

# THE TALSTAR® MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE.

When you use Talstar® insecticides, we'll guarantee long-lasting performance against a broad spectrum of insects, or your money back. That's because Talstar® insecticides have the longest proven residual in the industry, providing up to 6 months control of target pests. The active ingredient, bifenthrin, is the only biphenyl pyrethroid available in the industry. And

since bifenthrin contains no alpha-cyano group, Talstar® insecticides won't cause the skin or throat irritation experienced with other pyrethroids.

Talstar® insecticides can solve your toughest insect problems. In and around buildings, on lawns and ornamentals, even on golf courses, Talstar® insecticides control a broad spectrum of insects and mites.

The water-based flowable and the granular formulations can both be safely applied to sensitive turf and ornamentals without damage or burning. Plus, they're easy to handle and are odor-free at label rates.

Find out more about our new money-back guarantee for Talstar® GC Granular Insecticide, Talstar® GC Flowable Insecticide/Miticide, Talstar® PL Granular

Insecticide and Talstar® Lawn & Tree Flowable Insecticide/Miticide.\* Contact your FMC authorized distributor or call 1-800-321-1FMC.



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\*See Program Guidelines for details.

Circle No. 133 on Reader Inquiry Card

continued from page 38

enue. Don't cut corners. Have the right tools and the right parts, and take the time to do the job according to specifications or accepted practice.

Bill irrigation work at a rate calculated to cover all equipment, labor and advisory costs. Your costs for irrigation might be higher than conventional maintenance or landscape installation. There is some logic to having irrigation crews do low-voltage lighting installation work as well. Power and controllers for these two specialties need to be addressed similarly.

With skilled labor being relatively scarce, you will hate to train someone and lose them to another company. Stay competitive with your wages and benefits.

However, there is something good to be said about getting employee participation in benefits. Just like they participate in a 401K, employees can invest in their future through training. You can provide a solid base of training, and offer to share in the expense of additional training, providing the employee also contributes to the



**Granular matrix soil moisture sensor from Irricom can make a system more efficient.**

cost. Once employees "buy in" to their professional advancement, they've made a commitment to staying in the field.

Reward employees regularly and frequently. Don't overlook hard work or smart work. And respect their family needs.

#### **Troubleshooting and service contracts**

One of the most popular classes taught by the Irrigation Association is electrical troubleshooting. There is more to irrigation than cementing pipe, fittings and components. Properly designed, a system works

only if controllers and valves communicate properly. Technicians need to be able to detect electrical faults and to use all the features of controllers. Note that many controllers today can be expanded with four-station modules. This enables you to add zones for surface and subsurface drip, wick irrigation, and, in some cases, control night lights and pumps for water features.

Have at least one person who understands backflow prevention devices. You might be restricted from working on backflow devices in certain areas, but you still need to recognize failures and alert the proper person for correction.

Learn more about service contracts and how to sell them with new installations. These contracts pay you monthly for a service you should probably perform anyway. No system is free from vandalism or traffic damage. Without sensors to inform someone when a pipe breaks or a head is damaged, you must visually inspect irrigation systems during operation. Proper operation is in your best interest, whether you get paid for it on a regular basis or not.

Service contracts give you frequent customer contact and allow you to recommend improvements. This enables you and your customers to take advantage of the latest technology in irrigation. You're also helping your customers meet local conservation requirements.

#### **More expansion ideas**

Consider offering maintenance contracts that include spring start-up and fall winterization. Install drain valves during installation so you can blow out water in the fall before the soil freezes to the depth of your irrigation lines. A summer performance check-up lets you meet with your customer when the system is operating full tilt.

There are huge differences in water requirements from season to season. Be aware of these differences and help your customers adjust their schedules each season.

Additional projects to sell to your customers might include installing fertigation equipment, adding filters and algae treatment for drip lines, installing rain or moisture sensors, designing a gray water system,

## Take training seriously

Get trained and certified, whether or not it's required by your state.

▶ Work with your local irrigation suppliers to set standards and encourage professionalism among fellow irrigation contractors.

▶ Invite local irrigation consultants to address meetings.

▶ Work together in helping your local government determine the best way to implement conservation programs.

▶ Join the Irrigation Association through affiliated local organizations under a new special membership category for contractors. Attend the annual IA show held each November to take classes and see the latest technology.

▶ Become involved. Work with landscape contractors in submitting entries for award competitions. Alert the local press to professional recognition you receive for your work.

and providing an as-built irrigation plan if they don't have one. A handy tool for many customers is a report that tracks their yearly water use for irrigation.

#### **Strut your stuff**

Be visible. Create signs for job sites, decals for your trucks, uniforms for your staff and newsletters for customers. Make people aware of your company. Use flags with your company name and phone number to notify owners of malfunctioning irrigation heads. Boast that your irrigation systems are saving water as they make the environment green. Put floats in local parades. Write a weekly column for your local Sunday newspaper. Present awards to your customers for taking the effort to conserve water. **LM**

—The author is owner of Irricom, a publication consulting firm in Palmdale, CA. He can be reached at 800/455-4320.



TO GET TO ATLANTA FOR  
THE BIG GAME, A TEAM HAS TO  
BUILD THROUGH THE DRAFT, SIGN  
FREE AGENTS, AND STAY UNDER  
THE SALARY CAP.



{ ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BUY TALSTAR® }

## INTRODUCING THE TALSTAR® SUPER SPORT PROMOTION.

Eliminate pests with Talstar® insecticide products and you could be on your way to the big game in Atlanta or win other exciting prizes from FMC. You're automatically entered when you purchase Talstar® products; fill out an entry form and send it back with your invoice. So don't drop the ball. Buy Talstar® products today and win. See your authorized FMC distributor for an entry form and details. **Circle No. 125 on Reader Inquiry Card**

## YOU COULD WIN:

**First Prize:** A trip for two to the big game in Atlanta next January. Includes two tickets, hotel accommodations, and airfare.

**Second Prizes:** 25 autographed official footballs. (Five awarded per month; see rules for details)

**Third Prizes:** 100 Swiss-style military knives. (Twenty awarded per month; see rules for details)

### 1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN.

2. Contest open only to legal residents of 50 United States and Washington, DC, who are 21 and older to whom this offer is addressed and who are responsible for purchasing FMC products for their business. Sponsor: FMC Corporation, 1735 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

3. You are automatically entered when you purchase Talstar products and complete and return the attached card with your invoice. To enter without purchase, complete and return the attached card, checking off the appropriate box (do not include an invoice). Sweepstakes begins 5/1/99 and ends 9/30/99. This sweepstakes includes one First Prize drawing and 5 monthly drawings to award the Second and Third Prizes. Monthly drawings will be conducted for entries received for May, June, July, August and September, 1999. To qualify for a given monthly drawing, your entry must be received by the last day of that month. Your entry will be included in the monthly drawing for which it was received, in subsequent monthly drawings (if applicable) and in the First Prize drawing. If no entries are received for a given monthly drawing, the next month's entries will be used to award the previous month's prizes. Incomplete entries are not eligible for drawing. Only one entry per person. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, damaged, illegible, misdirected, or postage due mail. All entries become the sponsor's property and will not be returned.

4. Random drawings will be conducted by an independent judging organization from among all eligible entries received. Judges' decisions are final. Monthly drawings will be conducted within 15 days of the end date of the each month. The First Prize drawing will be conducted on or about 10/1/99. First Prize winner will be notified by overnight carrier and will be required to complete and return (via prepaid overnight carrier) an affidavit of eligibility/liability/publicity release which must be signed and received within 10 days of date printed on notification or an alternate winner will be selected at random. Travel companion to First Prize winner must also execute a liability/publicity release prior to travel. All other winners will be notified by first class mail. If a prize notification or prize is returned as undeliverable, the prize will be awarded to an alternate winner at random. Acceptance of prize constitutes permission (except where prohibited by law) to use winners' names, hometowns, prizes won, and likenesses for promotional purposes without additional compensation.

5. Prizes and their approximate retail values (ARV): 1 First Prize: Trip for two to Atlanta, Georgia. Includes: 3 nights double occupancy hotel accommodations, round trip coach airfare from/to closest major airport to winner's primary residence and two tickets to a football game (ARV: \$12,000). Actual value of trip prize depends on location of winner and fares at time of departure. Other incidentals and expenses not mentioned herein are not included and are the winner's responsibility. Trip prize winner must agree to travel on dates as specified by the sponsor or forfeit all rights to prize. If this is the case, an alternate winner will be selected at random. 25 Second Prizes (awarded 5 per month for five months as detailed in rule #3): Autograph Football (ARV: \$400 each). 100 Third Prizes (awarded 20 per month for five months as detailed in rule #3): Swiss-style military knife (ARV: \$10 each). Total ARV for all prizes: \$23,000. One prize per person with the exception of the First Prize which may be won in addition to any other prize. All taxes on prizes are the responsibility of the winners. Prizes are not transferable or redeemable for cash. No prize substitutions except by sponsor due to prize unavailability, in which case a prize of equal or greater value will be awarded. All prizes are guaranteed to be awarded and delivered to winners within approximately 60 days of drawings.

6. Employees of sponsor, its affiliates, subsidiaries, distributors and agencies and the immediate families of each are not eligible to enter. Odds of winning depend on total number of eligible entries received. Est. distribution of offer: 150,000. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. Void where prohibited by law.

7. Participating entrants agree to these rules and the decisions of the judges and FMC Corporation and release FMC Corporation from all claims or liability relating to their participation.

8. For a list of winners (available after 11/30/99), send a self-addressed, stamped envelope by 9/30/99 to: Super Sport Contest List of Winners, c/o FMC Corporation, 1735 Market Street, Suite 2225, Philadelphia, PA 19103.



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# Award-winning landscape

## Twitty residence Nashville, TN

### Property at a glance:

**Location:** Nashville, TN

**Staff:** contract

**Category:** Small Site and  
Residential

**Year site built:** 1990

**Total acres maintained:** 3.0

**Acres of turf:** 0.75

**Acres of woody  
ornamentals:** 0.5

**Acres of display beds:** 0.25

**Total man-hours/week:** 16

*The 1998 Grand  
Award Winner of the  
Professional Grounds  
Management Society  
for both the Small Site  
Category and the  
Residential Category.*

**H**ill House, the residence of the late Conway Twitty and his wife Dee, was a newly built home when Trees Company installed the landscaping in 1990. Eight years later, Trees Company has won three awards from the Tennessee Nurseryman Association for both landscaping and maintenance.

This double prize-winning garden, featured on a PBS special "Gardens of the World," has an extensive variety of plants in beds and pots, as well as deciduous and evergreen shrubs. Seasonal color plants are planned with the client and specially grown as much as six months in advance for the bi-annual changes in color, using the Morning Glory





# management



Farm, the Trees Company's growing operation.

Plants include: allemanda, anemone, azalea, bougainvillea, canus, caryopteris, clematis, cotoneaster, daffodils, daisies, diacaena, geraniums, heliotrope, hyacinths, hydrangea, impatiens, lavender, mandevilla, pansies, petunias, roses, salvia, scaevola, tulips, verbena, viburnum, vinca and violas.

▲ The pool gazebo in summer. Pots: canus, scaevola and ivy geraniums. Well: viburnum, mixed verbenas, mandevilla and allamanda

◀ A riot of color by the back door: Purple Gem and Apricot Beauty tulips with Crystal Bowl orange and purple pansies.

▶ The front of the Twitty residence.

Editors' note: *Landscape Management* is the exclusive sponsor of the Green Star Professional Achievement Awards for outstanding management of residential, commercial and institutional landscapes. For more information on the 1999 Awards, contact PGMS at 120 Cockeysville Road, Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD; 410/584-9754.

## Maintenance challenges

- ▶ turf in front is on a very steep hill, with processed soil on underlying rock: steep to mow; soil drains very rapidly;
- ▶ the highest point in Nashville, the site is very windy — trees require initial staking, followed by anchoring after four to five years because of the loose nature of the processed soil
- ▶ the wide variety of plant material requires careful maintenance

## Project checklist

(Completed in last two years):

- ▶ converting some turf areas to beds
- ▶ bi-annual color gardens
- ▶ heavy pruning due to ice storm

## On the job

- ▶ 2 full-time staff, 4 seasonal,
- ▶ 1 licensed pesticide applicator



**LANDSCAPE**  
management

**PGMS**



## Tip blight on pine

*How do you control Diplodia tip blight of pine? We have used Cleary's fungicide with variable results. When is the best time to treat?*

—PENNSYLVANIA

Diplodia tip blight is now known as Sphaeropsis tip blight. This fungal disease infects Austrian, red and Scotch pine. It becomes active in spring and kills new candles before they emerge from the sheath and can infect subsequent years of growth. By the second year, the two-year-old cones may be infected and the fungus will overwinter to produce fruiting bodies. After three years, if no new needles are produced or retained, photosynthesis is severely reduced while the older needles are shed. This weakens the plant and predisposes it to insects and diseases.

Avoid planting Austrian, red or Scotch pine. Prune and destroy infected tissues. Prune when dry and disinfect pruning tools between cuts to minimize disease spread. In years with dryer weather, pruning may be sufficient, particularly in Scotch pine. Removal of two-year-old cones may reduce inoculum and disease incidence.

If the disease is severe, and cool moist conditions prevail, use Cleary's or other fungicides. Apply the first treatment before candles are 0.5 inches. Depending upon weather conditions, two to three applications may be necessary, along with sanitation pruning of infected tissue.

## Reviving an ugly lawn

*How do you improve the overall appearance of a lawn neglected for many years. The soil appears to be compacted and the lawn had excessive thatch and lots of weeds — at least 30 to 40% of ground cover is from weeds, mainly clover, ground ivy and violets. There are also large irregular areas with dead grass.*

—ILLINOIS

Herbicides such as Trimec or Confront will help manage the "easy-to-manage" weeds. For "difficult-to-manage" weeds, such as violets, oxalis or ground ivy, herbicides containing ester formulations are better, although some may require repeat applications. Apply the treatment when the target weeds are actively growing.

The lawn may appear thin and less green after the herbicide treatment when the weeds die. However, the turfgrass should increase in density with proper maintenance and reduced competition for space, nutrients and light from weeds. Studies have shown that if the turfgrass is cut at 2- to 2.5-in. cutting height, there will be 30 to 40% less weeds.

The larger dead areas may be a result of previous insect or disease activity. If you know the past history of the problems, provide treatment as needed. Consider overseeding using grass mixtures for your area. Avoid and/or delay herbicide applications to seeded areas until mowed at least two to three times at the 2- to 2.5-in.

cutting height. (2,4-D or other herbicides can cause root injury to young seedlings.)

To manage the compacted soil and/or thatch problem, aerate the lawns. Consider overseeding along with aerifying.

## Black vine weevils

*We are seeing a lot of "C"-shaped cuts at the edge of ground-cover type of euonymus. What causes this? How do I manage this?*

—ILLINOIS

The problem is most likely black vine weevils. These are chewing pests and become active in spring from their overwintering stage. Generally, they are found feeding at night from early May through August.

Since these weevils are nocturnal, examine the suspected plants after dark by gently shaking the plants over a white sheet of paper to dislodge the black vine weevil. Or use the pit fall method: place a piece of cardboard under the plants over a small pit made in the ground. This technique is beneficial in determining the level of pest activity as well as helping to manage the problem by mechanical removal.

To manage this pest, follow the above cultural methods of trapping or chemical method. Treat foliage with Dursban or Orthene at 3- to 4-week intervals from early June through August or until no living adults are found. It is important to provide thorough coverage of the foliage for better control. **LM**



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### SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO:

"Ask the Expert"  
 Landscape Management  
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 or contact Nancy Stairs  
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Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.



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## WITNESS PROTECTION PLAN

For some, protection can be a matter of life and death. But when it comes to protecting your ornamentals, death is not an option if you use Surflan® herbicide from Dow AgroSciences. In fact, while being safe over the top of 400 types of ornamentals, it's still tough as nails on weeds. Surflan gives you extended control of 50 weeds such as crabgrass and goosegrass. It also strong-arms small-seeded broadleaf weeds like





## ORNAMENTAL PROTECTION PLAN

chickweed and henbit – weeds that are usually untouchable. Plus Surflan can be used in many tank mixes. So when it comes to protecting ornamentals while killing weeds, let's just say we've got an offer you can't refuse. For more information on Surflan or any other product in the extensive line of Dow AgroSciences products, call 1-800-255-3726 or visit our web site at [www.dowagro.com](http://www.dowagro.com).

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Always read and follow label directions.



**I** have to admit, I'm not a big fan of spruce. I won't go into details but I'll give you a brief picture: a bad-tempered pony, bit in teeth; a 10-year-old girl (me); a spruce hedgerow in the direct path of the bolting pony. Draw your own conclusion. The event has colored my impressions of spruce trees ever since, and even had an impact on my decision to go into forestry.

How often have you seen a Colorado blue spruce dwarfing a house, particularly a ranch-style house? Spruce trees — more than any other species — seem to be planted without any thought for the long-term effect or consideration of the landscape as a whole. Or, perhaps, they just command more attention. Their formal, conical profile can dominate a small landscape. The fact is that spruces can be too much of a good thing in many residential landscapes.

That doesn't mean that you must avoid using spruce in these landscapes. The colors of a blue spruce or the form of a healthy Norway spruce is beautiful, adding texture and scale to a landscape — where they have room to grow.

For instance, just down the street from the *Landscape Management* offices is a new two-story home recently "professionally" landscaped with no less than five 8- to 10-foot Colorado blue spruces, plus a number of flowering trees and assorted shrubs. Considering that the front lawn is about 50-feet across, I am amazed that so many plants could be squeezed into a single small landscape. And, while it looks nice (but busy) now, what about a few years down the road?

Colorado blue spruce is a particularly over-used conifer in many landscapes. Granted, it's a nice tree but more often than not it seems poorly located and, many times, in poor condition. Even when planting just one blue spruce, finding a suitable location in the landscape can be a challenge. Its stiff, coarse form and blue color draw attention

from even the most well-designed landscape. In addition, this attractive tree has a variety of potential problems:

- ▶ It grows to 30 to 60 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 20 feet. It needs room, lots of room.

- ▶ It suffers stress in hot, dry, polluted conditions and subsequently declines and fails. It will grow in a wide range of zones (2 to 7), but shouldn't be planted just anywhere.

- ▶ It's prone to spruce gall aphid, which makes pineapple-shaped galls on the tips of the branches, reducing its attractiveness.

- ▶ It can suffer from *Cytospora* (sigh-toss-spora) canker. *Cytospora kunzei* is the most common and



The early stages of *Cytospora*. It will continue to move up the crown of the tree, severely reducing aesthetic value as well as tree health.

damaging disease of spruces in the landscape. This fungus attacks spruces stressed by drought, poor nutrition, mechanical injuries or other diseases. *Cytospora* canker girdles branches, usually starting from branches lower in the crown and moving upward, although it can occur further up in the tree as well. Each year, more branches are infected and die. There is no cure for this disease other than maintaining the health and vitality of the tree and pruning out the infected branches.

Spruces have their place but that place should be in large scale plantings, not squeezed into residential yards. These trees need space, so that their mature size does not overpower the landscape. **LM**

## Too much tree for many landscapes



*Nancy Stairs*

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Technical Editor

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DOUG CALDWELL, THE DAVEY TREE EXPERT COMPANY