 401 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611; phone (312) 644-6610.

Shake Out

competitors to boost productivity

Are some of those 'price cutters' in reality just more sophisticated business people?

by Ed Wandtke

■ So far in the 1990s we have seen the impact of a tighter economic climate in the green industry.

The recent sale of the ChemLawn divi-

sion of Ecolab to ServiceMaster at a very discounted price suggests that the green industry may be going through some rough times.

During the past three years, many green industry companies that had been in business for more than 10 years suddenly



Some tools require a lot of time and manpower ...

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lost customers and employees, and thus experienced lower profits. Many owners attribute this to the influx of lowball competitors, who don't know how to operate at a profit, in the late 1980s.

These newer owners might just be more sophisticated business people. Their companies usually are very cost competitive and efficient in service delivery. They also offer the quality the customer wants.

If you have been experiencing business reduction, loss of profitability, or increased pressure from competitors, examine your company through the eyes of a critical businessman, and re-design the services your company offers or the methods in which you do business.

Industry consolidation—As more consolidations and company closings take place in the green industry, you have to address many cost challenges.

One method is to return to the basics. Specialize in landscape service, landscape design and installation, chemical lawn service, and so on.

Many companies have discovered that diversifying their business often leads to a

dilution of the efforts of top management (the owner), and one or more of the new services just don't seem to grow as fast or as large as the owner thought possible. People *do* make a difference, and an owner needs to examine how far he can delegate responsibility before he runs out of qualified employees.

During this period of consolidation in the green industry, some companies need to upgrade or add employees with the needed skills to improve or fill voids in the company. Examine the supply of potential candidates and choose those who possess the skills you need to grow and improve profitability. The cost for a quality individual may be high, but the results should show the initial investment was worth the risk.

Marketing/profitability—Computerization has become a reality. Some software can perform marketing functions. Determine if your management information system provides you with timely service information: missed applications; cancellations; service calls; employee productivity.

And never use the excuse that you're too busy. Next year may be too late.

Look at the approach you have been taking to attract and retain customers. I see companies improve customer retention to 85 and 90 percent. Who says you should have a 30 percent cancellation rate each year? Maybe your customers are coming aboard for the wrong reason or your company is not delivering on promises.

Now is the time to do a customer survey to check on customer attitudes about your service before the season starts in order to reduce cancellations this coming season.

Make this the year to examine the efficiency and productivity of your entire operation. What if you operated with one less office worker or hired a part-timer instead of a full-time employee?

Other survival tips:

- Establish production standards.
- Train employees so they can meet those standards.
- Reward them when they exceed the standard performance.

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TECH CENTER

How to get the bite on insects

As the calendar rolls into March, the appearance of insects means new business for the astute lawn/landscape company.

■ If you are the owner or manager of a lawn care or landscape company, you know how important and often frustrating it can be to deal effectively with some insects—but it can be done.

Deer ticks—which carry and transmit the Lyme disease spirochete, frequent lawns, yards, parks, playgrounds and wooded areas, especially in northeastern states—are a genuine health risk. Bites from nymphs are believed to account for up to 90 percent of recent Lyme disease cases, as reported in a Tarrytown, N.Y. symposium, which 12

authoritative scientists and more than 120 public health officials attended.

Deer ticks, which are active in May and June, cling to vegetation along paths in wooded areas and attach themselves to mice, chipmunks, raccoons, birds and even domestic pets. The ticks imbed their mouth parts into the skin.

A single application of carbaryl and chlorpyrifos on infected areas in early summer can control the ticks and reduce Lyme disease risk up to 90 percent, says Dr. Durland Fish of New York Medical College. However, since ticks are carried by animals, they can and often do return within weeks.

Other recommended treatment for deer ticks include spraying suspect grass, shrubs and flowers with insecticides such as Deet (diethyltoluamide), diazinon and malathion.

The **billbug** presents a formidable foe to lawn and landscape contractors, especially

in north central states. Infestations begin in mid-June. Billbugs cause large lawn areas to turn thin and yellow, and don't green-up after July rains. But since the same symptoms can also be caused by drought, chemical burn or turf diseases, lawns should be monitored carefully for billbug activity.

Billbug adults can be monitored in mid-March through July with simple pitfall traps, notes Dr. Frederick P. Baxendale of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. A container such as a coffee can is filled with alcohol and set in the suspect lawn with the rim level even with the soil surface. This easily traps any bugs. Change the container twice a week.

Insecticides registered for controlling billbugs are Oftanol, diazinon, Turcam, Dursban, Sevin and Mocap. They should be applied when adult activity is first detected

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Changing your soil pH for maximum turf growth

Obtaining the correct soil pH can be tricky. You may have to amend the soil, depending on turf species and soil conditions.

■ Soil acidity or alkalinity can have an effect on turfgrass health. Acidity and alkalinity are measured by pH (potential hydrogen) values: any pH value below the neutral 7.0 is acidic; anything over 7.0 is alkaline.

Turfgrasses grow best at pH values of 6.0 to 8.0. pH values below about 5.5 begin to have adverse effects on both soils and plants, and values below 5.0 are

indicative of real trouble.

Ryegrasses and bluegrasses do not tolerate marked acidity. Wheatgrass, buffalograss and gramagrass tolerate even alkaline soil conditions. On the other hand, bentgrass and fescues tolerate slight soil acidity. Sheep fescue and centipede grass usually prefer acid soil conditions with a pH of 4.3 to 5.8. On neutral or alkaline soils, centipede frequently becomes chlorotic from lack of iron.

Raising pH—Low pH results in symptoms of mineral imbalance. The grass lacks the bright green color of good vigorously growing turf, is fairly unresponsive to fertilizer and may have a high proportion of brown leaves.

As a general rule, if the pH values are below 6.0, liming is needed. There is no danger in mild acidity, and outside of humid regions of the U.S., liming is not needed since soils are more alkaline.

Liming should be done periodically, at amounts adequate to forestall serious acidity (see Table 1). The most practical and easily obtained material to correct soil acidity is finely ground limestone. (This is not to be confused with burnt lime—

TABLE 2.

SOIL REACTION RANGE FOR GOOD TURF GROWTH

COOL-SEASON GRASSES	pH RANGE
1. Wheatgrass, fairway	6.1-8.6
2. Kentucky bluegrass	5.8-7.5
3. Rough bluegrass	5.8-7.2
4. Canada bluegrass	5.7-7.2
5. Annual and perennial rye	5.8-7.4
6. Colonial and creeping bent	5.6-7.0
7. Red and chewings fescue	5.6-6.8
8. Tall fescue	5.5-7.0
9. Bluegrass, annual	5.5-7.0
10. Velvet bentgrass	5.2-6.5
11. Red top	5.0-6.5
12. Sheeps fescue	4.5-5.8
WARM-SEASON GRASSES	pH RANGE
1. Bahiagrass	6.5-7.5
2. St. Augustinegrass	6.3-7.8
3. Gramagrass	6.1-8.6
4. Buffalograss	6.1-8.0
5. Bermudagrass	5.7-7.0
6. Zoysiagrass	5.5-7.0
7. Carpetgrass	5.2-6.7
8. Centipede grass	4.3-5.8

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and when the insect is in its larval stage, advises Dr. Baxendale. When treating for larvae, the turf should be watered before and after application. Aeration helps move the insecticide into the rootzone where the larvae are feeding.

"In many cases," Baxendale emphasizes, "timing of applications is more important than the particular insecticide used. Billbugs are tough to kill, and timing is critical."

Most **clover mites** live indoors. They don't bite people or eat food or household items, and are easily removed from indoor areas such as floors and rugs with an ordinary vacuum cleaner. But if they are a continuous problem in homes, one solution is to remove all grass and weeds next to the foundation of infested buildings. Leave a strip of bare soil at least 18 inches wide. Replant it with zinnias, marigolds, chrysanthemums, roses or salvia, because these plants don't attract clover mites.

European pine sawflies that attack and defoliate European pine trees, Christmas tree plantings and those of Scotch, Austrian and mugho pines, are black-headed and have grayish green larvae. They like to feed in clusters at the ends of pine branches in the worm stage, and can cut most of the needles from branches very quickly. A tree is often severely damaged before the worms are even detected, but they can be controlled by spraying the trees with acephate, malathion or diazinon.

The **European pine shoot moth** larvae

feeds at the base of new shoots of pine trees and shrubs. Damage appears as brown, curled shoots or "candles," but by the time this happens the worms have ceased feeding and have progressed to the pupae state. Moths emerge shortly afterwards and lay eggs for the next generation.

To control the hatching worms, treat infested pines with a spray containing dimethoate (Cygon, De-Fend) in mid-July.

Cankerworms, commonly referred to as inchworms, are dark green or black and are famous for defoliating elm trees. They usually eat all the leaves except for the veins, and, as adults, move about from tree limb to limb, on a silken thread or drop to the ground.

Sprays containing Sevin, malathion, acephate or *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Thuricide, Dipel, Biotrol) will control cankerworms, especially if they are less than half grown.

Bronze birch borers, which are actually small beetles, attack birch trees. They emerge as adults from holes left in the bark and usually infest a tree's upper limbs first. Damage can be detected by already dead branches or by the foliage which becomes pale green. To control these pests, apply a spray containing dimethoate (Cygon) liberally and thoroughly when the eggs are hatching. Repeat the spray three weeks later to control any hatching bugs.

—*Bess Ritter May, the author of this article, is a freelance writer operating out of Philadelphia, Pa.*

quicklime—nor hydrated lime, which is used in the building and construction industry.) Ground limestone should be very finely ground to be fully satisfactory.

If you need to apply limestone, be sure to allow enough time for it to work. Even in warm, moist soils, some weeks are

required for enough of the lime to dissolve.

Only enough lime should be applied to correct the acidic condition. Alkaline soil conditions caused by an excessive lime application limit the availability of certain nutrients as much as an acidic condition.

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Insects, Their Damage and Their Control

INSECT	DAMAGE	CONTROL
European pine sawfly	Christmas, Scotch, Austrian, mugho pines	carbaryl (Savarin), acephate, malathion, diazinon
European pine shoot moth larvae	new shoots of pine trees and shrubs	dimethoate (Cygon, De-Fend)
Cankerworms (inchworms)	elm trees	Sevin, malathion, acephate or <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> (Thuricide, Dipel, Biotrol)
bronze birch borer	birch trees	dimethoate (Cygon)
deer ticks	carry lyme disease bacteria	carbaryl and chlorpyrifos in liquid or granular formulation; Deet (diethyltoluamide), diazinon, malathion
billbugs	large areas of yellow, thin and dead turf which often needs reseeding	Oftanol, diazinon, Turcam, Dursban, Sevin, Mocap
clover mite	very little, unsightly appearance	Indoors: vacuum cleaner for floors and rugs; pyrethrin, in pressurized spray cans, for windowsills. Outdoors: malathion or dicofol

TABLE 1.

POUNDS OF FINELY-GROUND LIMESTONE REQUIRED TO CORRECT SOIL ACIDITY

PH	CONDITION	SOIL REACTION POUNDS OF LIMESTONE PER 1000 SQ. FT. OF LAWN AREA			
		LIGHT SANDY SOILS	MEDIUM SANDY LOAM	LOAMS/SILT LOAMS	CLAY LOAMS
4.0	Excessively acid	90	120	165	200
4.5	Very strongly acid	80	105	150	180
5.0	Strongly acid	70	90	120	150
5.5	Moderately acid	45	60	90	120
6.0	Slightly acid	25	30	45	60