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**K**en Thomas, an Atlanta-area landscaper, started working for himself in 1986. He drew \$250 a week for 60 very honest hours' work. But he soon realized that he'd eventually self-destruct trying to maintain that frenetic pace.

"Five years ago, when I realized that landscaping was going to be my life, I knew some serious decisions had to be made," Thomas recalls.

Just as it dawned on him that he needed to grow his "job" into a "career," it recently dawned on me that you can use numbers to determine how your career is progressing. (A "career," of course, being preferable to "just a job.")

The answer to this lone question can quantify and qualify what you're doing for a living, whether you're a landscaper, a lawn care operator, a golf course superintendent or a grounds manager.

The question is this:

*What percentage of your time is spent on manual labor like mowing, chemical application and digging?*

*(Fill in a percentage here, before reading any further.)*

Here are your alternatives, and how they relate to whether you've actually got a career or just a job:

**100%:** What you've got is a job—no more, no less. At times, you doubtless feel like you're on a treadmill, working long hours and getting nowhere. Unfortunately, you're destined to remain at this level unless you can create and follow a plan that allows you to assume less of your organization's "manual labor" burden.

In some cases, the plan might include moving up in the organization to a foreman's position; in some cases, it might be parlaying your experience and expertise into a new job that will put you on a faster career track; in some cases, it might even be starting your own business.

**99%-50%:** You're on your way to a full-fledged career in the green industry, because you've taken that huge first step by (1) being promoted at least once or, (2) hiring someone to

help you, if you own a business. Much of the journey toward a successful career in this industry remains ahead of you, however.

**49%-21%:** You've created a good working base for advancing your career. You've been able to delegate much of the everyday manual labor to people you can trust to get the job done.

If you're a golf course superintendent or grounds manager, you're probably handling quite a few managerial tasks by now, and have also taken a firmer grip on administrative tasks. If it's a small business, you're also concentrating more on selling.

**20%-1%:** Interestingly enough, this is the range in which *most* of you are *most* content.

Alan Culver at Mahoney Golf Course in Lincoln, Neb., doesn't hesitate to hop on a mower. He's been at the course for 20 years, and he's as happy as a clam.

"It might be a hard job, but I love what I do," says Culver. "I'm actually best at managing—putting all the pieces together and seeing that things get done right."

If your answer to our question is in this range, you're spending most of your time on management, administration, and short- and long-range planning—but you're still getting outside enough to keep you happy.

**0%:** Sorry, Jack. Unless you're CEO of a multi-million-dollar company, this probably isn't a career, it's a rat-race.

It's fine to be able to delegate all the mowing and chemical applications, but you should still be handling some of the everyday chores, if for no other reason than to "stop and smell the roses" (which probably in some way attracted you to the green industry in the first place). You may well be making money hand over fist, but I'll bet you're not as content as you were back in what you consider "the good old days."

So there you have it: my version of how to establish a satisfying career in the green industry. The above generalizations, based on hundreds of interviews conducted over the last 13 years, may be right on the money or they may be a little off-base. I'd like to know how you feel. Please phone (216-826-2830), e-mail (jroche\_lm@compuserve.com) or write, and we'll use your own observations in a future column. **LM**

## Is it a job or a career?



*Jerry Roche*

JERRY ROCHE  
Editor-in-Chief



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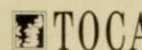
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## Herbicide timing in tall fescue

*In our area, some people do the fall seeding of tall fescue lawns during September, October and November. How safely can we apply a pre-emergence herbicide like pendimethalin during the following spring to control smooth crabgrass? What can we expect?*

—NORTH CAROLINA



**BALAKRISHNA RAO**  
*Manager of Research and  
 Technical Development  
 for the Davey Tree Co.  
 Kent, Ohio*

As a general rule, turfgrass that has been recently seeded should not be treated with pre-emergence herbicides like pendimethalin. Applications should be avoided until the turfgrass produces good density and has been mowed at least four times at regular cutting height and mowing frequency. You can use Tupersan herbicide on newly-seeded lawns without any problems.

Researchers at the University of Georgia evaluated the response of fall-seeded tall fescue during September, October and November to spring-applied (Feb. 28th) pendimethalin. They found that tall fescue seeded during September or October had excellent density without showing any adverse effect of pre-emergence herbicide application in the spring. However, they found a significant reduction in density with a November seeding period as a result of immature turfgrass plants.

Another option is to delay the pre-emergent application as late as possible in the spring and apply products like Dimension, which will work as a pre-emer-

gence and an early post-emergence crabgrass management tool.

In some situations, you can best manage the crabgrass through a split application program where you use one-half of the product early in the spring and then follow with the other half about six weeks later. For additional details on the rates and specific directions, refer to label guidelines.

You can also consider skipping the entire pre-emergent application in the early spring. Instead, start monitoring the crabgrass seedlings as they germinate and begin to emerge. When they are at the two- to three-leaf stage, you can manage using post-emergence herbicides like Acclaim, DSMA or MSMA (Daconate 6, Lescos MSMA 6.6). Some of these may produce discoloration of desirable turfgrass. Therefore, become familiar with the product on a small scale before using in your programs.

Where feasible, you can also skip the application of pre-emergent for crabgrass management during the first year of establishment.

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## Pine needle scale

*When and how do we control scale on pine needles?*

—NEW YORK

The pine needle scale attacks pine, spruce and occasionally hemlock, fir and taxus. Most severely affected are Austrian,

Scotch, white, red and mugho pines, and white and blue spruces.

This sedentary insect sucks large amounts of plant juices, turning the needles yellow and causing them to drop prematurely. If left uncontrolled, infestations can stunt and gradually kill branches and entire trees.

Pine needles may appear nearly white when heavily infested with pine needle scale, an elongated insect one-tenth of an inch long, white with a yellow spot at one end.

During the fall, purple-red eggs are deposited beneath the white female covering; these eggs overwinter and hatch in late May (when lilac is in full bloom), and the reddish crawlers emerge from under the mother covering. Crawlers migrate to the new growth and, once established, do not move again. In about seven weeks, this first brood matures and produces a second generation in late July. This brood matures in October and lays eggs which overwinter.

Apply 2% horticultural oil during mid-June and again in mid-September. These dates are targeted against second-instar scales which have had a chance to settle down, but before they develop hard protective cover (testa). It is easier to manage the scales at this time.

LM

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