

Green Star Professional Grounds Management Awards 2002 Official Entry Form and Fact Sheet



Please **PRINT CLEARLY** or type the information requested below. Check for accuracy. This information will be used for publicity purposes and awards.

Each entry must include this completed form and entry fee:

- * PGMS members — \$125
- * Combination PGMS membership and entry fee — \$250
- * Non-members — \$180

Make checks payable to the Professional Grounds Management Society.

SEND COMPLETE ENTRY AND FEE TO:

Professional Grounds Management Awards
c/o Professional Grounds Management Society
720 Light St.
Baltimore, MD 21230
Call 410/752-3318 with any questions.

NAME OF SITE: _____
State: _____ Entry Category #: _____
Name of company or agency owning this landscape:

Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

**SIGNATURE OF THE COMPANY OR AGENCY OFFICIAL
CONSENTING TO THIS ENTRY AND A RELEASE FOR PUBLICITY:**
Signature: _____
Title: _____

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THIS LANDSCAPE?
 In-house staff Outside contractor
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Telephone (____) _____

(IMPORTANT) Year site was built: _____
Years I have maintained this site: _____
Total acres maintained: _____
Acres of turf: _____
Acres of woody ornamentals: _____
Acres (or sq. ft.) of display beds: _____
Total paved area: _____

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: _____
Full time (year round): _____ Seasonal: _____
Other (please specify): _____
Licensed pesticide applicators: _____
Total man-hours per week: _____

ANNUAL EXPENDITURES:
Total budget for this site: (Including salaries) _____ \$
Equipment: _____ \$
Chemicals and fertilizers: _____ \$
Seed and plant material: _____ \$

SPECIAL MAINTENANCE CHALLENGES:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMPLETED IN THE LAST 2 YEARS:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If selected a winner, I request the name on the award to be (check one or both):
 Name of entrant (name which will appear on plaque):
(please print) _____

 Name of organization or agency:
(please print) _____

IMPORTANT: Please provide the name of the person who will accept the award at the banquet:
(please print) _____

I certify that all information provided on this form and in the accompanying entry is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that no materials will be returned and that all material may be used for publication in *Landscape Management* magazine or for other purposes deemed appropriate.
Signature of entrant _____ Date _____

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY AUGUST 4, 2002



John Deere's 1500 aerator pulls 30 cores per sq. ft.

Aerate to the core

BY CURT HARLER /
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Cores? Let 'em lay, is what the folks at DeSantis Landscapes, Salem, OR, tell their customers.

"We used to rake up plugs," says John O'Neil, maintenance supervisor.

"Now we tell the customer that it's better to let them lay for a week and dry up. Then we run over them with a mulching mower."

Either spring or fall is a good time to aerate lawns, O'Neil says. He leans toward spring despite the fact that it's a busier time of year.

DeSantis's customers have a wide mix of soils from heavy clays to really loose ground. "We'll do the heavier clay more often," O'Neil says.

Coring is generally done two-and-a-half

to three inches deep on two- to three-inch spacing. Because DeSantis's aeration jobs often come at the busiest season, the company will sometimes subcontract a job. Even when handling the jobs in-house, they typically rent their aerators. "We only use them seasonally, so it pays to rent," O'Neil explains.

When specifying equipment, they prefer to use a cam-operated machine as opposed to the roller type. "They seem to do a cleaner job since they pull the cores straight out," O'Neil says. He finds that the roller units often come back at an angle and tear the turf.

As long as landscape professionals explain the benefits of leaving the cores on the ground, homeowners seem to have no ob-

jection. The next mowing, done with a mulcher, recycles the cores and any organic matter to the lawn. That makes all parties — the customer, worker and lawn — happy.

Cutting corners

Tom Taylor, owner of Integrity Landscape and Design, Nashville, TN, hates to see his workers coming back at the end of the day exhausted from wrestling with aerators. There's no good way to cut corners with an aerator — but Taylor thinks there should be.

"I'm looking for something that doesn't jerk the operator around the corners so much, something with good controls up front," says Taylor. His crews frequently deal with heavier soils. "More than anything else, I look for ease of operator use."

Before you buy...

▶ Check a machine's productivity in square feet per hour. Remember, productivity varies depending on the gear used

▶ Know the machine's coring pattern

Ask:

▶ How many different tine sizes and styles can be used

▶ How deep will the machine dig?

▶ How clean does the core come out of the ground?

▶ What does the machine weigh?

▶ Do you want a machine that slits or cores?

▶ How convenient are the hand controls?

▶ Can you get it on/off a truck easily?

▶ Is the engine one you're used to working with and stock parts and supplies for?

Cornering is the first area where Taylor would make some design changes. He'd like a machine that makes tight turns at the end of a row like a zero-turn mower or a walk-behind, not the big sweeping turns required to keep things going on many machines.

"There should be a way to clutch the machine when coming around a turn, rather than having to make a direct stop or letting the machine pull you around the corner," he says.

That would allow his workers to cover the maximum amount of ground per day without getting beat up. "I know you have to make trade-offs," Taylor says, noting that acres per day is still important. But he thinks a unit with a third wheel — a pivot wheel — would allow tight turns without lifting the bar...which, in effect, means

lifting the whole machine.

Speaking of lifting, Taylor would also like to find a machine that's easier to lift off a pickup truck. "When all the dove-tails are being used for other jobs, we'll run the corners out on a pickup," he notes. "I'd want to tweak the machine for ease of getting it off and on trucks."

AER WAY

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■ Require 15-40 hp tractor

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■ Eight tines standard per wheel, option to double to 16

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80 on the 60-in.

■ 6x6 single tine pattern, 3x4.5 double-tined three models available

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- Larger 2000 has 80-in. coring swath

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- Nine wheels operate on six-in. spacing
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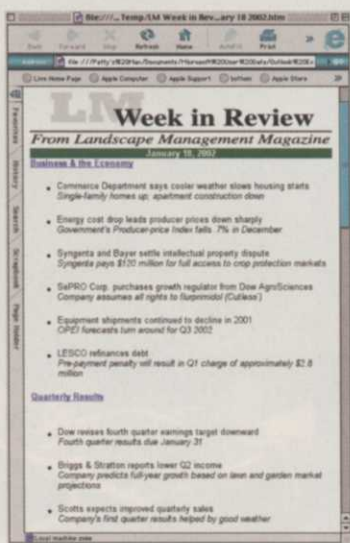
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Hire to grow

Learn how Bozzuto Landscape revamped its employee interviewing process to identify and hire the best candidates

BY JASON STAHL / MANAGING EDITOR

Hiring quality people fuels a company's growth. Nobody knows this better than Tom Davis, president of Bozzuto Landscaping Company, Laurel, MD. He was afraid his company's interviewing process had become ineffective and inefficient, and would soon slow the good growth his company had seen.

The problem: inefficient interviewing process

"We probably had 10 different people doing interviews, depending on which department was hiring, so we had 10 different styles of interviewing going on," Davis explains. "The interviews were taking too long, and too many interviewees were being bounced around to too many managers for second opinions."

Davis's biggest fear about the jumbled system was that it would eventually impede growth by allowing bad people to be hired and good people to slip through the cracks.

"Bringing the right people into a company is so key," Davis says. "You can only hire from your gut for so long; you can only get lucky so many times."

The solution: set up a system

Following the advice of some colleagues, Davis hired two professors from the University of Maryland, specialists in interviewing strategies, to help him create a reliable interviewing system. He spent five hours familiarizing the professors with his company. They, in turn, spent seven hours teaching the interviewers a new process. They suggested, and the company implemented, five changes:

A new phone questionnaire. Questions were developed to be asked over the phone to extract as much information about candidates as possible prior to them coming in. This would save time for the managers because it would limit the number of people coming in for interviews.

An on-site questionnaire. Questions were developed with the goal of getting interviewees to talk and think aloud during an on-site interview. This interview would have a start and stop time.

An on-site job fair questionnaire. "At job fairs, you have 15 minutes to meet with a candidate," Davis says. "We shrunk the questionnaire down to cater more to college students and identify things like eye contact, dress, speech, communication, etc."

Two-person sit-in and time limit. Two

Vitals

Company: Bozzuto Landscaping Company

President: Tom Davis

2001 gross revenue: \$7,500,000

Employees: 110

Services: Full-service landscape company

Customer mix: 100% commercial

managers would sit in on each interview, and the time limit for each interview would be 45 minutes. "If you ask the right questions and they can't figure them out in 30 to 45 minutes, there's a problem," Davis says.

This revamping of Bozzuto's interviewing process occurred last May, so, with a year gone by, Davis can now say it was well worth the \$1,500 it cost him.

"It's improved our interviewing process and loosened up our managers who were wasting time with bad candidates," Davis says. "It was a great investment because it will last us for years."

Davis says he initially had the interviewing process change directed at candidates for supervisor positions and higher, but now they use the process for crewmen as well.

"We have people who are now managers who started as laborers, and that's a huge success story for our company," Davis says.

"If you want to grow, hiring right is the first step. I don't think it's ever too late to start." **LM**

Homework overcomes objections

Grounds director prepared himself with research before making his big pitch

BY JEFFREY MCGINNIS

Paul Monahan, director of buildings and grounds for the Warren Township High School District (#121), Gurnee, IL, has lots of grounds and landscaping tasks to do every day. Like most public schools, however, he has to work with a limited budget.

He felt the most efficient way to accomplish all the maintenance chores he and his grounds crew faced was to replace an older, although still serviceable, tractor with a newer piece of equipment capable of performing many different maintenance tasks.

The problem: tight budget, old equipment

His big challenge was convincing the school board to spend money for the new type of tractor board members weren't familiar with, a Carraro SuperTrac unit.

In building his case, Monahan took a logical, business-like approach in making a presentation to the school board. He did a detailed comparison of various tractor models and their capabilities prior to submitting his request. He compared different features, then matched that up against the school district's grounds job requirements.

Because he researched his department's



Monahan can now plow snow and drop salt all in one pass with this new unit.

needs and several different models of tractors, he was able to present a convincing case for the particular model of tractor he desired. The board voted to buy the more expensive compact tractor model, mostly because of Monahan's claim that he could derive more use out of it, including the reversibility of driver controls.

The solution: buy a multi-task machine

"The old tractor we had wasn't powerful enough for us, and it was too big to use on our campus sidewalks for winter snow blowing and salt spreading," Monahan says. "For snow blowing, we would actually have to hook up the attachments and drive in reverse, craning our heads around to see where we were going. It wasn't easy."

Monahan's new reversible model eliminates that discomfort. Now, he puts the snow blower in front of the machine and the salt

spreader behind it, completing two functions in one pass. The tractor also adds options, including heating, air conditioning and a stereo for his workers who have to sit for long periods in the tractor. "My guys love it. Winter or summer, they basically fight each other for the chance to drive the tractor," he says.

But what moved the school board to approve the purchase, he believes, is the many different uses Monahan squeezes out of this one machine, with some functions being front-attached and others rear-attached, thanks to the unit's reversibility feature.

He uses the unit for snow removal, salt/sand spreading, mowing, athletic field overseeding, infield grooming, turf fertilization, aeration, rolling, moving dirt, and weed control by adding a 200-gal. spray attachment with a boom arm.

"It's excellent on sidewalks, like when you're doing the snow blowing work. When you turn a 90-degree corner, the articulating part of the tractor allows the rear attachments to track exactly to the path of the front tires. I don't hear any more complaints about scraping fire hydrants or parked cars, which is a relief." **LM**

— Jeffrey McGinnis is a partner with Gaul Advertising Inc., Wayne, PA.

Vitals

Institution name: Warren Township High School

No. schools in district: Two

No. grounds employees: 17

No. of acres maintained: 39 acres

Equipment used: Carraro Supertrac Tractor

Grounds maintenance budget: \$100,000

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New insecticide options

These new target-selective insecticides give turf managers new hope in pest management

BY DANIEL POTTER, PH.D.

In the past 10 years there has been radical change in the kinds of insecticides available to turf and landscape managers. Organophosphates (OPs) and carbamates that had previously been mainstays were restricted, and old standbys like diazinon, Mocap (ethoprop), Oftanol (isofenphos) and Turcam (bendiocarb) were lost. Passage of the EPA's controversial Food Quality Protection Act in 1996 had many Green Industry professionals concerned that they would be left without any effective tools for managing insect pests.

The 1990s also saw the advent of new kinds of insecticides that can be applied at low use rates, with reduced hazard to humans and the environment, and products that work selectively against pest insects (Table 1). Many of them are more versatile and effective than past ones.

We no longer depend on just two classes of chemistry. In fact, from the standpoint of insecticides, a person could argue that we're in a stronger, more diverse and more defensible position today than just a decade ago. Let's take a look at current trends in turf insecticides and what may be on the horizon.



Grubs and billbugs

From 1969 to 1994, short-residual OPs and carbamates were the only option for grub control (Table 1). Turf professionals used these materials curatively, targeting young grubs. If the timing was too early, the residues would degrade before the eggs hatched. If it was too late, the large grubs would have already caused damage and be hard to control. The insecticides required immediate watering-in, and their broad toxicity to humans, birds and other non-targets made them less than ideal to use. In addition to the aforementioned products, Crusade (fonofos) and Triumph

During the 1990s, management strategies for soil insects such as masked chafers (left), Japanese beetles (right), grubs and mole crickets shifted from curative to preventive control.

(isazafofos), both OPs, were canceled for turf usage in the 1990s.

Registration of Merit (imidacloprid) and MACH2 (halofenozide) during the 1990s revolutionized grub control. These pesticides' residues persist in soil for several months, allowing flexibility in application timing. Both products, especially the granular formulations, are forgiving if not immediately watered in.