

# Welcome to the 1400 Series



It's time our competitors faced the future: Up to twelve-mile-per-hour mowing. A flawless cut. And all-year use.

And the 1400 Series doesn't represent progress on one or two fronts, but on all of them. These machines are built on advanced self-reinforcing space frames — employed in everything from high-performance autos to airplanes — and meet ANSI standards. Hanger arms glide onto attachments.



Maneuverability is extraordinary. Comfort has been taken to the next level.

The only detail you might need to consider?

Which model to select. Available with 24- to 31-hp gas and diesel engines, all offer the option of mechanical 4WD. (Other options include hard and soft cabs, 4-post ROPS with light kit and hydraulic couplers.)



Choose the new 72-inch or 60-inch, stamped steel 7-Iron™ mower decks — designs that have already made a name for themselves. Or there's the new 62-inch, seven-gauge steel FastBack™ rear-discharge deck.

The price? Surprisingly affordable, even without considering the new John Deere full-service, 2-year limited warranty.\*

Stop by your local John Deere dealer. Or visit [www.jd1400.com](http://www.jd1400.com). Experience the rush.

Circle No. 113 on Reader Inquiry Card

\*Excludes: Tires, batteries, normal wear items, non-7-Iron™ decks. Includes: A John Deere dealer who takes care of every claim, from transmissions to engines and everything in between. No need to go to component suppliers for warranty service.



**Nothing Runs Like A Deere®**

## More workers available from immigration

**WASHINGTON D.C.** — On March 2, President Bush agreed to allow as many as 150,000 Salvadorans to remain in the United States up to 18 months. He said he took the measure to help El Salvador recover from the devastation of two recent earthquakes.

Washington DC and surrounding mid-Atlantic communities have a significant

population of Salvadorans, many of whom work in the landscape industry. Temporary protected status would shield them from being detained or deported for the next 18 months. It also would allow them to work legally.

In a related matter, Angelo Miño, who consults with U.S. landscape companies regarding immigration matters, reports that

employers have until April 30 to sponsor their foreign-born workers under the Legal Immigration and Family Equity Act (LIFE) that former president Bill Clinton signed in his final days in office. Miño, of Summit, Lenexa, KS, says that some landscapers have been taking advantage of LIFE to temporarily adjust the status of their workers to legal.

Even so, there has been a lot of confusion with the LIFE Act, and several landscapers contacted by LM, said they will not attempt to take advantage of the program. They said they do not want to identify their workers to the the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), even if it does mean a temporary legal classification for them.

### Beware of "experts"

Miño also reports that recently there has been a surge of unscrupulous "immigration experts" who are cheating employers (and their non-documented workers) by claiming that they can complete the necessary documentation to legalize foreign workers, often as much as \$5,000 to \$5,000 per employee.

Most of the same information, and the proper forms, are available from the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service for free, or for a small cost, says Miño. See the Web site: <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/index.htm>

### CORRECTION

In the December Green Book issue of *Landscape Management*, the directory listed Groundtek Mfg.'s ads as being on pages 141 and 143. In actuality, the ads appeared on pages 143 and 145. We regret the error.

## Info Center

VIDEOS AND LITERATURE FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY

**Be safe...** by picking up a copy of Snyder Industries' free inspection guide that details how to detect cracking and damage in intermediate bulk containers caused by chemical attack, handling abuse and environmental conditions.

To receive a free

copy, call 888/422-

8683 or, for more information,

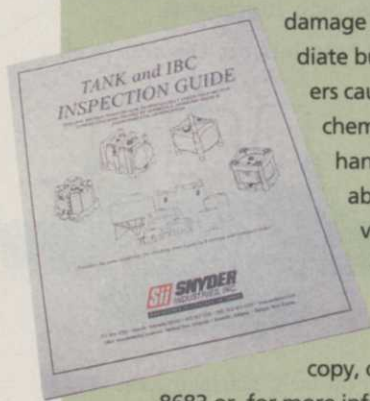
visit [www.snydernet.com](http://www.snydernet.com).

**Get out of the woods...** with Forestry Suppliers, Inc.'s 2001 Tool & Equipment Catalog. Looking for a soil profiler? It's in there. How about a hand-held sprayer? Check. Blowers and pruners? Lots of them. You'll find plant and turf care supplies, climbing equipment and lots more in over 600 detailed pages. For a copy, call 800/647-5368 or, for more information, visit [www.forestry-suppliers.com](http://www.forestry-suppliers.com).

### Learn about woody ornamentals...

in the 2001-2002 edition of the Umass Extension Management Guide for Woody Ornamentals. The guide includes "The Professional Management Guide for Insects, Diseases, and Weeds of Trees and Shrubs in New England" (Part I only - \$20, unbound, 3-hole punched) and "Strategies for Plant Health Management of Woody Ornamentals" (Part II only - \$12, bound, 3-hole punched). Cost is \$38 for Parts I & II in an inscribed 3-ring binder. Send orders to Umass Extension Bookstore, Draper Hall, 40 Campus Center Way, Amherst, MA 01003-9244. Make checks payable to Umass. Credit card orders may be placed by calling 413/545-2717.

**You'll brighten up...** when you check out Kichler Landscape Lighting's 2001 63-page landscape catalog packed with new decorative fixtures, accent lights, contractor-friendly bulk packed items and new finishes. Check out the Tiffany Mission Lantern that adds an artistic touch to gardens, or the new accent/deck lights. To receive a copy, call Kichler at 216/573-1000.





**Get a free  
string trimmer**  
model ST23 (\$299 value)



— or —



**a portable  
blower**

model HB26 (\$229 value)

from  
**Cub Cadet Commercial.**

All you need to do is purchase a TANK zero-turn riding mower anytime from March 1 through April 30, 2001. Come see us today and arm yourself with the tools you need to win the turf war.

Offer available at participating dealers while supplies last. Subject to applicable sales tax. Not valid on previously purchased merchandise.

# Buy the Tank. Get the artillery for free.

- Yes, I'd like more information about the complete line of Cub Cadet Commercial lawn care products.
- Yes, I'm interested in becoming a dealer.

Please print

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years in Business \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Employees \_\_\_\_\_

For more information  
call 1-877-835-7841 or  
visit [www.cubcommercial.com](http://www.cubcommercial.com) today.



Engineered for professional landscapers

# Buy the Tank. Get the artillery for free.



## BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 323 CLEVELAND OH

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE



PO BOX 93422  
CLEVELAND OH 44101-9615

NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



## Get a free string trimmer

model ST23 (\$299 value)

— or —

## a portable blower

model HB26 (\$229 value)

## from Cub Cadet Commercial.

All you need to do is purchase a TANK zero-turn riding mower anytime from March 1 through April 30, 2001. Come see us today and arm yourself with the tools you need to win the turf war.

Offer available at participating dealers while supplies last. Subject to applicable sales tax. Not valid on previously purchased merchandise.



# Let's get down to business.



## Introducing Cub Cadet Commercial

Cub Cadet Commercial is a new premium brand of turf equipment and landscaping tools that really means business. That's because we make our products specifically for businesses like yours.

We've designed our equipment to meet the demands of professional landscapers. That means we build dependable machines that make you more productive. We provide innovative features to make your job easier. Plus, we offer service and support programs that help keep you on the job.

Find out more about this tough new brand. Take a look at our full line of zero-turn riders, wide area mowers, trimmers, clippers and blowers. Visit one of our dealers. Take a test-drive. Ask about our exclusive Command Cut System™ and programs, like Next Day Parts and our 3-year turf equipment warranty.

At Cub Cadet Commercial, we've made it our business to provide you with the finest professional equipment on the market. How you take advantage of it...well, that's your business.

Circle No. 114 on Reader Inquiry Card

**Cub Cadet**  
**COMMERCIAL**

Engineered for professional landscapers

For the location of a Cub Cadet Commercial dealer near you, call 1-877-835-7841 or visit [www.cubcommercial.com](http://www.cubcommercial.com) today.



# Squeeze more out of your time

**Learn how top landscape professionals organize their lawn maintenance crews into masters of efficiency and profit**

BY JASON STAHL / MANAGING EDITOR

**T**he Green Industry could easily offer the most solid proof that time is money. Competition is so heavy that some jobs, like mowing, must be done as efficiently as possible to make a profit.

Lawn maintenance needs to be systemized in order to ensure efficiency. There are some components of a system that many landscape companies use; other more unique components are only suitable for a few companies. One thing's for sure, though: you can't be successful if you don't have a system. These landscape professionals have been successful for many years and, not surprisingly, developed their own systems from which you can learn.

**Company name:** Wheat's Landscaping  
**Owners:** Warren and Darin Wheat  
**Location:** Tucson, AZ  
**2000 gross revenues:** \$2 million  
**Employees:** 50  
**Business mix:** 100% commercial  
No employee wants to be called into Warren Wheat's office for consistently exceeding the number of hours allowed to complete lawn maintenance on a property, but it's not just because he's a former NFL offensive tackle. It's because, as Wheat puts it, "no one wants to be in the hot seat." And junior supervisors know they will be in that "hot seat" if they don't finish jobs on time because Wheat has established a set of hours for each of his 78 properties. Each month,



Warren Wheat

ILLUSTRATION: © GRAHAM FRENCH / MASTERFILE



Crews can save time by knowing exactly what needs to be done at a property before arriving there.

(PHOTO COURTESY  
WHEAT'S LANDSCAPING



he gets a report on how each crew is performing relative to those hours.

"We send out a memo to junior supervisors that tells them these jobs aren't where they need to be and they have 'x' amount of time to improve," Wheat says. "If nothing changes, we meet."

Wheat's average crew of four people maintain the same properties over and over so they can develop a routine and consistently reduce the amount of time it takes to complete the job. Part of that is becoming familiar with the property so the crew knows what they're going to do and how they're going to do it before arrival. A supervisor at each property helps figure out ways to de-

crease time and improve quality.

Each crew performs all tasks related to maintenance, but it wasn't always that way. "At one time, we had a mowing crew," Wheat says, "but it didn't save us any time at all. In fact, it created more man-hours because, for each job, we'd send trimmers in, then mowers. Why make two trips? The only thing you're saving on is equipment."

Wheat is aware of how much time is wasted traveling back to the shop for a forgotten piece of equipment, so he came up with the idea of assigning equipment to each crew and storing it in a chain-link cage. Each day, the crews know to load everything in the cage onto the trailer — if the cage isn't empty when they pull away, they know

they don't have everything.

Also, each of Wheat's trailers is custom made. There's a specific place for all pieces of equipment, with riding mowers in the back since mowing is the last thing done on each property.

Wheat cautions not to assume that starting work on properties farthest from the shop, then working your way back is the most economical route. "Sometimes when heavy traffic makes for slow going, we'll start at the closest properties," Wheat said. Throw in customers' requests to have the service done at a certain time of day and you end up with a genuine puzzle that each landscape manager has to best figure out how to handle

for his or her own company.

**Company name:** Blanchard Landscape

**Owners:** Fred Redmann, Jim Blanchard

**Location:** Holland, OH

**2000 gross revenues:** Over \$3 million

**Employees:** 60-70

**Business mix:** 50% commercial, 50% residential

"The only way you can make money mowing is to have a tight route with no downtime," says Fred Redmann. And while he may be stating the obvious, it's worth hearing again if it reminds us to establish an efficient system.

One thing Redmann's crews do to reduce downtime is carry a

## LM'S BENCHMARKS: STANDARDS FOR THE LANDSCAPE AND LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

### One-day response calms customer complaints

One indicator that your maintenance system needs an overhaul is a sudden increase in customer complaints. New complaints mean your service system is breaking down.

So how do you balance your need for speed, efficiency and profits with your customers' seemingly endless need for personal attention, time on site and those little "extras?" Our Best Practices Panel had several ideas for serving the customer while staying with a system that works. While their ideas varied, they all recommended quick and careful response to customer complaints — meaning response within one day.

This doesn't mean that all problems can be fixed in one day, but our experts strongly recommended contacting the customer within 24 hours, with the goal to resolve most problems as quickly as possible. How quick is that? Some contractors recommend within 48 hours, 72 hours, seven days or, in certain cases,

scheduled as necessary. The one thing they agreed on was that 24 hours is the maximum time to call customers back and hear their complaints, no exceptions! You may be tired after a long day but this is more important. Here are their other suggestions:

- Make sure every employee who deals directly with customers is empowered (and trained) to listen to the complaint and take steps to address it. The attitude that "it's not my problem" should not exist in your organization.
- The best way to handle complaints is on the telephone or face-to-face. Hopefully, revisits and reworks can be done within a week.
- Handle all refunds within the existing fiscal year, if possible.
- Don't refund on seeding jobs. Rather, redo if necessary. Some experts say not to refund unless a job is done incorrectly.
- Set a meeting date on-site to review any rework extras or installations to guarantee 100% satisfaction.
- Schedule a follow-up call to gauge customers' satisfaction.



## In the zone (maintenance, that is)

Zone maintenance works. If all your maintenance areas are grouped together into zones, you can assign the same workers to do similar tasks throughout the zone. For example, you may have customers who are in your spraying program, and one employee who does all the spraying. You may have mowing customers in your town and three neighboring towns. Assign one crew to each town or area so they don't have to spend a lot of time driving. When a crew leader is responsible for the same customer throughout the entire season, that person develops pride in the crew's performance. Also, the crew will become more efficient as the crew leader learns what has to be done and what can be skipped from one week to the next.

— Leonard Phillips,  
landscape architect, Peabody, MA

backup for each piece of equipment on the trailer. "That way, if something breaks down, they can at least complete the job," he says. Crews try to take at least three mowers to each property, such as two large walk-behinds and a push mower for residential accounts. With an eye toward efficiency, however, Redmann has turned to mowers with velkies because many of the residential properties he cares for are large.

He knows that employees with more energy are more productive.

Like many other professionals, Redmann prefers that his employees stick to the same route week after week to familiarize themselves with their properties. But sometimes that strategy just doesn't work.

"Sometimes our schedules don't allow that, or sometimes someone doesn't show up, so

we try to give people exposure to different jobs," Redmann says.

While Redmann would like his crews to leave their equipment in the trailers so they won't have to haul anything out in the morning, the risk of theft is too great. As an alternative, he's considering purchasing all-cover trailers that he can lock.

**Company name:** Landmark Landscapes

**Owners:** Mark, Neil and John Thelen

**Location:** Norcross, GA

**2000 gross revenues:** \$3 million

**Employees:** 65-70

**Business mix:** 100% commercial

Even with a solid lawn maintenance system, inefficiency can still plague a crew if it doesn't have the right equipment. In Mark Thelen's case, he left belt-driven mowers behind in favor of hydrostatic walk-behinds and riders. "We did it to increase speed and production," The-

*continued on page 30*

# Temporary / Seasonal Labor Visas



Receive work visas for your peak season and have a loyal, productive labor force that you personally choose! Every day you delay shortens the duration of your visa.

**Call now for information packet and a quote.**

*Foley Enterprises*

*Your labor solution for the millennium and beyond...*

## We Specialize in Work Permits for the:

- Green Industry
- Hotel/Resort
- Golf Courses

Join us in our sixth year of obtaining and maintaining a legal work force. You can trust that our experience and motivation is sincere and our customer service is unbeatable!

*Toll Free (888) 623 7285*

*Austin (512) 282 3237*

*Fax (512) 282 0958*

\*Other Industries are also eligible for this type of work permit...call us now to find out if your company is eligible

Circle 115



# PROTECT

## PEOPLE, PROPERTY & PROFITS

*with real-time weather information*



- ☛ LIVE WEATHER DATA
- ☛ NETWORK COMPATIBILITY

**DTN**  
**WEATHER**  
SERVICES

**1-877-806-6614**

[www.dtnweather.com](http://www.dtnweather.com)

**Weather Solutions for  
Business Decisions**

Circle No. 116 on Reader Inquiry Card

- ★ Storm arrival time, type & severity
- ★ Lightning Prediction /Detection
- ★ National, regional & local radar
- ★ 5-minute NEXRAD updates
- ★ Watches & Warnings
- ★ Customized forecasts
- ★ Forecast & current conditions
- ★ Automatic alarms for weather changes



**SAVE \$400**

*(free shipping & initiation)*

**When You Order By  
April 30, 2001**

Custom Forecasts • Data • Satellite • Internet • Training • Customer Service



# 11 great tips for an efficient lawn maintenance system

- Authorize a job time for each property
- Send same crews back to same properties
- Create a system that ensures all necessary equipment is brought to property
- Always bring a back-up for each piece of equipment
- Study traffic patterns before establishing a set route
- Train employees to do a variety of tasks
- Establish ideal crew size and stick to it
- Purposefully arrange equipment in trailer
- Perform maintenance tasks in most efficient order
- Set incentives for crews to reach job times
- Set up a "job board" so crews know job details beforehand

*continued from page 28*

len says. "We were really pushing the belt-driven mowers beyond what they could do on hills and in long, wet grass."

Thelen goes one step further than just using the right equipment, though — he adjusts his crews' maintenance schedules to maximize equipment. "The two crews with the 60-in. rid-

ers go to larger properties, and those crews with 44- and 48-in. riders go to properties I feel that equipment is more suited," Thelen says.

Crews number between five and six people, one of whom is a senior crew manager and another of whom is a junior crew manager. Instead of everybody moving on to different tasks when they're done with their

initial task, Thelen has organized the crews so that one person is responsible for mowing and edging, while someone else does detail work — pruning, spraying, weeding, etc.

He once experimented with mowing crews. Although he hasn't given up on the idea yet, he has put his own twist on it — combining them with regular crews on one truck to cut down on excessive travel.

Thelen believes the best protection against equipment breakdowns is putting new equipment in his workers' hands. To do that, he tracks when equipment was bought.

The only way a crew could arrive at a property without a piece of equipment is if it fell off the truck — all equipment stays in the truck overnight. Trucks are parked in 30-ft. wide covered hoop houses enclosed by a locked fence. Thelen already has a diesel tank on his property, but is contemplating adding an unleaded and mixed tank for added convenience. **LJM**



*Eliminate  
Unightly  
Algae*



*Remove  
Foul  
Odors*

## Function, Safety & Beauty

- Safety Tested & Approved by ETL, ETL-C and CE
- 60HZ & 50HZ Available
- Pumping Rates in Excess of 775GPM or 167m<sup>3</sup>/hr
- Less than 100lbs or 42kg Dimensional Shipping Weight
- Complete 5-Year Warranty
- Interchangeable Spray Patterns in Less than 20 Minutes

**Otterbine Products Include:**  
 Aerating Fountains • Industrial Aerators  
 Giant Fountains • Instant Fountains  
 Dewatering Pumps • Fountain-Glo Lighting  
 Lake Dye • Bioaugmentation

Otterbine® Barebo, Inc. • 3840 Main Road East • Emmaus, PA 18049 • USA  
 (610) 965-6018 • Fax: (610) 965-6050 • aeration@otterbine.com • www.otterbine.com  
 Otterbine has over 300 Distribution Centers, with 90 Certified Service Centers Worldwide



A  
E  
R  
A  
T  
O  
R  
S  
&  
F  
O  
U  
N  
T  
A  
I  
N  
S