

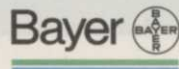


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LM 100

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1968, the nonprofit facility thrives on its mission to provide relaxation for visitors of all ages, along with horticultural education. About 100,000 people visit each year.

City of Las Vegas Las Vegas, NV

While this desert oasis is better known for its flashy entertainment and miles of bright neon, Manager of Parks John Black oversees an incredible array of landscaped beds along each road and sidewalk. Colorful ornamentals, turf, trees and shrubs are artfully arranged to make the country's fastest growing city look its best. As



part of a current five-phase, \$22-million makeover project, more than 220 palm trees

have just been planted at the intersection of Fourth Street and Las Vegas Boulevard.

University of Notre Dame South Bend, IN

Founded in 1842 by Father Edward F. Sorin, a French missionary with a respect for scholastic excellence, the historic campus landscaping is now overseen by Grounds Superintendent William Thistlewaite and covers 1,250 acres. It also hosts 155 buildings. Heavily traveled, with more than 10,000 students, the institution's grounds remain a major tourist attraction known worldwide for its diversity, grace and beauty.

10 Great Smaller Companies

We think smaller, innovative and successful operations should be recognized, which is why we've established this new category. Obviously, there are hundreds of great, small companies out there, but we don't have room to salute all of you. This inaugural group has revenues ranging from less than \$500,000 to nearly \$5 million, but each does business in an innovative or unusual way.

Share your story of growth, reputation, innovation or employee loyalty with us. See the end of this article for information on how to tell us more.

Jack Robertson Lawn Care Springfield, IL

Loyal employees. Loyal customers. Robertson Lawn Care has grown each of its 23 years, and owner/operator Jack Robertson doesn't see any reason why it shouldn't continue to prosper. "I've been fortunate to keep people for a long time," he explains. Senior service technicians Brian Cox, 19 years, and Mike Harris, 18 years, along with other members of Robertson's staff, know they

get time off to see a child's soccer game or to take care of a sick family member when they need to. "We don't have daily quotas here," he says. Robertson Lawn Care is one of the most visible small businesses in Springfield, and one of the most respected. Its trucks are always clean, its service efficient and its follow-up prompt.

Down to Earth Inc. Wilmington, DE

The journey Larry Iorii has taken from starting his company with a partner in 1974 to today has been one of learning and no-nonsense operations. At one time, he had the company on a track of fast growth, but that has changed. "I had to sacrifice too much quality," he says, and now concentrates on providing excellent turf and ornamental service to his residential customers. Iorii is happy with his 10 employees, the approximately \$600,000 in revenues for 1998 and the strong customer loyalty he enjoys.



Russ Fragala Landscaping Corp. Long Island, NY

This do-it-all New York company has been around since 1982, when it was known as Nice & Green Landscaping. Since 1988, it has carried President Russ Fragala's name. This year, it has put up eye-popping growth numbers for its Long Island business. "With the people that we have, we can grow 143% and not have a problem." Fragala generated about \$4.7 million in 1998, and is looking for a figure close to \$6.6 million in 1999.



Dwight Hughes Nursery Cedar Rapids, IA

Dwight Hughes' business plan (he calls it "the most unusual business plan in America") aims to make the most volume and profit possible, with only four full-time employees to handle a nursery producing 10,000 trees, as well as a landscape installation business servicing residential, commercial and institutional clients. With revenues of around \$700,000, Hughes constantly pushes for more production and innovation through better equipment and time management. "We're always trying to focus and do work better and faster," he says.

Pro Scapes Inc. Syracuse, NY

The company that Rick Kier formed back in 1978 employs 32 to 35 people each year. Kier estimates 1999 revenues to reach between \$1 million and \$1.2 million, for a business that serves residential, multifamily housing and commercial customers around Syracuse. One of Kier's innovations for productive operations include setting goal times for specific operations and services. "When people have something like that to shoot for, they can pull off the work," he notes.



Turf's Up Lawn Service Lee's Summit, MO

Jon Cundiff's roots go back to his days working Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium with famed George Toma, so it was natural for him and his wife and co-partner Vicky to expand the 15-employee lawn, tree and shrub care business into sports field maintenance. Although the bulk of their business is in residential services, the lure of sports services represents additional potential to grow. With 1998 revenues of around \$900,000, Turf's Up is poised to break through the \$1 million barrier this year.



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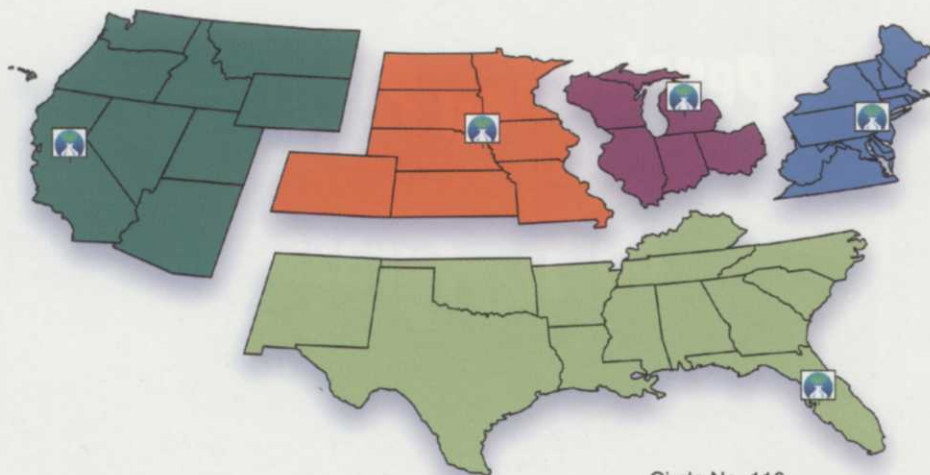
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Clean Lawn Tire Hill, PA

Ronald Keafer started Clean Lawn 16 years ago, after working 27 years in the green industry for someone else — first on the golf course, then as gardener for Bethlehem Steel. His firm does turf applications, along with tree/shrub trimming and contract mowing. Keafer says 80% of his clients are located within three zip codes — nice and tight. "I don't want to be any bigger," says Keafer, whose eight trucks are busy all the time in Johnstown, PA.



Loyet Landscape St. Louis, MO

Owner Joe Loyet gets up every work day before the crack of dawn to get his 60 to 70 employees on the road and onto customers' properties. Then he's off to see his clients himself to make sure they're pleased with his service. Recently, Loyet opened a branch on the north side of St. Louis so his crews can better service their hospitals, apartment, condo and mall properties. With sales of about \$3.5 million, Loyet Landscape, founded in 1985, competes with smaller companies on quality of service and with larger ones on price.

Mike Ward Landscaping Loveland, OH

Mike Ward, president and owner, says his small-team orientation gives his 30 employees several types of work to experience. His company serves both residential and commercial customers in Cincinnati, doing maintenance, installation, sodding/seeding, chemical lawn care, snow removal, light excavation and sod growing. He expects revenues to grow from \$1.5 million to nearly \$1.8 million. Employee relations are a priority: "You can spend as much energy on employee (relations) as you do on the business," he adds.

Village Turf Inc. Mt. Vernon, VA

In the seven years since Lou Kobus Jr. started Village Turf Inc., it has grown to \$2.8 million in revenues from a variety of services: landscape design and installation, chemical lawn care, soil amendments, lawn and sports turf maintenance, irrigation, seeding and sodding, drainage work, arbor care and removal, snow removal and hardscapes, to name a few. Village Turf employs eight year-round and nearly 60 seasonal employees. He expects the business, which serves government facilities and commercial and residential customers, to exceed \$3 million in 1999.

10 High-Profile Women-Run Operations

Lawn care, landscape contracting firms and grounds management operations managed by women are still something of a rarity in our industry. Here's a list of select few:

Smallwood Design Group Naples, FL

Instead of becoming a teacher in the early 1970s, Joanne Smallwood found her niche offering landscape design and installation services to wealthy



estate owners in Naples, FL. "When I first started, there were so few women in our industry," she says. Since then, her firm has blossomed to 75 people offering design, build and horticultural management services to high-end residential, hotel, resort, commercial and golf course clients in the area. She expects Smallwood Design Group to have about \$7 million in revenues this year. Her leadership in design, management and associations makes her a strong role model. "I like to bring an attention to detail and a passion for creating great environments and beautiful spaces," she explains.

Audrie Seeley & Co. Kansas City, MO

The company, owned by Audrie Seeley, employs 60 people and does \$4 million in business. Seeley said what she hears most often from clients is that her people are talented and know how to take care of clients' needs. Seeley is very active in her local Associated Landscape Contractors of America chapter and would like to become more active in the national organization.

Longhorn Maintenance Inc. McKinney, TX



Longhorn services a niche market in the Allen/McKinney area of north Texas. The company focuses on educated professionals (residential market) looking for quality service, custom design and professional work. President Andee Bechtold says her company is "innovative and unafraid to try something new." This is Longhorn's 18th year in business.

Gardener's Guild Inc. San Rafael, CA

Linda Novy said she prides herself of leading a cutting-edge company. "We were on the leading edge of environmental issues long before it became trendy to do those things," Novy said. Her company, which employs 94 full-time employees and expects to do \$4.3 million in business this year, develops "organic" solutions to her clients' landscape management issues. She is active in ALCA.



Utah State University Logan, UT

Utah State University knew what it was getting when it hired Ellen Newell as its landscape manager for the campus in 1992. After all, Newell started at the university as an hourly employee and has done a little bit of all the jobs to be found in her department. Newell urges all of her colleagues to join a professional organization such as the Professional Grounds Management Society, of which she is an active member.

Madelyn Simon & Associates New York, NY

"We like to think of ourselves as being on the German-car level of landscape management," said Madelyn Simon, whose company, founded in 1979, has 75 employees and expects to do \$3.3 million in business this year. Simon, an ALCA member, said personal service is what her company is known for. "We just hope to do our projects at a higher level," she said.

Secret Gardens San Francisco, CA

If a client is looking to produce a show garden, this firm is not for them. Kathryn Mathewson, owner of Secret Gardens, said her firm focuses on the healing power of plants — hence the name of her firm, which plays off the title of a Frances Hodgson Burnett book "The Secret Garden." Mathewson, active in the ANLA, said she would rather keep her firm small than compromise her principles.

Leisure World of Maryland Corp. Silver Spring, MD

Tending 600 acres of landscaping at a retirement



community is not a walk in the park — just ask Stephanie DeStefano. "People here pay a lot of attention to the landscaping and aren't shy about letting their feelings be known," she said, laughing. "It's rewarding to know your work gets noticed." She is in her second year of presidency of

the Washington, D.C. PGMS branch, and said joining the organization gives her a great net-

work of people to go to for advice

Greater Texas Landscapes Austin, TX

This one-stop shop, founded in 1981, does everything from landscape design to irrigation to facilities management. Owned by Debby Cole, the firm expects to do \$3.4 million this year. "Our strongest assets are our knowledge of horticulture, combined with our ability to communicate it," said Sara Twaddle, director of business development.

Tiger Stadium Detroit, MI

Heather Nabozny became the first-ever female Major League head groundskeeper when she began tending the turf at historic Tiger Stadium this past spring. Heather, a graduate of the Michigan State University turf program, got her start as a grounds manager at Old Kent Park, home of the West Michigan Whitecaps, and so impressed the folks there that the Tiger organization noticed her. This is the last season for Tiger Stadium, and next season, the Tigers and Nabozny open new Comerica Park.

10 Pioneer Firms Who Shaped the Industry

Compared to some industries, ours is young. We searched for firms that we consider to be "old" for their segment. Most of these were real innovators when they started, and they have served as models for many that followed. We're sure there are other pioneer companies worth celebrating — just contact us with your details.

Hillmeyer Nurseries Lexington, KY

Stephen and Chris Hillmeyer run the second oldest continuous nursery/lawn care company in the United States. Founded by fruit tree grower Francis Xavier Hillmeyer in 1841, this fifth generation success story started by shipping mail order fruit trees around the country. Today, the operation, which is almost fully residential, had



1998 revenues of \$10.2 million, with an 11% to 12% uptick in the cards for 1999. The landscape operation keeps nearly 125 trucks on the road serving central Kentucky.

Lied's Landscape, Design & Development Sussex, WI

Delmar Lied founded this family business in 1945, working out of his house. He built a trailer to pull to jobs, and that was the beginning of today's \$14.9-million design/build and maintenance operation. His son, Tom, expanded the business, and today, Delmar's grandson Rob

holds the family name high, overseeing a third generation of growth fueled by reputation and three generations of clients. With a second branch in the Fox Valley, Lied's keeps 300 people on the road.



Rood Landscape Co. Tequesta, FL

When Roy "Buster" Rood returned from his tour of duty in the South Pacific following WWII, he considered attending Purdue University and becoming an engineer. But, that would have meant leaving south Florida, and he figured he'd been away long enough already. Now, more than 53 years later, Bert Clattenburg and Tom Whitesell run the day-to-day operations of Rood Landscape, but, Roy, 81, still keeps on eye on the business he founded. The firm, which offers a complete package of landscape services, puts 100 trucks on the road daily in Palm Beach and Martin Counties.

Clarence Davids & Co. Matteson, IL

With little more than a belief that top quality, cost-effective service and a knack for beautiful landscaping would be enough, Clarence Davids Sr. started on a shoestring in 1951. Son Bill runs one of the top 10 landscaping companies in the Chicago area, with over \$10 million in 1998 revenue, and a \$2-million boost forecast for 1999. The company's customer mix is 80% commercial and 20% residential, providing a mix of 40% design/build, 40% maintenance, with lawn care and flowers adding another 20%.

Teufel Nursery Inc. Portland, OR

This fourth-generation-owned family business, headed by Larry Teufel, was begun by Gustav Teufel 109 years ago in 1890. The landscape division recorded \$17 million in revenues in 1998, and estimates business will climb to \$19 million in 1999. Riding the Northwest's booming economy, 300 employees and 75 vehicles cruise the

Greater Portland and Seattle landscape doing installation and maintenance.

Swingle Tree & Landscape Care Denver, CO

"Tree surgeon" John Swingle founded this company 52 years ago, with a promise to give customers the best service he could possibly deliver. Swingle will generate just under \$8 million in sales this year, but a better indication of its level of service is its overall customer retention rate of 81% in 1998. Services include tree/shrub care, lawn care, irrigation, landscape lighting and holiday lighting. Tom Tolkacz, 12 years with Swingle, purchased the company this past year.

Lawn Doctor Inc. Holmdel, NJ

Lawn Doctor is a pioneer in chemical lawn care and one of the masters of franchised applications services, with 376 locations in 36 states. It was founded in the early 1960s. The company also has close to 2,000 employees and generated around \$50 million in revenue in 1998, with \$56 million projected for this season.

Grasshopper Lawns Inc. Edwardsville, PA

For over 35 years — before ChemLawn — this family-owned business has been providing professional lawn care in northeastern Pennsylvania. Michael Kravitsky III started the business in 1964. Kravitsky later became independent, and Grasshopper Lawns is now run by his two sons, Michael Kravitsky IV and Shawn Kravitsky.



LM 100

Davey Tree Expert Co. **Kent, OH**

John Davey and his son, Martin, incorporated The Davey Tree Expert Co. in 1909, and the company is now one of the largest horticultural services providers in the United States, with sales of about \$315 million in 1998. Doug Cowan, president, expects 1999 revenues to reach about \$325 million. Davey's 6,000 employees, breadth of services, 75-branch network throughout the United States and Canada and initiatives in research and education make it a formidable competitor in residential lawn care, landscape contracting and arborist services.

The Siebenthaler Co. **Dayton, OH**

This family owned nursery and landscape design business has existed for 129 years. Five generations of family have managed the operations, which now include a 600-acre nursery, a full-service landscape design-and-build department and three retail garden centers. Chairman of the Board Bob Siebenthaler, his son Jeff and his son-in-law Mike Fanning currently manage this Dayton landmark company, which grows more than 400 varieties of trees and hundreds of perennials. The nursery is adjacent to a 60-acre natural fen.

We had to include two other companies for their 50+ years in the industry (see details about them in our listing of 20 Top Landscape Contractors):

Environmental Industries Inc. **Calabasas, CA**

See pg. 24.

The Brickman Group **Langhorm, PA**

See pg. 24.

10 High-profile Landscapes

Millions of people visit landscapes like these each year, either for a special trip or as part of their day-to-day lives. We developed this category because excellent management of landscapes like this reflects well on our industry as a whole. The 10 landscapes we selected this year are known for their design and components, their innovative practices or the challenges of maintenance with so many visitors.

The Grand Hotel **Mackinac Island, MI**

Staying abreast of maritime shipping schedules and keeping an accurate account of available horse power are just a few of the many duties performed by Stephen Bernard, grounds and

recreation manager at the world's largest summer resort. "There's a lot of challenges that come from being on an island," he reports. "All the materials have to be brought in by freight boat, and then they're delivered by horse and carriage." The seven-person grounds staff, along with 15 other workers assigned to the golf course, use hand tools to complete most of the landscape tasks at this 250-acre site, which dates back to 1887 and has hosted five U.S. presidents.

Walt Disney World **Lake Buena Vista, FL**

Under Director of Horticulture Katy Moss Warner, more than 650 horticultural professionals — gardeners, arborists, irrigation specialists and pest management specialists — tend to Disney's

Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

Up to 20 million visitors a year soak in the gardens and spectacular natural landscapes adorning the entire 35 miles of parkway between lakes Erie and Ontario. John Dick, manager of horticulture, has an annual grounds maintenance budget (equipment and capital improvements are extra) of \$7.5 million (Canadian) and 190 workers — and it is each person's job to pick up litter. The sheer volume of people and a near-constant mist from the falls create logistical challenges. A highlight is the 40-foot diameter floral clock that keeps accurate time. The colors on the face change twice a year.

Central Park **New York, NY**

Neil Calvanese, vice president of operations, tends a landscape of Big Apple proportions as the 843 acres of historic parklands make up 6% of Manhattan's total area. More than 20 million people visit the park each year to enjoy the 26,000 trees (including 1,700 American elms), 250 acres of lawns and 136 acres of woodlands. The 8,968 park benches would stretch seven



dizzying array of 4,000 acres of plant materials featuring 2,400 species. Nearly 12% of the resort — an area equal to 3,000 football fields — is devoted to gardens and maintained landscapes. The 2,000 acres of turf require 450,000 miles of mowing annually, plus there are more than two million shrubs and some 200 trimmed topiary projects in addition to the 6,000 trees planted each year. Nearly 13,000 roses adorn the 47 square miles of grounds, along with more than three million annuals and bedding plants.

The Niagara Parks Commission

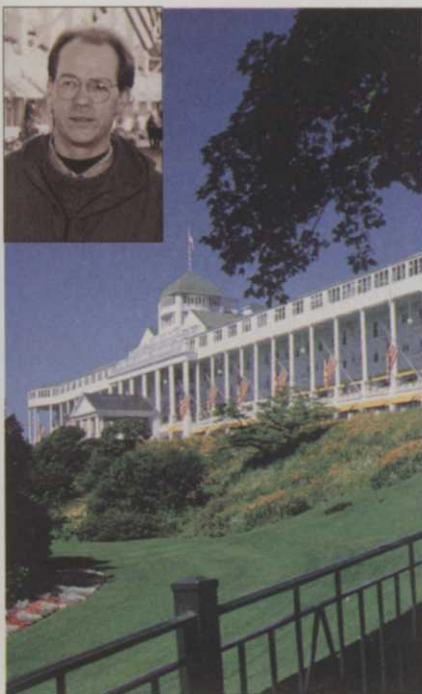


miles if placed end-to-end. The annual budget, which includes funds for maintenance, programming and landscape improvements, tops \$5 million.

Monticello **Charlottesville, VA**

President Thomas Jefferson was an avid collector of plants, in addition to being a world-class inven-

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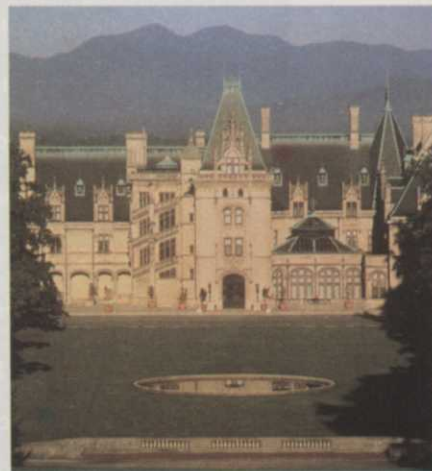
LM 100

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tor, architect and statesman. Today, 500,000 people each year tour his home and the 2,000 acres of grounds managed by Peter Hatch and a staff of 14. "We don't have a 1999 grounds management approach," he explains. In accordance with 18th and 19th century practices, a policy of "benign neglect" reigns. Modern materials are seldom used, and "low-tech" techniques, like using branches to hold up plants, are in place.

Biltmore Estate Asheville, NC

The country's largest private residence, this 250-room French Renaissance chateau is home to more than 250 acres of grounds, gardens and a greenhouse overseen by landscape curator Bill Alexander, maintenance manager Rick Connard



and a staff of 57. Their jobs include pruning 80 varieties of roses, planting 50,000 tulip bulbs in the English walled garden each year and growing and planting 20,000 annual bedding plants.

The Getty Center Los Angeles, CA

A master landscape plan developed by world-renowned architect Richard Meier at this new \$1 billion museum complex was specifically designed to blend with his unique construction details. Eighty-six acres of gardens and terraces, including the Central Garden designed by artist Robert Irwin, provide views of the Los Angeles basin, the mountains and the ocean, with the surrounding 600 acres preserved in their natural state. Under the direction of grounds superintendent Richard Naranjo, the landscape evolves with the intent of creating an intimate, ever-changing tableau that enhances the visitor's experience.

The Butchart Gardens Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Each year, more than a million annuals, perennials, trees and flowering shrubs of 700 varieties are overseen at this 50-acre showplace by Rick Los, director of horticulture. The famous Sunken Garden is perhaps the ultimate environmental reclamation project, as it was constructed in an

abandoned limestone quarry by the wife of Portland Cement king Robert P. Butchart. Starting in the early 1900s, plants from around the world were collected and brought here to populate gardens saluting the horticultural contributions of Italy, Japan, The Netherlands and other locations.

The Hermitage Hermitage, TN

Located just outside of Nashville, the horticulture surrounding the home of President Andrew Jackson is maintained in the fashion it was in 1819. Nancy Murphy, director of gardens and grounds, says the highlight of the 650 acres of meadows and woodlands (once populated by Jackson's slaves) is Rachel's Garden, a one-acre monument to a Southern plantation garden, featuring shrubs and flower types that Old Hickory's wife presented to departing guests. The property and mansion are viewed by 250,000 visitors each year.

Longwood Gardens Kennett Square, PA

Nurtured and grown by the late industrialist Pierre S. du Pont, more than 900,000 people



each year view the 11,000 species of plants gracing 20 outdoor gardens, 20 greenhouse gardens and more than 1,000 acres of woodlands and meadows. **LM**

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