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MODELS G20/40 & F8



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The New Dodge



& cash back

The decay and decomposition of organic matter is a natural recycling process that has occurred for eons. In the forest, this recycling continually supplies the sources of nutrients for the on-going process of plant growth. Leaves, twigs and woody debris fall and rise again as nutrients building a new plant.

Organisms such as insects and fungi help this process of decay, but not necessarily only on dead wood. There are some organisms which exist in living trees and are considered to be *pathogenic* when contributing to or causing the death of a tree. They already can be at work when a tree is still green and standing.

In the forest, where many of the external stresses that affect landscape trees are limited, individual conifers with thinning crowns and poor shoot growth may be infected with decay fungi. As well, the progression and spread of the disease to the surrounding trees may be quite apparent.

In the landscape, however, we generally will not observe the spread of

decay fungi from tree to tree. Thinning crowns and reduced shoot elongation could be caused by any number of human induced factors, including root girdling or compacted soils.

One thing that can help us see the presence of some decay fungi is the existence of conks or mushrooms on the tree or surface roots. These are the fruiting structures of certain decay fungi and their presence may indicate that a disease is well established. Basal conks and mushrooms can be considered to indicate decay fungi present in the roots and base of the tree. Conks further along the trunk can indicate columns of decay in the trunk.

The presence of decay in a tree can cause a reduction in the structural stability of the tree. In fact, a 5 percent loss of wood weight can result in

significant loss of wood strength. While in the forest, this might not be a serious concern, in the landscape it should be. Even before the presence of visible symptoms of decay, the structural integrity of the tree has been compromised. Once decay symptoms are visible the progression of the decay is well established and may be quite advanced. The tree must then be evaluated for hazard concerns.

The presence of perennial conks is sometimes overlooked as they start small and increase in size from year to year. So it can be easy to fail to note their presence or significance. The summer and fall can be a good time, however, to notice the presence of annual conks and mushrooms. The fact that they occur 'suddenly' where there was nothing before can catch our attention.

While in some cases the fungus may not be a concern, there are other fungi whose activities are serious enough for the tree to be considered for removal. Few of us are expert enough to differentiate between the variety of fungi fruiting bodies out there, which is where extension services or diagnostic testing facilities may come in handy.

Even if you don't deal with customers' trees, if you observe conks or mushrooms on a tree, inform your client. This is particularly important where a potential target or high use area exists. Recommend that they have the tree looked at by a professional such as a certified arborist with hazard tree experience, and have the fungus identified. A good professional should have the ability and tools or resources to help identify the extent and severity of the decay and to make appropriate recommendations.

Agree/Disagree? Comments/Questions? Column Suggestions? Let Nancy Stairs know at 440/891-2623. Fax: 440/891-2675. E-Mail: nstairs@advanstar.com LM

Keep an eye out for signs of fungi in trees



Nancy Stairs

NANCY STAIRS
Technical Editor



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Craig Ruppert heads expanding TruGreen-ChemLawn Landscape

ASHTON, MD— Craig Ruppert describes Ruppert Landscape's recent decision to join with TruGreen-ChemLawn as a merger. "Our company has become part of their company and visa versa, and we are working together to build a new company under the TruGreen-ChemLawn organization," he told LM.

"A tremendous amount of deliberation took place as we chose the best option for both our customers and employees," he added. "Our employees are genuinely excited about the opportunities our combined resources will bring to them as well as to our customers."

The Maryland-based company's decision provided TruGreen-ChemLawn's newly formed landscape division with an additional \$45 million in sales for 1998, but more significantly, with experienced leadership as Ruppert now serves as senior vice president of the TruGreen-ChemLawn Landscape Division. Ruppert Landscape will continue to operate under its current name and leadership.

"Ruppert provides us with a strong platform for expansion in the eastern portion of the United States and we are excited that founder Craig Ruppert and the Ruppert management team will play a

leadership role nationally in managing this growing business," added David M. Slott in a recent news release. Slott is president and COO of TG-CL, the lawn care giant with about \$770 million in sales in 1998.

"I see Ruppert Landscape Company as a significant addition and a great platform company for our new landscape contracting division," added Slott.



Craig Ruppert to head TruGreen-ChemLawn's new landscape division.



Maryland headquarters of Ruppert Landscape will serve as headquarters for growing TruGreen-ChemLawn landscape division.

Ruppert's Maryland location is headquarters for the TG-CL Landscape Division which is presently divided into several geographical regions: West headed by Richard Ackerman of Northwest Landscape Industries;

Central headed by David Minor of Minor's Landscape Services, and the East headed by Chris Davitt, of Ruppert Landscape. The Atlanta market in the Southeast is being overseen by Joe Skelton,

Lifescapes, Inc. "There are many many more key people in those organizations who

practices and share approaches among brother operations so that TG-CL can present the marketplace with a uniform product.

"Our goal is not to be the biggest landscape company," he told LM. "We want to be known as being the best as serving our customers, our employees, and our shareholders."

TruGreen-ChemLawn, headquartered in Memphis, moved into landscape contracting earlier this year by acquiring Minor's Landscape Services, Ft. Worth; Environmental Landscape Services, Houston; Northwest Landscape Industries, Portland; and Otey Brothers, Boston.

In addition to Ruppert, it has since attracted the following landscape companies: Landscape Concepts, Houston; Cook Services, Austin; Earth Management, Boston; Lifescapes, Atlanta; and late in August, California Landscape Maintenance, Los Angeles, and Evergreen Landscape, Inc., Austin, TX.

TG-CL is a part of ServiceMaster Consumer Services, one of two major operating segments of Chicago-based ServiceMaster, with sales of \$5.6 billion.

are playing key roles on a national level," said Ruppert.

He added that TruGreen-ChemLawn Landscape will continue to explore growth through acquisitions in 1998, but an equally important task will be to implement best



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many other machines gobble up. Space that can be used for additional equipment, like walk-behinds and handhelds.

The John Deere Z-machine is a 12-hour-day dream-come-true. The high-back seat has 5 inches of fore-and-aft adjustment and coil-spring suspension to smooth out the ride. Optional armrests provide an additional



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Faded text on the left side of the page, likely a list of features or specifications for the Trak product.



Faded text on the right side of the page, possibly a testimonial or a short paragraph.

TRAK™

Material collection system

Large 9-bushel-capacity system has 16-inch-diameter fan and 8-inch suction hose that handle even damp grass. Door latch operates from seat. To increase stability, the optional dual-rear-wheel kit is recommended.



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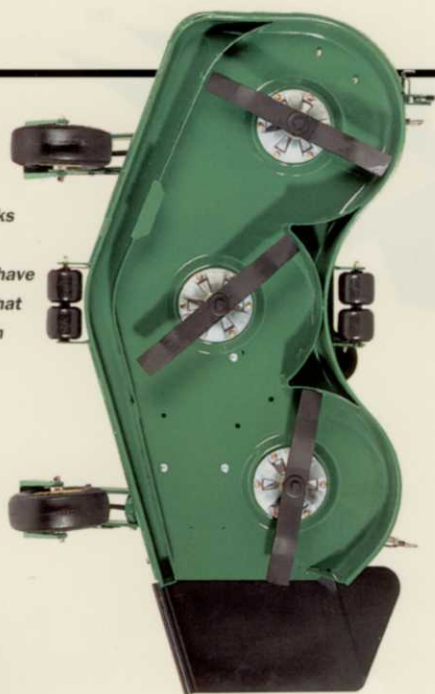
Whether you choose the 48-, 54- or 60-inch deck, all have the same great feature — they rotate 90 degrees for easy service. Flip-up decks also save space on your trailer, leaving more room for additional equipment like hand-helds and walk-behinds.



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30-inch deck

Original Z-Trak deck is rugged 7-gauge one-piece steel. Other decks (54-inch) are built of one-piece steel. All have 18-inch cutting height that can be adjusted with a pedal right from the seat.



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Wheel/tire options

The single rear-wheel configuration is standard on the Z-Trak. For greater stability with the material collection system, the optional dual-rear-wheel kit is recommended. Standard turf tires (shown) are well suited for most applications. Optional knobby tires improve traction in wet conditions.

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FQPA represents huge industry challenge

PALM BEACH, FL— Bringing about change to the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) will not be easy. The Director of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Pesticide Programs Marcia Mulkey said as much at the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment's (RISE's) eighth annual meeting in September.

On the other hand, lobbyist David Crow brought the specialty pesticide industries a ray of hope when he spoke at the same meeting. "I would ask the EPA to go slower, take its time, issue limited tolerances and give us (the industry) the opportunity to develop the science," he said.

Crow said that earlier this

year, the EPA was moving to eliminate an entire class of chemistry, the organophosphates, when the users of these products appealed to their legislators.

"This may have saved a huge number of our products, simply because of the political pressure applied," he said. "Congressional members got a huge number of letters, calls and visits."

An average member of Congress gets 20,000 to 25,000 letters a month, Crow said, and if they don't hear from their people, nothing happens when a lobbyist walks into their offices.

"If we don't continue our direct involvement in this process, we are not going to

have any of the products we want to keep around," he added. "You have to step up the pace in 1999 and 2000 if you want to keep your products. Congress must continue to understand how much is at stake for us."

During her speech, Mulkey said, "I have no doubt that the fundamental principles articulated in the statute are virtually impossible to argue with. It makes good sense to say that, when you are looking at the effects of a pesticide on a person or on the environment, you have to look at all of the sources of exposure together. This refers to the statute's aggregate risk provision."

Mulkey added that if a group of pesticides operate in the same way toward a person or the environment, then the EPA must look at the cumulative exposure of all of the sources together.

"Finally, the notion that we will go the extra mile for children, makes sense," she continued. "We all expect an extra margin of safety when it comes to children."

However, during the question-and-answer period, Mulkey did admit that the extra

mile for children theme "may also be good politics."

Mulkey concluded that all of the FQPA's fundamental principles are not debatable, and are not much debated. "The tricky part is figuring out how to implement them in way that make sense.

"The truth is that FQPA has changed the way we think about pesticides for everyone," she said. "All sources of exposure are now thought about in the same way and in the same risk assessment. FQPA created a premium on risk mitigation. It is easy to abandon a use for a product. It is much more difficult to keep uses while dramatically altering exposure."

Mulkey said she suspects that because the FQPA begins with the word "food" and focuses on food, non-food users such as pest control and lawn care may think that they will get short shrift. They may think they will be sacrificed in the process, or may be overwhelmed by the focus on dietary risk.

"I can tell you that I hear the exact same fears from the agricultural side," she said. "They say that food uses may be blamed for all of the risk, for example."

by Jerry Mix

MACH2™ registered in NY

MACH2™, manufactured and marketed by Rohmid (a joint venture of Rohm and Haas and American Cyanamid), has been granted registration by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. The product is approved for use in all states except Arizona and California.

A 1.5-percent granular formulation of MACH2 is available for use on all turf sites, including home lawns, golf courses and athletic fields. The liquid (ZSC) formulation is available for use on golf courses, commercial landscapes and sod farms. Due to more stringent conditions for pesticide use in Suffolk and Nassau Counties (Long Island), MACH2 liquid and granular formulations will not be available for use or sale until further notice.

The pesticide controls a variety of grubs and caterpillars on home lawns, commercial landscapes and golf course by accelerating the normal molting process of targeted pests.

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LM

LandCare USA, Inc. focuses on SE, Calif.

Houston, TX— LandCare USA recently closed more transactions, and shows no signs of slowing down in its march to be a national landscape/tree service provider.

In early September, the Houston-based company, took another step toward that goal by acquiring:

Greentree Incorporated of Georgia, Atlanta, founded by Steve Champ in 1970. It provides primarily landscape maintenance services to multi-family, multi-location customers. Greentree has 12 locations across the Southeast, from Jacksonville to Memphis and Nashville.

Arteka Southeast Corporation, Atlanta, founded by David Luse and Karen Corcoran in 1997. Its operations will be combined with Greentree.

Pacific Environmental Landscape Maintenance, Inc., Lake Forest, CA, established in 1972, a provider of landscape maintenance services primarily to homeowners' associations.

Redwood Landscaping Company,

Santa Rosa, CA, founded in 1972. Under the leadership of Lebo Newman it performs services primarily for commercial customers.

Since going public on June 4, 1998, LandCare USA has closed transactions or entered into letters of intent to acquire landscape services companies with combined revenues of about \$150 million. Combined with earlier mergers they push the company's projected 1998 revenues to \$275 million..

"With these additions, LandCare USA now services approximately 53 percent of the top 40, and 65 percent of the top 20 commercial real estate areas in the United States with particular concentrations in California, Texas and the Southeast," said Bill Murdy, chairman and CEO.

LandCare USA now provides comprehensive landscape and tree services from over 60 locations: 19 in the western region, including northern and southern CA and AZ; 16 locations in the central region, including TX, IL and, MN; 26 locations in the eastern region, in AL, FL, GA, NC, SC, and TN.



David and Julie Luse make a statement on the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Luse, Arteka Corporation, Eden Prairie, MN, is one of the seven founding members of LandCare USA.

Swingle promotes Dickson, Tolkacz

DENVER, CO— Swingle Tree Company announced that Tom Tolkacz has been appointed company president and Dave Dickson to chairman. Previously Tolkacz was vice president and Dickson was president of the company.

Dickson has been with Swingle since 1967 and became its president in 1988. Tolkacz joined Swingle 11 years ago and has run the company operations for the past five years.

Swingle Tree was started over 50 years ago and provides landscape and arbor services throughout the Denver metro area.

Michigan environmental program starts strong

Lansing, MI— Michigan's Environmental Stewardship Program is off to a strong start. Introduced this past spring, it already had about 30 participating golf courses by early fall. Sometime in the future, grounds facilities will be included in the program.

"The program is designed to augment the Audubon (Cooperative Sanctuary) Program and is focused in two areas—pollution prevention and environmental enhancements," Michigan State University turfgrass expert Greg Lyman told LM. "The pollution prevention section is the area we are leading with; it's unique, partnering the industry with MSU and state agencies to collaborate on managing potential point sources of pollution on golf courses.

"The environmental enhancement section is one that we will develop this fall," he added. "Anyone involved in the Audubon program will be way ahead of the curve here."

State agencies are also enthusiastic about the partnership with MSU and industry. "At one time, golf courses and turfgrass managers were seen as part of the problem. Now they're seen as part of the solution," said Keith Creagh, with the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

To learn more about the Michigan Environmental Stewardship Program, contact: Debra Spakoff Swartz at (517) 353-3208 (e-mail: swartzdJ@pilot.msu.edu) or Greg Lyman at 517/353-0860 (e-mail: lyman@msue.msu.edu).



Fall Brings Harvest of Success

Fall is a good time to look at the fruits of our labor throughout the industry.

By ROBERT E. REAVES

We all like to read about success stories in our industry. They make us think about ways we can improve our own business. And with the summer of 1998 behind us, can you think of a better time to reflect about the projects, products and business practices that made a difference in the green industry around the country? Our sampling of various business accomplishments came up with a wide range of responses — everything from computer software to plant growth regulators.

Software a plus

Our first stop on the "success story tour" is Pro Scapes, a Jamesville, NY-based landscape management firm. Pro Scapes installed new business management software that makes a difference — both from a financial and quality standpoint. "Our customers will come out winners because they'll get a much more accurate estimate,"



Rick Kier, president of Pro Scapes is happy with new business management program for tracking job completion and costs.

says Rick Kier, president of Pro Scapes. "To set up the program, we hired an outside computer consultant for around \$9,000," discloses Kier. "However, many landscape management companies can use a commercially available software program that would cost less."

The software focuses on goal times, which includes the hours to complete a job and the amount of materials used — such as pesticides, fertilizer, topsoil and mulch. "For our foremen, goal setting gives them the independence

to do the job, yet still know their time and budget limitations," Kier says. If the costs go above budget, the foreman has the ability make revisions and communicate the information with the the customer.

"We now have the ability to track and set goals for every job," adds Kier. "As an example, we maintain a condo complex where spring cleanup varied between 120 and 180 hours to complete." Pro Scapes used a goal time of 157 hours for the site, based on the average of the low and high end of the job times. "The time to complete the spring cleanup is now just under or at the goal time of 157 hours."

"Because we'll have an ongoing account history, we can fine tune our goals at contract renewal times. And when a crew foreman receives a job order, he knows where he is going and how much time the job should take," explains Kier. Even with the attention to goals, Kier wants his crew to understand that safety and quality are always more important than the goal times. "We don't want the crew rushing around to get a job completed at the expense of safety and quality."