

Step 5: Plan for prep time

Loading or unloading and travel time to or between jobs is not downtime, but it needs to be made billable. Calculate this in your estimate, as it is often the overtime hours that an employee receives. Preventive maintenance or daily cleanup and sharpening blades is a must, but have these tasks done by an evening or morning crew that is not the production crew. A loading and unloading crew or person can get things ready ahead of time for the production crew.

Step 6: Plan for equipment

If your equipment and vehicles are constantly breaking down, replace them. Remember, your client pays for the equipment — not you — if you have an estimating system that recovers the cost of equipment. Even if your equipment is paid for, it does not make you money if it is down.

Match equipment size and type to a site's needs. Always use the largest cutting width feasible to optimize labor. You may find it is better to purchase a mower with a large cutting width to reduce your labor. Market this machine to optimize its use.

Step 7: Plan for the future

Be proactive and not reactive to your customers' needs. Weekly, biweekly or monthly manager evaluations and inspections at each project site alerts you to potential problems so they can be corrected in the schedule.

It's also a great way to up-sell your client. Finally, it shows the client you are interested in the project, which builds customer loyalty.

Step 8: Plan time to plan

Stay proactive and keep up weekly with the hours spent on jobs, and scheduling becomes easier and controllable. If you match actual hours vs. estimated hours spent per service, you can compensate for extra time spent per service, and realize more control

over your jobs and make more profit.

Landscape maintenance is manageable due to the repetitiveness of the job. Keeping the same crews doing the same jobs week after week should increase the efficiency and reduce man-hours on the job.

You can spend time leading the circus, or use the time to be with your family. **LM**
Jerry Gaeta is a green industry consultant and a partner with The Good Earth, Inc., Mt. Pleasant, SC. He can be reached at 843/884-6114

One contractor tracks production for landscape maintenance, irrigation, landscape installation and extra work by job number and week to get an accurate picture of production flows.

Landscape Maintenance

Regular Labor Hours		Weeks				Total
Job #	Job Name	1-8	1-15	1-22	1-29	
1156	Benchley		2.0		1.75	3.75
2221	Crown Point	1.5	1.5	1.75	2.00	6.75
1789	Oakhill	2.0		2.0		4.0
5467	Trawler		3.75			3.75
2323	Airport	25.75	30.5	28.50	32.50	117.25
7879	Brown Industries	10.50	12.0	11.50	11.75	45.75
6067	Blue Trout	4.00	5.00	4.25	4.75	18.0
3117	Piggly Wiggly	2.50	3.25	4.0	2.25	12.0
2895	Glenville Bank	1.50	3.00	2.50	2.50	9.50
3006	Johnson School	4.75	6.25	6.0	5.25	22.25
Total Hours		52.5	67.25	60.5	62.75	243.00

Irrigation

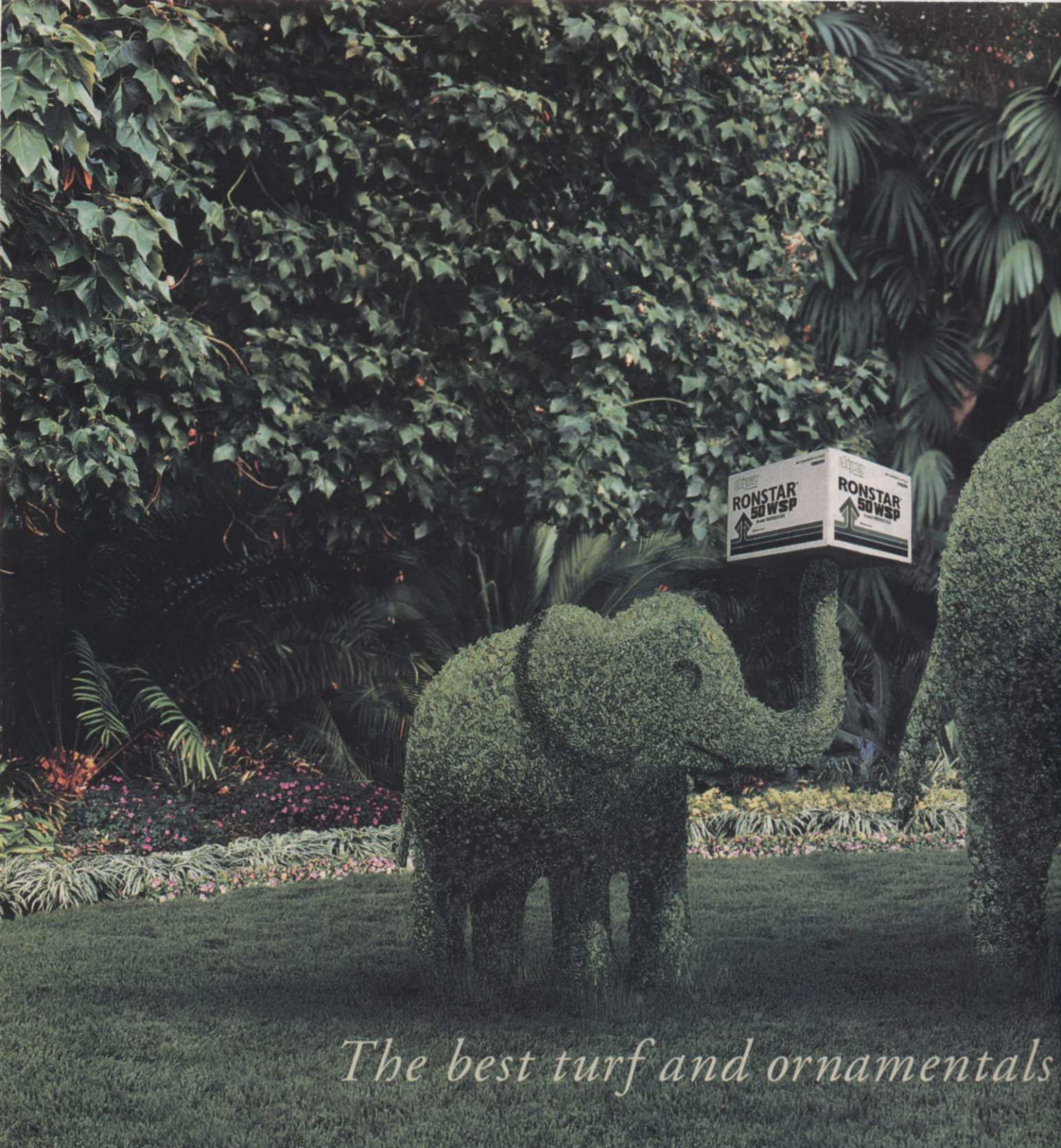
Regular Labor Hours		Weeks				Total
Job #	Job Name	1-8	1-15	1-22	1-29	
1124	Estimations	2.75	1.00	19.00	6.25	29.00
2297	Stevens		5.50			5.50
3343	Hotel 9	2.75	2.25		1.50	6.50
4440	K-Mart	2.50			11.50	14.00
Total Hours		8.00	8.75	19.0	19.25	55.00

Landscape

Regular Labor Hours		Weeks				Total
Job #	Job Name	1-8	1-15	1-22	1-29	
1281	Realty Two	28.50	69.75	96.25	30.25	224.75
8898	Smith Acres	72.75	15.75		30.50	119.00
2333	Deer Pond #2	14.50	12.50	29.50	15.25	71.75
400.1	Service Equipment		7.00	4.00		11.00
Total Hours		115.75	105.00	129.75	76.00	426.50

Extra Labor Hours

Extra Labor Hours		Weeks				Total
Job #	Job Name	1-8	1-15	1-22	1-29	
6067	Blue Trout		5.00	6.25		11.25
1998	Post House	10.25	25.50	38.75		74.50
Total Hours		10.25	30.50	45.00		85.75



The best turf and ornamentals


You've known for quite a few years that CHIPCO® RONSTAR® herbicide is the most valuable tool you have for keeping tough broadleaf and grassy weeds out of the turf and ornamentals you care for. But, did you know that this proven performer is now available as a sprayable formulation in two convenient sizes that are ideal for big or small jobs? It's true. CHIPCO® RONSTAR® is now available in both one and one-half ounce and one -pound water soluble packages. That means that you can keep crabgrass, goosegrass and more than 20 other broadleaf and grassy weeds out of sight



weed control on any scale.

all season long no matter how much ground you have to cover. And the new water soluble packaging means that you can now tank mix CHIPCO® RONSTAR® with Roundup® for use as a directed spray on landscape beds and other non-turf areas. Of course, you'll still get all of the other CHIPCO® RONSTAR® advantages, like no root pruning, no leaching, and season-long protection from just one spring application. This year, keep your customers satisfied with CHIPCO® RONSTAR® herbicide in two easy-to-handle sizes.

chipco
RONSTAR®

trademark of Monsanto. As with any crop protection chemical, always read and follow instructions on the label. ©1997 Rhône-Poulenc Ag Company.  RHÔNE-POULENC

Circle No. 125 on Reader Inquiry Card

1999 Truck Guide



Ram Sport 1500

They get your work done



International

Landscape managers look for products that give crews self-sufficiency and higher productivity

By ROBERT E. REAVES

We talked with a cross section of landscape and lawn contractors, property managers and manufacturers, and found there are definite vehicle buying trends in the industry:

- ▶ Most contractors stay loyal to a specific brand of truck.
- ▶ They prefer to purchase vehicles whenever possible.
- ▶ Preferences include automatic transmission and gasoline engines, especially in snow-belt areas; but diesel engines for medium-duty trucks.
- ▶ They prefer products that deter theft and equipment damage.
- ▶ Image is important. Trucks, trailers and vans are moving advertisements.
- ▶ They are using more cargo trailers and medium-duty trucks with box vans, such as the Super Lawn Truck.
- ▶ Contractors use the Internet on a regular basis to obtain product information.

Before you decide to buy a truck or accessory, learn what other contractors are saying around the country. Then check out the latest innovations in trucks and accessories.

So many vehicles, so many solutions!

Ford's field

► New features of the F-Series include: more powerful 5.4-liter, V-8 engine; standard fourth door on F-Series Super-Cabs; full rear-passenger compartment; and separate platform construction for models over 8,500 lbs.

► Super Duty F-Series trucks — F-250, F-350, F-450 and F-550 — come in 44 model configurations, 21 of which are new and 15 unique to the industry. Two new commercial trucks in weight classes 6 and 7 (Super Duty F-650 and F-750) offer three cabs and three diesel engines.

► The Explorer Sport Trac will debut next year; a combination sport utility vehicle (SUV) and cargo bed. The cargo bed can remain open or can be closed with a lockable, foldable, hard tonneau cover.

► The addition of a four-door SuperCab to the Ranger line makes it one of only two compact pickups to offer a four-door model (Mazda is the other).

► Econoline vans, E-150, E-250, E-350 Super Duty and E-450 Super Duty designations are easily personalized.

Chevrolet's lineup

► Silverado is available in regular and extended cab 1500- and 2500-Series models, with a new four-wheel disc brake system with ABS.

► The C/K pickup in regular and extended cab models have a

third door, crew cab and chassis cab design. New Short Box crew cab has a much smaller turning radius and shorter overall length than the Long Box. Optional "Big Dooley" rear wheels help give the crew cab a GVWR of up to 10,000 lbs.

► Rear-wheel-drive Astro cargo van tows up to 5,500 lbs.

► Express cargo vans can be used as a service vehicle or as the platform for a conversion van and comes with two wheelbases (135- and 155-in.). Three heavy-duty G3500 cutaway models offer wheelbase lengths up to 177 in.

► Venture cargo van is available in a four-door extended wheelbase model.

GMC's full line

► All-new Sierra comes in 1500 Series and 2500 Series models up to 8,600 lbs. VRW.

Current generation Sierra ranges in GVWs of 8,600 lbs. through 15,000 lbs. A new shortbox crew cab version of the 3500 Series Sierra gives greater maneuverability.

► Sonoma compact pickup offers a wide choice of body styles, wheelbases, pickup boxes, suspensions and powertrains.

► Savana cargo van and Special cutaways range from 135-in. to 155-in. wheelbases, with GVWs up to 9,500 lbs.

► GMC and Chevrolet are the only manufacturers to offer both diesel and gasoline engines in the medium-duty category. Other featured trucks include the T-Series tilt cab models in Classes 5-7 and a revised line of W-Series tilt cabs, aimed at the lighter Class 3-4 market.

Dodge does trucks

► 1998 Dodge Ram Quad cab has an extended-cab, full-size pickup with four doors (available throughout the entire Ram lineup).

► Next-generation 24-valve Cummins turbo diesel engine is more powerful and fuel efficient than the popular engine it replaced.

► Rams with five-speed manual transmissions have hp increased to 235, plus increased torque. Automatics also have greater hp and torque, with better fuel economy.

► Choice of power trains includes the 3.9-liter V-6, 5.2-liter V-8, 5.9L V-8 and the 8.0-liter V-10, with 300 hp and 450 lb.-ft. of torque.

► Dakota compact pickup continues as a popular contractor choice as the only pickup

cont. on page 56



Sierra 3500 HD, with both carrying and pulling capacity, is the workhorse of many landscape firms.



cont. from page 55

with a V-8 engine. Its 6,700-lb. maximum towing capacity and 2,000-lb. maximum payload exceeds all other compact pickups on the market, rivaling some full-size pickups.

International's diesels

► Navistar's International trucks may be the most durable diesel truck on the market, when you look at the *Truck Blue Book*. International 4000 Series trucks are said to be consistently worth more at resale, one reason why many contractors purchase International trucks and get 300,000 or many more miles per truck.

► Maintenance costs may also be lower, because routine maintenance has been engineered down to a minimum. Model DT 466E and 530E diesel engines run a full 12,000 miles between oil changes.

▼ Nissan trucks offer body choices.

► 4700 Lo-Profile or 4700 LPX probably have the best fit with the lawn care industry, with a chassis as low as 24 inches off the ground for less fatigue from lifting. The 4700 LPX handles narrow alleys and tight loading areas with ease.

Medium-duty Isuzus

► Isuzu was the highest ranked cab-over medium-duty truck in the J.D. Power and Associates 1997 Medium-Duty Truck Customer Satisfaction Study. NPR-HD diesel and gas models are new.

► N-Series trucks have low cab forward design, a range of GVW ratings and four wheelbase choices, to accommodate 20-ft. bodies. With a 109-in. wheelbase, the turning radius is 33.5 feet.

► The panoramic windshield gives good visibility, with drop-design side windows to help eliminate blind spots. Middle passenger seat folds down as a workstation and N-



Isuzu medium-duty, cab-over trucks got a high rating.

Series trucks come prewired for CB radio, portable computer and cellular phone.

► Scheduled maintenance on the NPR gas truck gives an extra 1,500 miles between service stops compared to the Ford E-350.

UD Trucks

► Three light-duty UD trucks from Nissan Diesel America meet a variety of land-

scape industry needs: UD1200 is rated at 12,000 lbs.; UD1400 at 14,250 lbs.; and the UD1800 CS at 17,995 lbs. All three accommodate various van bodies, flat beds, insulated bodies, towing bodies, landscaping bodies and utility bodies.

► Trucks have a turning radius ranging from 17.4 to 25.9 feet, large windshields for good visibility and tilt cab for easy maintenance.

► Medium-duty trucks range up to 32,900 lbs. GVWR.

Mitsubishi Fuso's haulers

► Model FG has four-wheel drive; bodies up to 14-ft. long; payloads to 12,000 lb. GVWR; and choice of two wheelbases (109.4 in. and 133.1 in.), making it well suited for landscape contracting.

► "The FG can face the challenges of some of the most demanding terrain," said Robert E. McDowell, MFTA senior vice president of opera-

cont. on page 58





Taking over new turf.

You know our M-Series mid-size tractors for their all-round versatility. Now we're going after some new turf.

Introducing our M4700, 2-wheel drive Turf Special. It's got wide flotation turf tires, a low-profile front end, creep speed for spraying and turf conditioning and a sunshade for added comfort.

Like all Kubota tractors, the M4700 is loaded with features that increase productivity and make operation easy.

An ISO-mounted, semi-flat deck greatly reduces vibration

Creep speed transmission has 12 forward speeds (0.17-13.76 mph) with turf tires.



Kubota also offers an M4700 model with 4-wheel drive.

and minimizes fatigue, while hanging pedals add comfort and ease of operation.

The E-TVCS 5-cylinder diesel engine delivers maximum power, with high torque, low noise and low vibration. Enhanced combustion efficiently

reduces fuel cost and lowers emissions.

The Kubota M4700 Turf Special. It's designed from the ground up for landscape and turf applications. And then some.

For more information, please write to:

Kubota

KUBOTA TRACTOR CORPORATION

P.O. Box 2992, Dept. GM
Torrance, CA 90509-2992

or call Toll Free 1-888-4 KUBOTA ext. 401
(1-888-458-2682 ext. 401)

Financing available through Kubota Credit Corporation





Accessories Galore

We can't list all the vehicle and trailer accessories available today, but here's a sampling:

Green Industry Innovators'

Mulch Mule is the ultimate mulching machine. With the pull of a hydraulic lever, you can fill a wheelbarrow in less than 10 seconds, or you can swing open the back door and unload the 15-yard



Mulch Mule is easy to unload.

capacity box in less than two minutes. It's powered by a 11-hp Honda motor and can be pulled by a 3/4-ton pickup. Call 330/875-0769.

Highland Group Industries

makes ramp kits and ramp mats; towing and trailering products — such as straps, tie downs; truck hardware (like truck anchor points), cargo bars and truck accessories (in-



Highland ramp offers kits, mats.

terior floor guards and custom molded splash guards in several colors). Call 908/362-5396. www.ramparts.com

Reading Body Works is the place to go for stake and platform bodies for trucks. Steel or pressure-treated Southern pine stake bodies

come in lengths from 8 to 24 ft. Pickup accessories keep tools and equipment safely stored, accessible and organized. Call 800/458-2226. www.readingbody.com

Oxlite Manufacturing manufactures loading ramps for trucks and trailers. Its #49 aluminum ramp has 800-lb. loading capacity and is designed to load rear-engine lawn mowers on trucks with high tail-

gates and long wheelbases. Special arch prevents drag on equipment with low ground clearance. The Oxlite #98C loads four-wheeled machinery into small to mid-size short bed trucks. The ramp only weighs 21 lbs. per runner, with 1,000-lb. loading capacity. Call 800/256-2408. www.oxlite.com

TruckCraft's line of pickup truck dump bodies and combination service/dump bodies includes heavy-duty tempered aluminum truck flats for the landscape contractor. Available sizes range from 81 in. wide by 8 ft. long for pickups, to 96-in. wide by 18-ft. long for cab-chassis. Call 717/375-2900.

cont. on page 60



Maxi offers six dump trailers.

cont. from page 56

tions. "And, a wide variety of specialized bodies — dump, utility, tool carrier, stake body and dry vans — can be fitted to the chassis, making the truck adaptable to virtually any landscape need."

Toyota pickups

► The new Tundra full-size pickup truck sports a 4.7-liter engine offering the first double-overhead-cam, 32-valve V-8 offered in the segment. It will deliver approximately 245 hp and 315 lbs.-ft. of torque. The V-8 hauls a maximum payload of nearly one ton and pulls a maximum towing capacity of 7,200 lbs.

► Tundra will be powered by either V-8 or V-6 engines, including two- or four-wheel-drive, two-door regular cab with an eight-ft. bed or four-door access cab with a six-and-a-half-ft. bed. The access cab has large double doors and a expansive entry.

► Tacoma compact pickup's cargo bed has a double-wall design to minimize damage to the exterior skin and is fitted with four inner tie-down points. It can tow up to 5,000 lbs. (V-6) or and 3,500 lbs. (V-4).

Our readers tell us what works for them

Medium-duty trucks fit the bill

Todd Pugh, president of Todd's Envirosapes Inc., Louisville, OH, likes Ford and International trucks:

"Our 12-truck fleet is a mix of Ford and International. All of our one-ton through Super Duty pickups are Fords, and all of our medium-duty trucks are International. We like International because they have a sharp turning radius and the



This cargo trailer also acts as a moving advertisement.

parts are the same price or less than Ford trucks."

Looks at:

► Automatic transmission — "So anyone can drive the truck."

► Cost studies — "We do cost studies on each truck, looking at mileage and time. We found the largest International trucks cost us less per mile to operate than the larger Ford trucks."

cont. on page 60

FERTILIZER FOR YOUR BUSINESS.



For those of you out there whose job it is to make things grow, UD TRUCKS has some enrichment in the form of a truck. The UD1200 light-duty truck to be exact. It comes with a very efficient 145hp turbocharged and intercooled engine, a cabover design for a tighter turning radius for some of those difficult residential and city streets, and is built for long lasting durability. The UD1200. A truck built to help some other things grow: like your business. For more information about UD TRUCKS, Western U.S. call 800-272-4831, Eastern U.S. call 888-680-8060.

Circle No. 160 on Reader Inquiry Card

www.udtrucks.com





cont. from page 58

Maxi-Products' six new dump trailer models have platform sizes ranging from 5 by 8 ft. to 8 by 16 ft., with GVWRs from 3,000 to 20,000 lbs. All models come standard with 10-gauge floors, sealed beam lights, hand-held remote controls and deep cycle marine batteries. It converts any standard size pickup into a dump truck. Call 800/833-3740.

Martin Industries' NuWay Utility Trailer Division offers three 85% preassembled Kit-N-Caboodle trailer models. The kits allow do-it-yourself contractors to save money with a partially assembled kit, yet have a usable trailer with only two hours set-up time. Many accessories are also available. Call 800/647-2558. www.MartinIndustries.com

Klipping King Inc. offers debris hauling trailers in several models from small to large. The Klipping Jr. is a debris hauling trailer. The mid-size model hauls debris and equipment for a variety of grounds maintenance uses. Call 800/279-3904.

GNC Industries' 100-gallon, fiberglass spray rig designed for lawn care has a Briggs 5-hp IC Plus engine (with oil guard), Hannay hose reel, 300-ft. 1/2-in. 560 PSI hose, Mag 1 spray gun, 8 GPM @



600 psi piston pump — all with a one-year warranty. Call 800/462-2005.

Landscape organizer racks from **Green Touch Industries, Inc.** include Ultimate Racks (to fit the body styles of most utility vehicles), as

well as a full line of coated and lockable racks and mounts to fit open landscape trailers and trucks. Call 800/621-6919.

Innovative Industries' new Stowramp is a 100% self-contained, heavy duty ramp with a 1,000 lb. capacity. There is no need to remove a truck's tailgate unit — it bridges the tailgate so there is no



Innovative Industries' new ramp

weight on it, reducing the risk of lost loads or injuries. Call 800/374-1134.

Wells Cargo's high-quality cargo trailers range from six-ft. mini-wagons to 36-ft. models. All trailers have a three-year warranty.

Wells Cargo trailers up to 36 ft.

Frame construction is exceptional. Many different accessories, interior and exterior options are available. Call 800/348-7553.

cont. on page 62

cont. from page 58

► Used trucks — "We buy most of our trucks used, primarily because we only put about 10,000 to 20,000 miles per year on our vehicles."

► Customizing: "Our trucks and trailers have a white cab with a green bed, plus our logo and phone number on the saddle boxes. All have a Reese hitch, saddle box, tool box for general tools, plus any equipment associated with a specific job. We recently purchased a 24-ft. enclosed cargo trailer to be used by the maintenance crew."

Large campus, tight budget

Jackie Toburen, grounds manager, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, mixes trucks and utility vehicles.

"We maintain approximately 350 acres of the 650-acre Kansas State University campus, with a tight vehicle budget. We have nine trucks, including Ford and Chevy, as well as 17 utility vehicles. Most of our equipment is on the older side."

Looks at:

► Trailer hitch — "Probably our most important feature because we do a lot of hauling."

► Dump beds — "Makes limb removal much easier."

► Crew cab — "You can haul more people, but we would not want all the trucks to be crew cabs."

► Accessories — "Tool boxes are very important — especially on our irrigation vehicles."

Vehicle age range: "Our oldest truck is a 1978 and newest 1993."

Dodge meets needs at Villanova

Kevin O'Donnell, superintendent of grounds for Villanova University, Villanova, PA, says his motor pool fleet has about 150 vehicles to handle services like snow removal, tree care, small moving operations, set up and trash removal.

Brand loyal: "All of our vehicles are Dodge, including utility vans, full-size pickup trucks and Dakotas. Since we repair our own vehicles, one brand gives us better efficiency in stocking parts and training our mechanics."

Looks for:

► Standardized storage — "We would like to secure landscape equipment directly onto the bed, as well as racks and tie-downs designed specifically for that model."

► Standard skid — "We could put landscape implements into the trucks (such as spray rigs, portable dumpers) that could be changed out easily."

► Accessories — "Most important are salt spreaders, spray rigs and liners for our truck beds that make it easier to move mulch. We have bed liners in all of our trucks."

Specialization works

Jody O'Donnell, president of Landscape Management Inc., Carrollton, TX, is a big Ford fan.

cont. on page 62