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Here's the deal: for \$35 each, you can treat your employees to lunch and a day of educational sessions designed to help them become better assets to your company.

That's what the Green Industry Expo is doing in Nashville this year with "Green Team Day."

Sure, you have to get them there, which, may or may not be a challenge, depending on where you are. But if your office is within one or two days of Nashville, you really ought to consider driving at least two or three of your crew in.

The GIE is held from Nov. 14-17, with Green Team Day on the 17th. The day starts early, so you'll probably want to get your crew there the night before.

If you feel your crew could use a brush-up on these topics, or if it's their first time exposure to the show, you should send them in for the day.

The GIE is the main event within the landscape, lawn care and grounds management industries. It's co-produced

by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA); Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS); and Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA).

PLCAA sessions during Green Team Day include: Six Sure Fire Ways to Make Your Day Shorter; Taming an Ormery Engine; How to Use a Spreader Correctly; and How to Reduce Call-Aheads.

The Professional Grounds Management Society's educational topics include: Pitfalls in Sports-field Construction; Customer Service from the Ground Up; Common Sense Tips for Landscape Design; and Growing Good Employees.

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America will offer sessions on How to Read Your Customer's Mind; Fleet Management; Equip-

ment Selection and Maintenance; and Ways to Make Your Day Shorter, among others.

The responsibility here cuts both ways. As a company manager or owner, you owe it to yourself, your employees and your company to ensure your employees have a well-rounded education. If you are stressing Green Industry "career opportunities" within your company, this is one way to show it. Employees often feel they are not learning enough, that they don't know enough about what this industry is all about. They need to see how other people work, what's going on in the Green Industry.

Your role has to be that of a mentor as well as a boss. If you take the time to nurture and educate the career-oriented members of your team, they will likely pay you back with dedication, quality work and much thanks.

Anyone we've asked has told us that yes, the employee retention equation includes opportunities for personal and professional growth.

It's getting to be a tired story, hearing about how hard it is to find good employees. Well, it's partly because not enough employers are making Green Industry jobs attractive, challenging, and career-based. It's no wonder that workers bolt for 50 cents an hour more. What are you offering them besides the work, which is hot, hard and sometimes exhausting?

If you send your team to the show alone, you have to make them accountable for what they do there. Let them know they will have to be teachers when they get back to the office, and will be expected to pass along what they learned to others in a classroom setting.

If all they can tell you is what they had for lunch, and hand you an unopened binder filled with unread handouts, you've made a mistake, and they slept in.

For more information, call ALCA: 800/395-2522; PLCAA: 800/458-3466; or PGMS: 410/584-9754.

Send your team to the GIE. It's well worth it.



Terry McIver

TERRY McIVER
Editor-in-Chief

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Gypsy moth in decline?

Last year we had a number of gypsy moth larvae dead or dying from something. We have seen this happening on our clients properties, even before we had a chance to treat them. This has been an observation of local communities in our area. It looks like a disease may be killing them. Also, last year we did not see much feeding damage from the gypsy moth compared to previous years. Are they in decline? What should we expect for the 1998 season?

—NEW JERSEY

Your observation regarding larval mortality is correct. They may be dying because of the fungal or viral infection. A fungal agent called *Entomophaga maimaiga* has been found in many states including New Jersey, Delaware, Michigan, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. This fungus causes a disease on gypsy moth larvae - killing them. As a result, even 4th and 5th instar generations may be found dead on tree trunks. Diseased and sick larvae look sluggish, and when touched or poked, the cell content comes out, which reportedly causes an itching irritation when in contact with the skin.

A typical gypsy moth outbreak would last for two to four years. But in recent years, because of these natural biological control agents, as well as concentrated treatment programs using commercial *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.) products and traditional and/or alternative insecticide programs, their popu-

lations are in decline. Reports from United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service indicate that the gypsy moth defoliation was the lowest on record since 1968. They also report that the defoliation has declined more than 85% from 1995 to a low of 202,472 acres scattered across 11 states. They noted that most dramatic decline occurred in Virginia - from 850,000 acres in 1995 to 0 in 1996.

Scientists also feel that the *E. maimaiga* fungus is rapidly spreading from state to state along with gypsy moth. They suggest that the increase in defoliation in newly infested areas may be because the fungus has not kept pace with the advancing front of gypsy moth.

The question always remains "speculative" as far as what to expect in 1998 and the future. Transmission of fungal pathogens to insects and subsequent population control require long periods of moist weather so gypsy moth population 'crashes' are hard to predict. In the Northeast, decline generally occurs after gypsy moth are in an area for a few years. However, gypsy moth activity may gradually move westward with time and environmental conditions may not be conducive to control by natural agents. Therefore, any efforts made to manage them should be continued with an open mind in regards to outbreaks or resistance to biological agents. Where feasible, mechanical removal and discarding of egg

mass and pupae should be maintained.

Thanks to mother nature help to keep the gypsy moth population to a level where we can maintain the remaining moths known, practical means of plant health care practices.

Ground ivy invasion

We have had a problem managing ground ivy. It creeps into lawns from adjacent areas. We have been using 3-way mixtures of 2,4-D, Dicamba and MCPP. Results are variable. Is there anything else we can use to get rid of these weeds?

—WEST VIRGINIA

Ground ivy can present a serious problem if not managed properly. The plants produce new growth wherever their stems come in contact with the ground. The 3-way mixture of 2,4-D, Dicamba and MCPP should work reasonably well. However, sometimes this perennial weed may be difficult to manage with a few applications. Ground ivy is considered to be 'intermediate' in susceptibility to the above herbicide mixture in some situations. That may explain why you are getting variable results.

Consider using products such as Turflon-II or Confront. Repeat applications may be necessary.

Read and follow label specifications for best results. **LM**

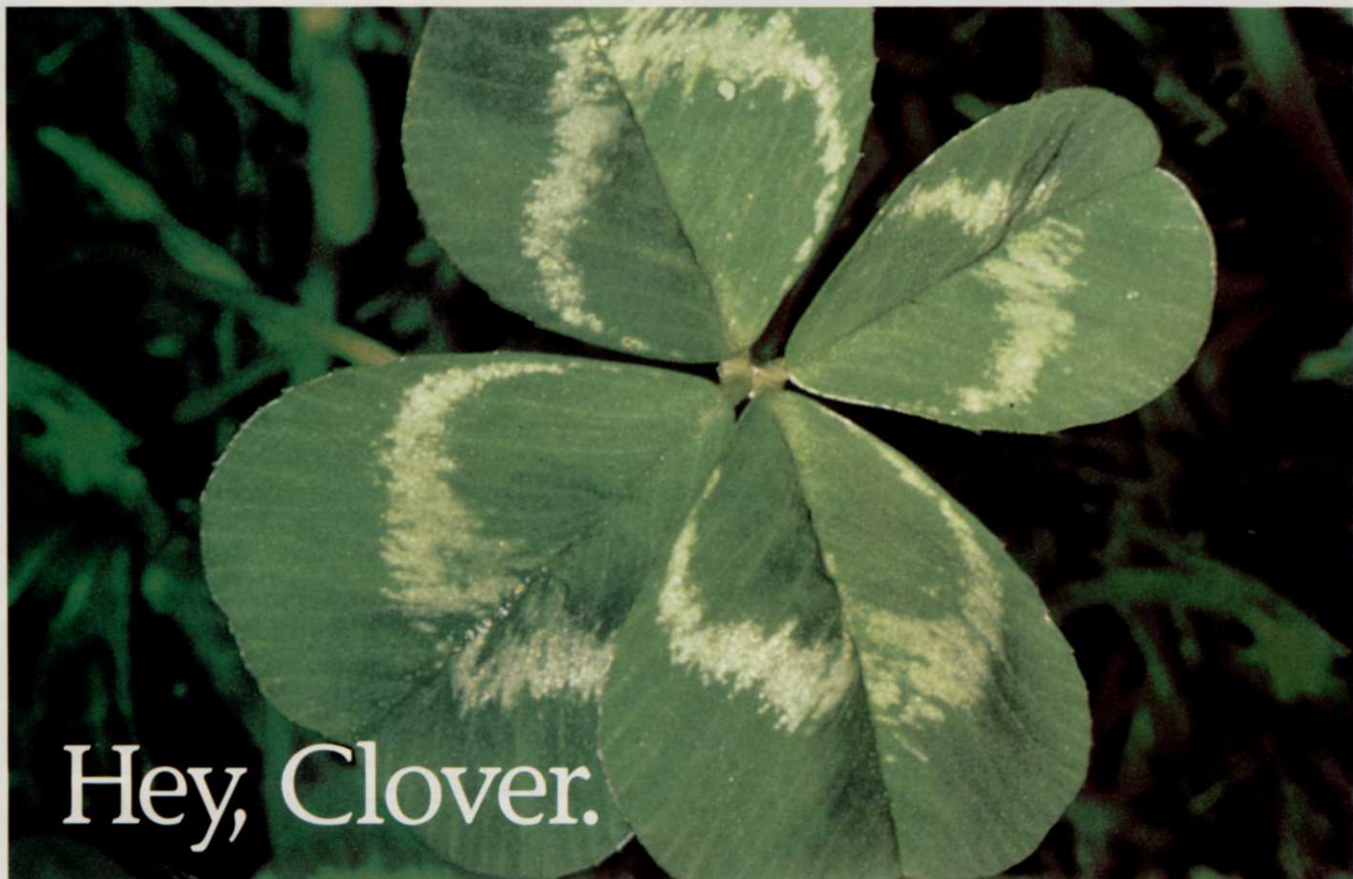


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After the rush of spring, and the demands of summer, the fall can be a time when things slow down enough that tree planting can be fit into the schedule. While not necessarily the best time for planting, as root regeneration will not be as great as when planting in the spring, good scheduling and proper post-planting care can mean successful tree establishment.

As when planting in the spring, efforts must be made to keep the roots from drying out and moving trees on dry, hot, windy or cold days should be avoided. Trees should be well watered as a dry fall and a cold winter are not conducive to tree vitality or survival. But the soil should not be too wet either. Mulching is also important,

even at this time of year. If the site is prone to winter winds, this may be a situation where staking (with suitable materials and not ... wire through a piece of garden hose) is appropriate as the recently planted tree may not have sufficient root growth into the parent soil to keep it up-right, or winter winds may cause excessive tree movement,

tearing the newly established roots in the transition area between the planting hole and the parent soil. Thin-barked trees may be more susceptible to sunscald in the winter as they are not likely to be acclimatized to the new situation; so protective wrapping can be left on the tree trunk but must be removed in the early spring. Young trees can actually photosynthesize through their bark tissue and will need all the available surface area.

Balled-and burlapped or container stock are most suitable for fall planting and use of bareroot should be avoided. Double-check the root condition of the planting stock to be sure that the roots are in reasonable condition.

Deciduous trees are best transplanted after the leaves have turned color and dropped. In colder climates this is best done at least a month

before the soil freezes to allow time for some root development. In warmer climates, the window of opportunity is much larger. Conifers can be transplanted in the late summer and early fall. Once the buds have set and shoot elongation is completed the trees are better able to withstand transplanting, however, high temperatures and water stress should be avoided so take local climate into account.

There are benefits to fall planting: the soil is warmer and may have more moisture (or the climate may be subject to autumnal rains), encouraging some root growth prior to the winter. Transpiration of conifers and broad-leaved evergreens should be reduced due to shorter days and cooler temperatures.

There are species which should not be planted and some nurseries will not guarantee some tree species for fall planting. It is a good idea to check with your nursery supplier to make sure your trees are guaranteed if planted in the fall. According to information from the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL, species commonly recommended for spring planting only include: the families of birches (*Betula* spp.), beeches (*Fagus* spp.), dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.), cherries, apricots and plums (*Prunus* spp.), hickories (*Carya* spp.), poplars (*Populus* spp.), larches (*Larix* spp.), willows (*Salix* spp.), hemlocks (*Tsuga* spp.), magnolias (*Magnolia* spp.) and most of the oaks (*Quercus* spp.) except English and pin. Other tree species include: yellowwood (*Cladastris lutea*), tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*).

On the other hand, keep in mind that planting failures may be as much due to poor planting stock condition, poor site selection, poor planting practices or poor post-planting care as to tree species. The extremes of winter can be even less forgiving to a poorly planted tree than the summer because you can't see the response of the tree reflected in the leaves. Exercise care in these aspects and tree survival should be more likely and hopefully those that do survive look good too. **LM**

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

Thoughts on fall planting



Nancy Stairs

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