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hot new products

continued from page 30

Get lit

Ready to make the plunge into the night? Nite Time Decor Elegant Landscape Lighting provides contractors with everything necessary to give clients year-round landscape lighting. The Nite Time Decor franchise package includes operation manuals, product and uniforms, quick start marketing kit, three-day training seminar, continued toll free phone support and over \$3,200 in supplies and tools.

Contact Nite Time Decor at 877/552-4242; www.christmasdecor.net/ Circle no. 242

Mulch like a maniac

Earth & Turf's front mount attachment for the Mulchcat cuts the time and effort needed to mulch ornamental landscape



beds. It attaches to the John Deere 900 and 1100 series mowers and has a 3/4 cu. yd. capacity. The high-torque, 12-volt electric motor with switch allows the operator to regulate mulch flow from the tractor seat. Two agitators loosen the material as the mulch is discharged from the unit, then windrowed inside the edge of the bed.

Call Earth & Turf at 888/693-2638/ Circle no. 243

Mowing by robot

Husqvarna's Auto Mower may not replace you, but should be popular with those looking for low-maintenance mowing. A built-in circuit board with a microprocessor and a wire loop are its brains. The wire loop forms the outer boundary of the



area to be cut, much like an invisible fence for pets. The mower moves in a random pattern, and changes directions if it hits a solid object. Husqvarna says it improves soil conditions since it cuts grass into tiny pieces that disintegrate. To deter theft, it is switched on with a personal code and has a built-in theft alarm.

For more information contact Husqvarna at 704/597-5000; www.husqvarna.com/ Circle no. 244

Gotcha, suckas!

Endeavor insecticide from Novartis has translaminar activity that enables its active ingredient to penetrate the leaf and form a reservoir inside the plant tissue, providing extended residual control of aphids and whiteflies in ornamentals. Endeavor affects the insects' sucking mechanism to stop them from feeding. By disabling the insect's sucking mechanism, it also stops secretion of honeydew and the transmission of persistent viruses.

For more information contact Novartis Crop Protection at 336/632-6000; www.cp.us.novartis.com/ Circle no. 245

Snowplows with panache

Snowman Snowplow has two new models: the 70+SC (single cylinder) for commercial use with full-size 1/2- and 3/4-ton FWD trucks, and the 60LD for two- and 4WD trucks and some SUVs. The adjustable arms, adjustable mounting, powder coat finish, receiver hitch series and spring trip action make it really useful.

Snowman says its plows eliminate back dragging and turnaround and, when used with conventional front-mount plows, can cut snow removal time by 2/3. Accessories include hay bale mover, plow stand, flood lights and two styles of wings.

Contact Snowman at 888/766-6267/ Circle no. 246

New postemergent controls

TopPro Specialties' new herbicide, Drive 75DR, has postemergence activity. The company says its new herbicide does the work of two products, controlling both broadleaf weeds and grasses — including clover, dandelion and crabgrass — with postemergent control plus residual soil activity. Drive will not reduce root length, strength or mass, nor will it reduce turf stand or quality. A variety of turfgrasses can be reseeded or sprigged any time before or after application.

Call TopPro Specialties at 800/451-8461/ Circle no. 247

Spraying, spreading made easy

Why get tired, sore feet when you can ride? The Ride-On Sprayer Spreader treats 100,000 sq. ft. per hour and hugs hills, Perma-Green Supreme says. Features include hydraulic brakes, a 6-hp Robin Subaru engine and wide-angle spray nozzles where air is inducted to reduce drift.

Contact Perma-Green Supreme at 800/346-2001/ Circle no. 248

Simple drainage solutions

Flo-well Water Management Systems' simple, lightweight system controls damage from unwanted water. It holds, leaches or transfers small or large volumes of water. Unlike heavy concrete drywells, the system is easy to install and has been used to disperse water from lawns, playgrounds, patios, stadiums and parking lots. Call Water Management Systems at 800/356-9935; www.flowell.com/ Circle no. 249

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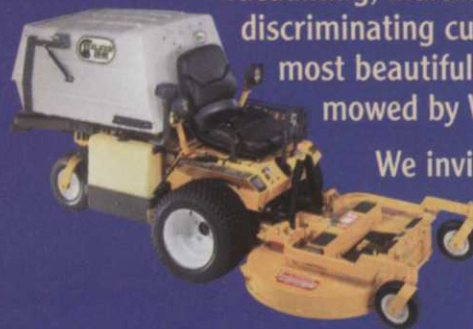
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A MOUNTAIN OF A TASK

John Van Etten's job is to keep the grounds beautiful at Mohonk Mountain Resort, but the deer don't care

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE / CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Grounds Superintendent John Van Etten oversees multiple tasks at Mohonk Mountain Resort high above the Hudson River Valley, about 90 minutes from New York City.

In addition to overseeing design and horticultural maintenance, along with nursery and greenhouse production, he supervises a busy

◀ Left, the 130-year-old Mohonk Mountain Resort is located in the Hudson River Valley, about a 90 minute drive north of New York City.

▶ Right, John Van Etten uses organic gardening to create beauty.

▼ Below, the Show Garden is planted in one day, about 23,000 seedlings.

retail operation, presents educational programs and dispenses advice worldwide as an expert on deer-resistant plant material. He accomplishes all of this while also executing an ever-evolving integrated pest management program at the resort's grounds.

"I'm responsible for 500 acres, and it's managed closely with IPM," says Van Etten, who graduated from Ulster College in New York with a degree in horticulture. "We uphold strong environmental ideals. Our core garden area — which encompasses 15 acres with over 60,000 plants — is entirely organic, and, in our Show Garden, we show people that you can successfully garden organically."

The resort's formal flower garden is over three acres. It's a showcase of heirloom roses, perennials, rustic vine-covered arbors as well as formal cutting gardens. The grounds also include two aquatic gardens, and herb, rock and Alpine gardens. Van Etten's crew also mows 65 acres of turf on the resort's century-old, nine-hole golf course (Scottish design), plus maintaining a 20,000-sq.-ft. bentgrass putting green and regulation lawn bowling and croquet courts.

Situated on top of a small mountain, the resort presents a mowing challenge for Van Etten's crew members, which varies from eight to 25 seasonally. They have to carry a small mower up to some sites. "We have access to some of our terraced gardens and sunken gardens only by steps and bridges. And that's all on foot," says Van Etten.

His crew uses eight Toro rotary and reel mowers and a John Deere aerator to maintain the grounds. They must work around activities at the resort. "We look at our tournament schedules and try to fill in the blanks.

We're always aerating our lawns, and we topdress them with compost that we make on site," he adds.

The 130-year-old Mohonk Mountain Resort has been designated as a National Historic Landmark.

The Mountain House itself is a turreted, seven-story Victorian castle. It was built between 1879 and 1910 and has 261 guest rooms, many with fireplaces and balconies and all graced with fresh flowers grown by Van Etten and his staff. The property also has 128 summer houses constructed from turn-of-the-century chestnut and native red cedar. The summer houses are rustic but comfortable. No two of the gazebo-like structures are the same.



Van Etten started as a grounds foreman with Mohonk 14 years ago. He says he's acquired much of his understanding of organic gardening and IPM by his day-to-day work on the grounds.

And, he gets plenty of opportunity to practice what he preaches. The one-day planting of the three-acre Show Garden is another annual tradition at the resort. Last June 1, he and his crew planted 23,000 seedlings representing 200 different flower varieties. Over the next three days, the 16 workers also put out another 37,000 seedlings in other beds and borders.

The plants were sprayed with Deer-Away repellent to prevent the deer from eating them. "Our largest problem so far is our native deer population," says Van Etten. Not surprisingly, he's researched and experimented with ways to keep them from destroying the resort's stunning beds and grounds. The four-page list of plant material that the deer don't like helps him create landscapes that resist damage. Requests from other homeowners and grounds managers has kept Van Etten busy answering requests. "Everybody, it seems, has deer problems," he says. To date, he's sent out over 30,000 copies of his list.

"They (the deer) least prefer plants that have gray foliage," he says. "This has to do with the chemical compounds that make up the coloring and pigmentation of the plants."

But deer don't occupy all of his thoughts. His latest project is a Victorian maze that he designed and installed last summer. With 268 eight-foot-tall arbor vitae, the maze covers 7,500 sq. ft. and provides a healthy challenge for resort guests. **LM**



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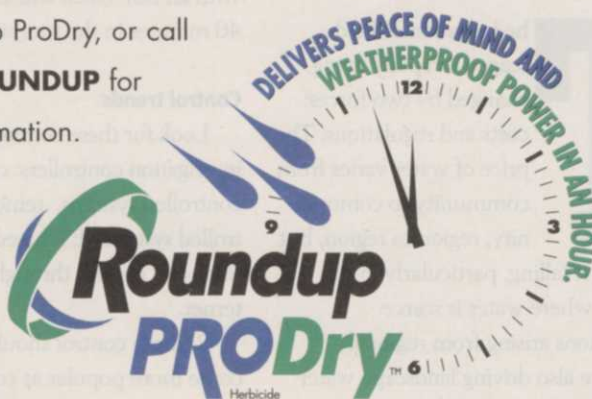
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Control gets 'smart'

Regulations and high costs are forcing many irrigators to use water more efficiently. One solution? Take advantage of 'smart' controllers

BY TOM MENTZER

The irrigation of landscapes is rapidly being changed by two forces: costs and regulations. The price of water varies from community to community, region to region, but nowhere is it falling, particularly in the Southwest where water is scarce.

Regulations arising from regional droughts are also driving landscape water users to more targeted, efficient systems. "We realized long ago that water restrictions were going to become more and more of an issue across the country," says Keith Shepersky, a product manager for Rain Bird.

The 'brains' behind irrigation

The biggest advances in irrigation technology are taking place on irrigation system controllers. The brain of any system is its controller. It has evolved from motorized master hydraulic valves that powered a series of pressurized valves to electromechanical clocks and, most recently, to micro-computer-based clocks.

Jeff Banghart, owner of Controlled Rain, Omaha, NB, feels the newer controllers' ability to manage multiple zones and programs has been the biggest improvement in the product's evolution.

"More and more people have landscape zones around their houses. We can program the controller to water the shrubs, flowers and syringe the yard late in the day," he says. "If it gets real hot, people want to run the system for 10 minutes to cool off the grass. You can do that with an ESP clock and still water 40 minutes in the morning."

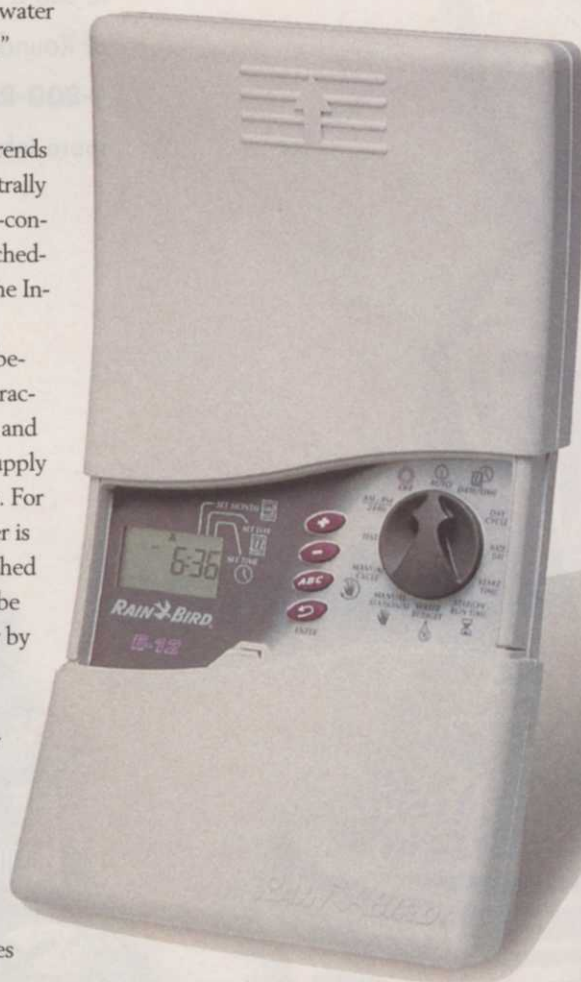
Control trends

Look for these coming trends in irrigation controllers: centrally controlled systems, remote-controlled systems, ET-based scheduling and control through the Internet.

Remote control should become more popular as contractors look for more accurate and timely ways for clients to supply their landscapes with water. For example, even if a controller is locked in a client's storage shed or garage, a contractor will be able to access the controller by simply typing in an access code from a laptop computer or remote transmitter in his or her truck. The contractor can then perform any number of tasks: troubleshooting, winter system blowout, spring start-up or other types

of general maintenance.

The concept of on-site remote control might eventually evolve into centralized, computer-based control using a GPS satellite, fiber optics or modem. Contractors could use a computer in their office to run, test and troubleshoot as many as 200 different sites. Similar to systems already being used on golf courses, centralized controllers could be connected to a weather station to monitor natural precipitation, evapotranspiration rates, and heat





and wind to make adjustments to the irrigation programs at individual sites.

Pinpoint systems

How quickly these technologies become popular is anybody's guess, but they're on the way, just like drip systems were less than a generation ago. Primarily used to deliver water to plantings in landscaped areas, drip systems are now commonplace in southern California and the Southwest. They allow water to be measured in terms of "gallons per hour" instead of "gallons per minute," but can still keep plantings lush while reducing the overall amount of water used. They accomplish this by pinpoint watering at the root ball of the plant.

Battery-powered controllers will continue to rise in popularity because they are ideal for sites where AC power is restricted or unavailable. Already in use, these types of controllers use a single 9-volt battery to power one to four valves and can maintain fairly complicated systems.

In fact, today's controllers offer many features that make irrigation more efficient and user-friendly. These include super capacitors which hold the controller's program memory for up to 30 hours in the event of a power outage and diagnostic circuit breakers to detect shorts in the wiring. The circuit breakers can sense when a solenoid, connector or valve wire short circuits. Instead of popping a fuse, which would cause the entire controller to stop, it de-

etects which zone or station has had the short. It then "jumps" over it in the irrigation program and continues to water all other operable zones.

Just as the humble typewriter was updated and eventually replaced by the personal computer, so too have controllers changed to keep up with the newest technologies, client preferences and government regulations. **LM**

The author has written on landscape topics for several years.

Controller trends to watch:

- ▶ Centrally controlled systems;
- ▶ Remote-controlled systems;
- ▶ ET-based scheduling;
- ▶ Control through the Internet.

Don't do this to your controller

Though technology has changed the irrigation controller since the first models appeared on the scene, the long-standing loyalty that contractors have for electromechanical clocks is understandable. They are rugged and fairly simple to program and service without help.

John Joseph, owner of Joseph Irrigation, Tampa Bay, FL, claims that a controller belonging to the Tampa Parks and Recreation Center continues to operate after surviving a burglary, lightning strike and run-in with a police car all in the same incident. Here's how it happened:

Joseph says that a burglar broke into the center during a storm. A surge from a lightning bolt blew the controller off the wall and into the burglar's hands. A few seconds after the alarm went off, he ran out of the building with the controller, threw it in his car and fled the scene.

The police gave chase, hitting the burglar's car and spun it out of control. As the car was spinning, the controller flew out and was hit by the police car. After the burglar was apprehended, the controller was recovered, returned to the center, given a fresh coat of paint and reinstalled. It's still in operation today.

David Raber, owner of Rainbow Irrigation, Bristol, IN, described how he and his wife watched their home get leveled by a tornado in 1980. "One of the items found in the debris was the Rain Bird automatic sprinkler controller, Model RC-7, that I installed in 1976," he said. "I installed it when our home was rebuilt and it still controls my system today."



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