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INSIDE



22

COLUMNS

- 8 OPENING SHOTS
- 10 ASK THE EXPERT
- 12 ARBOR VIEW

DEPARTMENTS

- 14 HOT TOPICS
- 79 EVENTS
- 78 PRODUCTS
- 87 CLASSIFIED
- 89 AD INDEX
- 90 GRAB BAG

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FEATURES

SPECIAL REPORT

- 22 **MAKE CONSOLIDATION WORK FOR YOU**
We chronicle who's consolidating and how to make the best of it
LM STAFF REPORT
- 23 **NEW PLAYERS, NEW RULES**
Big consolidations are changing the industry forever. Here's how.
- 28 **WHO'S CONSOLIDATING?**
- 33 **HOLD 'EM OR FOLD 'EM**
Contractors — sellers & independents — speak out
- 39 **SELLING? GET HELP NOW**
- 42 **STAYING INDEPENDENT**
There are plenty of ways to compete with the big boys

- 44 **LM REPORTS: WALK-BEHIND MOWERS**
New, productive machines
CURT HARLER

WEED CONTROL GUIDE

- 52 **CONTROLLING CRABGRASS IN COOL-SEASON TURF**
BY ZAC REICHER, PH.D.
- 58 **THE SOUTH'S ORNERY NEW WEEDS**
BY BERT MCCARTY, PH.D.



- 52
- 58
- 64 **TOP 10 ORNAMENTAL WEEDS**
BY JEFFREY F. DERR, PH.D.
- 70 **TIME TO ADD A NEW SERVICE?**
Know what's profitable first
BY ED WANDTKE, MBA
- 74 **AWARD-WINNING LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT:**
Post Dunwoody Apartment Homes
- 76 **TAKE THE PLUNGE INTO IRRIGATION**
This add-on service can be a natural
BY PALMA PATRUCCI

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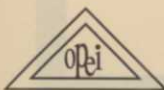
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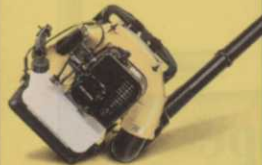
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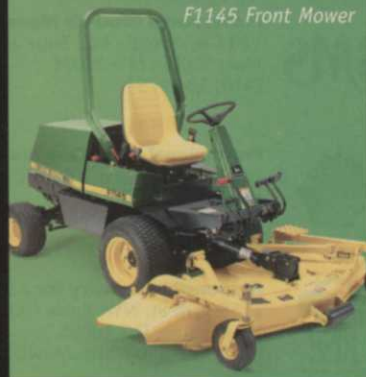
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Sue Gibson

SUE GIBSON
Executive Editor

Wonder if consolidation is a fad? Don't think so. The flow of millions of dollars into the landscape industry has changed it forever. This can be bad news for you, or it can be the opportunity of a lifetime. And you don't have to sell out to succeed in this new market.

I've watched this consolidating market with a mixture of admiration and confusion. It has characteristics that are familiar but I couldn't put my finger on it until I realized it's like a mating dance or courtship ritual. Think about it.

Two organizations eye each other from a distance, start a form of courtship by talking together (sometimes in secret) and exchanging confidences, and then the fun begins. The buyers may hear rumors that some other organization is interested in the target company and press their suit more strongly, perhaps upping the ante. When the seller finally commits and both organizations reach an accord, they boldly and happily announce their intentions

to the world. These announcements have come so rapidly lately it seems like everyone is getting "hitched."

If our industry's companies were Wall Street's "wallflowers" before, they're suddenly much in demand. The giddy deal-making and cashing in after hard years establishing a business is wonderful for those involved, and we wish them the best of luck in their new organizations and ventures.

It will be interesting watching from the sidelines as the fallout begins, and the inevitable number of failed acquisitions happen. According to Allan Springer, vice president, business development for GrowScape LLC (a new consolidator), statistics show that 57% of the acquisitions made in the last 10 years failed to meet the original objectives. Sounds like the U.S. divorce rate statistics.


Despite lengthy and careful due diligence, despite strong intuition, despite the fact that both sides will try very hard to make each acquisition integration work, many will not.

What about those of you who won't be selling? How much will consolidation hurt your

- ▶ *Worried that consolidated landscape companies will steal your business?*
- ▶ *Afraid you've missed the best opportunities to sell your company?*
- ▶ *Think no one wants to buy your company at all?*

business, or offer opportunities? In this issue of *Landscape Management*, our staff offers the first of a series showing how consolidation has affected the industry and how you can respond. We profile the key players, their strategies and what they're looking for on page 28. We talk to contractors who have sold their businesses and those who will remain independent (page 33). If you want to sell, we sift through the finer points of making your best deal (page 39). And if you're staying independent, we recommend some opportunities to keep you competitive with the big boys (page 40).

Business management pundits tell us that adapting rapidly to marketplace change is the key to staying competitive. Whatever your situation, consolidation brings new threats, opportunities and decisions. **LM**



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How to prune euonymous

How do you prune *Euonymous alatus compacta* (burning bush) when used in a formal landscape—best time, worst time, promoting new bud growth and fall color?

—MICHIGAN

The burning bush (*Euonymous alatus compacta*) is a spring blooming plant. These shrubs, and small trees such as redbud, flowering or Kousa dogwood, forsythia, mountain laurel, privet, magnolia, crabapple, mock orange, rhododendron and lilac produce flowers on last year's wood. They produce flower buds late in the season, so if they are pruned during the dormant season in winter, they will not have flowers the following spring. Therefore, to maximize flowers and colorful berries, burning bush should be pruned after blooming.

However, winter pruning can help determine the architecture and shape of the plant. If there are any crossing branches, they are easy to notice and can be pruned off at this time.

Some of the burning bush plants may reach the size of a small tree. These small tree-type plants can be best trimmed during the dormant season. Recognizing branching structural defects and making proper collar cuts is easier without the leaves.

Another euonymous question

What would cause winged euonymous leaves to fold? Inside the

fold were egg masses and some leaves had extensive notching, similar to black vine weevil adult feeding damage. But we usually see black vine weevil damage later than this. We also found some weevils that looked different from black vine weevil.

—CONNECTICUT

Your problem may be the adult two-banded Japanese weevil, a pest on ornamental plants such as azalea, dogwood, euonymous, forsythia, holly, lilac, privet, rhododendron, rose, spirea and viburnum in several eastern states.

This weevil has a much-broadened abdomen and a short snout, is gray to dark-brown in color with two dark bands on the wing cover. They are about 1/5 to 1/3 inches in size. Their larvae are like the black vine weevil, but shorter, legless and 3/8 inch long.

The two-banded Japanese weevil can overwinter as eggs, larvae or adults in debris, and becomes active from April to July. During June, newly emerged adults (developing from immature overwintered adults) can be found along with old adults, which have duller markings. This weevil has one generation per year with overlapping stages of life.

These weevils become active two to four weeks earlier than black vine weevils. Around May, eggs are laid in leaves on the ground or on the plant. The adults use their legs to fold the leaf edges, then deposit one to nine eggs. Eggs hatch, larvae

crawl from the leaves, then burrow into the soil and develop on roots.

Unlike black vine weevil, the adult feeding of the two-banded Japanese weevil is reportedly greater than the larval damage. Adults feed by day and remain on the host at night. Black vine weevils feed at night, take shelter during day at the base of plant in debris and can be easily trapped. Since two-banded Japanese weevils stay on the plant, the trapping technique using boards, etc., will not be practical. However, at night you can place some paper or sheets on the ground and shake the plant to dislodge the insect.

It is also possible you may find both two-banded Japanese weevil and black vine weevils on the same plant and both will cause similar crescent-shaped feeding notching damage. The two-banded Japanese weevil often feeds in clusters and can defoliate the plants by late summer.

Mechanical removal may not be very effective because adults emerge over an extended period. To date, all the adults have been found to be female, which probably means females can produce viable eggs without mating. Insecticides used for black vine weevil management may also work for two-banded Japanese weevils, but the timing should be two to three weeks earlier than black vine weevil management. This needs further research to determine the product efficacy. **LM**



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