

Prepare now for the spring growing season



While not thought of as a gardening month, February can include a few yard and garden activities. There are plenty of things to do in anticipation of spring and the 2007 growing season.

If the weather is acceptable, start the process of pruning apple trees. Apples should be pruned on a regular basis to keep them productive, and February through early April is a good time to do it. Other trees and shrubs can be pruned, but be careful. Don't prune spring blooming shrubs because flower buds were formed last season. Cut them off and the shrubs will not produce flowers this spring.

Even so, old, neglected spring-flowering shrubs often require extensive pruning to rejuvenate or renew the plants. The best time to rejuvenate large, overgrown shrubs is late winter or early spring. While heavy pruning in late winter or early spring will reduce or eliminate the flower display for a few years, the long term health of the shrubs is more important.

February is also a good time to look for branches that are broken or crossing each other, those that are too low or growing into buildings. As weather conditions get

warmer, these limbs can be removed.

— Information courtesy of University of Nebraska-Extension. For more, visit <http://lancaster.unl.edu>

Connecticut town goes pesticide free

PLAINVILLE, CT — This city of 17,000 people located about 15 miles southwest of Hartford is going pesticide free on its city property — all 167 acres. The town council on Jan. 10 voted to accept the recommendation of the 11-member Plainville Conservation Commission to quit using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

In addition, the town council is asking homeowners with property near the Quinnipiac and Pequabuck Rivers to quite using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

Plainville is reportedly the second town in Connecticut to try to maintain public property without synthetic products.

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BY DAVID FRABOTTA / Senior Editor, *Golfdom*

Charting a course for growth

Deborah Hamlin takes helm of Irrigation Association

SHE PERSEVERED OVER A FIELD OF 80 CANDIDATES to capture the executive director post of the Irrigation Association. But it won't be the biggest challenge for Deborah Hamlin as she leads a "fragmented" and a growing Irrigation Association, which bid farewell to retired head Thomas Kimmell.

We sat down with Hamlin to talk about her goals and vision for the association, which is based in Falls Church, VA. She's a certified association executive and the former executive director for the International Association of Plastics Distributors, which she ran for 10 years. During her tenure, she developed a comprehensive educational program, grew membership, reorganized the volunteer structure to streamline projects and bolstered participation at association meetings.



Q Why was IA a good fit for you?

I worked for an industry association that was basically manufacturers and distributors for the past 10 years, so that certainly helps my understanding of the business and the way things are manufactured and distributed. What I'm trying to learn more about are some of the technical issues and some of the political issues.

I'm very familiar with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America — and I know we've had a long-term relationship with them — but I'm hoping that my connections there and my existing relationships will help build a stronger relationship.

Q What is top of mind for you begin in this role? One of the biggest things is the fact that we're partnering with EPA and its WaterSense program. The first rollout of this WaterSense program is individual certifications. (In 2007), they are going to roll out product certifications, where you would label a product like you would an Energy Star product, except for water conservation.

We're hoping that all of our landscape and golf exams will be EPA endorsed. So if a person passed an IA program that has been approved, then the EPA will allow them to put a label on their business cards and brochures to prove that they are using water-saving techniques in their day-to-day business. That's pretty cool.

Q What are your main goals in the short term of your tenure?

One of my personal goals is to grow our relationships with our affiliate organizations. There are hundreds of irrigation associations and turf and landscape associations out there; 50 of them currently pay membership dues to us.

So we have a staff person that currently is traveling around and meeting with those people; it's been an emphasis for about a year now. But I'd like to formalize the relationship and benefits for those members.

Q What will be your biggest challenges?

Serving our diverse members. I was drawn to the industry association because you can do much more with more people and because you have the voice of everyone, but when you have everyone, each segment wants to be different. So we're in the process of coming up with programs and services to cater to each of them. We can no longer just give the same information to everybody. But electronically, we can individualize our approach. It's one-to-one marketing; we can figure out what one person gets out of the organization and then market that to them.

Q How does IA want to be seen by irrigation professionals? All of the contractors, especially on the landscape side, are very fragmented. They have a lot of different associations that they

belong to on a state and local level.

I would love for them to look to us as a resource and as a leader in education, specifically in training and testing.

Q What are you most excited about in taking this position?

There is so much potential. It's a small community of people, but they are so intertwined by the water issue that it certainly makes membership in the organization sellable because you have this common goal among so many different types of companies.

The other thing that I love about this group is that they are very engaged. Maybe because it's all cause related and people feel good about what they are doing, but they are working hard at getting things done.

Also, many members are going through an evolution. A lot of them are family businesses in their second and third generations, and the next generations have different ways of looking at things; they want something out of this organization in return as opposed to some of their parents who were members to network or because it was the right thing to do.

Members now are looking for different things from the organization, and I'm excited to come in during that transition so I can help provide those new benefits.

Q How will you ensure that IA's certification program is a premium credential? I envision a certification board for the industry where it is an umbrella, and we acknowledge all of the certifications out there under one body.

In conjunction, there needs to be some sort of training and assessment at the lower level, and I think we are missing that. The certification board is looking at that to determine whether it is their role, and if so, is there a market for that, or should that be something that stays on the education side of things?

People & companies

John Deere Landscapes, John Deere Golf & Turf One Source and the company's professional mowing segment will now come under the direction of **David Werning**, president of John Deere Landscapes and senior vice president, commercial segment, John Deere C&CE.



Phil Burkart, vice president and general manager of **The Toro Co.**'s irrigation division, was asked to serve on the Irrigation Association's Board of Directors.

Harvey Massey, owner of Orlando, FL's **Massey Services**, and his wife Carol donated \$1 million to the Dr. P. Phillips Orlando Performing Arts Center, a proposed facility in downtown Orlando.

Arsenault Associates announced that **David L. Reed** has joined the company as Fleet Management Consultant. Reed brings more than 20 years of fleet maintenance and technology experience to the newly created position.



Amy Briones has been named branch manager of **Greater Texas Landscape Services'** new office in San Antonio.



Matthew Wilson has been promoted to service and compliance manager at **RedMax/Komatsu Zenoah America**. He will be responsible for the company's service, warranty and emissions compliance.

Ron Wolfarth, director of **Rain Bird's** landscape irrigation division, was named to the board of directors for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Alliance for Water Efficiency.

The Broyhill Co. of Dakota City, NE, named **Lee Stone**, senior product and division manager for Golf and Turf Equipment.

Charlie Lockerson has been named manager of **Horizon Landscape & Design** in Vero Beach, FL.



R. Douglas Cowan stepped down as chief executive officer of **The Davey Tree Expert Co.** at the end of 2006. Taking his place is **Karl J. Warnke**, who serves as president and CEO.

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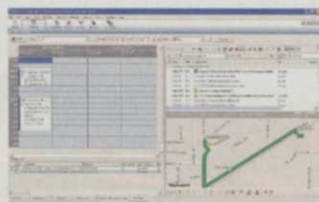


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In the Know

Water district limits lawn irrigation to one day a week

BROOKSVILLE, FL — The Southwest Florida Water Management District executive director recently declared a water shortage and restricted lawn watering to one day a week in the 16 counties in the district, including the portion of Marion County west of Interstate 75, according to the Star-Banner in Ocala, FL.

The restrictions will be in effect from Jan. 16 until July 31, unless rescinded or modified. The limits are being imposed because of low rainfall levels, which are affecting river flows and surface and groundwater levels.

As of Dec. 31, the districtwide average rainfall deficit is about 11.6 in.

Lack of rain limits watering to once a week.

"Our rivers are clearly being impacted like that of our lakes and groundwater system," said David Moore, SWFWMD's executive director. "We are very early in our typical dry season. Conditions are already low. We are asking for everyone's assistance in these six to seven months we anticipate this water shortage condition. We are asking the general public to really try to conserve as we move forward to this dry season."



[CLIPPINGS]

Toro delivers Disney vacation

RIVERSIDE, CA — Two lucky Toro Irrigation customers will soon be going to the Magic Kingdom. Suzanne Heimbuch, commercial account manager for Choate Irrigation, and Shanon Holden, owner of Lubbock Turf Irrigation, were the winners of Toro Irrigation's Walt Disney World Resort Vacation Giveaway at the 2006 International Irrigation Show in San Antonio. Toro is the official provider of turf maintenance equipment for Walt Disney World Resort.

Horiculture degree from UI

URBANA, IL — In fall 2006, the University of Illinois began partnering with Chicago area community and city colleges to offer a bachelors degree in horticulture. Students who have completed an associate degree can complete their final two years of coursework and earn a bachelors degree from U of I at Urbana-Champaign — without relocating. For information, call 800-252-1360 or visit www.nres.uiuc.edu.

Minnesota Expo biggest ever

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Green Expo is one of the fastest-growing green industry trade shows and educational conferences in the U.S. The expo hosted 8,004 registered attendees Jan. 3-5. The show is presented annually by the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association and the Minnesota Turf & Grounds Foundation.

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The new Brillion LSS6 seeder features mounting capabilities for both skid steer loaders and tractors, adding flexibility to landscape management.

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The LSS6 itself is 84 inches wide with a seeding width of 72 inches and a hopper capacity of 4 1/2 bushels.

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Circle 120



BEFORE

Problem The client is unhappy with the appearance of this area under the shade trees in the parking lot. What is the problem? What would you recommend?

The cause The ugly junipers growing under the shade trees are failing to thrive because junipers require full sun growing conditions. The junipers are also being damaged from applications of snow melting products and snow removal operations.

Solutions

1. Quick fix, remove the ugly. Remove the junipers and redress the mulch and you are done.
2. Remove the junipers. Properly prepare the soil and install turf via seed or sod. (See photo below)
3. Remove the junipers. Install a ground cover that will grow in semi-shade conditions and with no irrigation such as Liriope, English Ivy or Euonymus coloratus. There are many other plant materials to consider.



AFTER

Every day you see horticultural problems. Sometimes the solution is obvious, but others are much more difficult to solve. Brickman Group Senior Horticulture Specialist H. Bruce Hellerick tackles these issues each month in Problem Solver. He can be reached at Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com

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Why Spray Nozzle Selection is Critical to Your Success

The consequences of inadequate spraying can be extremely costly. Under application can result in turf damage and the need to re-spray. Over application results in waste of chemicals. So, be sure you have the best nozzle for your specific application.

Nozzle Type	Herbicides, Fungicides, and Insecticides		Droplet Size	Nozzle Type	Herbicides, Fungicides, and Insecticides		Droplet Size
	Contact	Systemic			Contact	Systemic	
Turbo TeeJet®	Good	Excellent	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	DG TwinJet®	Excellent	Good	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Turbo TeeJet® Induction	---	Excellent	○	Turbo TwinJet®	Excellent	Excellent	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
AIC TeeJet®	Good	Excellent	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	XP BoomJet®	---	Very Good	○

● Very Fine ● Fine ● Medium ● Coarse ● Very Coarse ○ Extremely Coarse
 (Droplet-size categories may vary with nozzle capacity, spray angle and spray pressure.)



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Hydroseeding

► Contractors find more efficient ways for sowing lawns

BY JANET AIRD

You always know where hydroseeders have been: they leave hillsides, golf courses and residential lawns a strange green-gray color that turns into tough native plants and lush, green turf.

Chris Haddock, owner of CBH Landscape Contractors in New Hampshire, added hydroseeding to his business in the early 1990s. The bulk of his company's work is residential, but he also does golf courses, shopping malls and new developments.

Obvious advantages

"Hydroseeding's a lot cheaper than hand-sowing seed," he says. "Hand-sowing a lawn takes about half a day. With the hydroseeder, it takes about an hour to an hour and a half. It doesn't take long to make up for the cost of the machine."

Hydroseeded soils hold moisture better than hand-seeded ones, Haddock says, so the seeds germinate more quickly. They usually have fewer weeds. Hydroseeding

also can increase the number of your customers. "We have customers who call about hydroseeding, then ask us to do more for them."

Lots of applications

Jim Listowich added hydroseeding to his business, Norpine Landscape, in 1988. He does mostly housing developments and condos, across Maine with his 3,300-gallon model.

"It's the right size for big jobs, but we can still do small jobs with it," he says.

These days, hydroseeding is used for everything from lawns to erosion control, hillside stabilization and vegetation restoration after wildfires. In some places, though, such as high-traffic areas, Haddock says, laying sod can be more appropriate.

Hydroseeding begins with a slurry of water, fertilizer and mulch. For lawns and golf courses, use a high quality grass seed. For erosion control and stabilizing slopes, use a tougher, less-costly grass, or native plants, whose roots hold the soil in place.

The slurry binds with the



(l. to r.) Christopher B. Haddock, owner CBH Landscape Contractors, Tim LeMien, landscape supervisor and Joshua Marceau, hydroseed foreman, standing beside one of their labor-saving units.

soil and helps prevent erosion. On steep slopes, adding tackifier, a gum-based solution, makes the slurry hold onto slopes even better.

Haddock has a 900-gallon unit that he pulls behind his one-ton diesel truck. "This seems to be the best compromise," he says. The machine is big enough for large applications, but small enough to go down a golf cart path.

Quality counts

As hydroseeding becomes more popular, new manufacturers have come out with less expensive models. This has allowed more landscapers to get into the business. But Haddock advises buying an established brand from a reliable dealer.

Hydroseeding is a great method for sowing seed, but it's a method with advantages, not a miracle, Haddock says. You have to use the right ingredients for the job in the right amounts, and mix the slurry properly or it clogs the machine.

Both men agree their biggest problem is that customers don't think they need to maintain their lawns, partly because they see tougher grasses growing on hillsides, and partly because their lawns come in so well.

They both give the same warning: "Take time to educate your customers."

— The author is a freelance writer in Altadena, CA.

Contact her at

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PIECEWORK— does it pay?

When this landscape company began paying based on production not hours, management discovered a whole new world of good and evil

BY CHARLES SIMON

FLEXIBLE WORK WEEK

Finish 40 billable hours in 40 hours

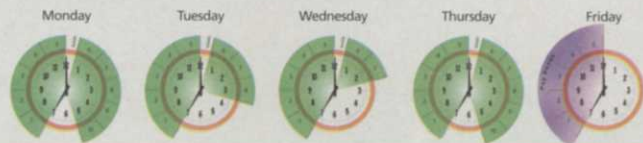


Work 40 hours,
get 40 hours
of pay.

$40 \times \$10 = \400

GET A PAY BONUS

Finish 45 billable hours in 40 hours

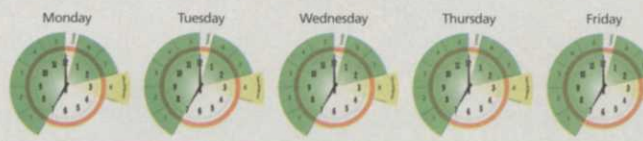


Work 40 hours,
get 45 hours
of pay.

$45 \times \$10 = \450

GO HOME EARLY EVERY DAY

Finish 40 billable hours in 35 hours

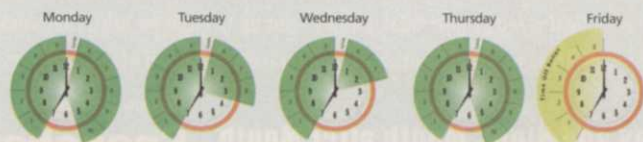


Work 35 hours,
get 40 hours
of pay.

$40 \times \$10 = \400

TAKE FRIDAY AFTERNOON OFF

Finish 40 billable hours in 35 hours



Work 35 hours,
get 40 hours
of pay.

$40 \times \$10 = \400

Would you like to increase productivity by 30%? Would you like your workers to

make smarter decisions? How about controlling labor costs at the same time?

A piecework pay system may be the answer. Piecework pay is also called standard hour pay, incentive pay, variable pay, pay for results or pay for performance. Regardless of its name, though, it's based on work completed instead of actual hours worked.

A standard amount of time is set to complete a specific job, and the employee is paid that set time — even if the work is completed in less time. For example, auto repair shops might set the standard time for a brake job on an F-350 at 1.5 hours. If the mechanic completes the work in less time, he still gets 1.5 hours of pay. If it takes more time, the mechanic is paid the normal hourly rate for the time spent.

Using a piecework pay system for landscaping is straightforward. You charge a customer 50 minutes in labor to mow, trim and blow a property. You pay the workers 50 minutes even if they finish early. It's possible for a worker to complete 40 hours of billable time in 35. The

continued on page 30



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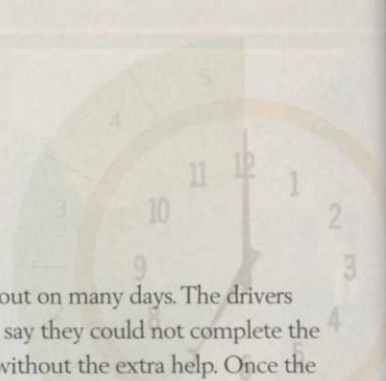


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continued from page 28

worker still gets 40 hours of pay even though he actually worked 35.

The workers are happy because they get to go home early, but still get a full 40-hour paycheck. Employers are happy

because the work was completed efficiently without paying overtime.

Real-world results

Here's what happened when we tried it: It was our practice to send three-man

crews out on many days. The drivers would say they could not complete the work without the extra help. Once the new system was in place and they had to split the pay with the third worker, they decided they didn't want any extra help. Two-man crews ruled.

We were amazed by how quickly the work was completed. One crew achieved savings of 30%, another about 25% and the rest between 5% and 10%.

We knew we had some slow workers. Now drivers would not accept these men on their crews. We had to let to workers go because no crew wanted them. Our efficiency improved dramatically.

Drawbacks, too

It did not take long, however, for the complaints to start coming in. "Your driver cut me off," complained one caller. "Why aren't they mowing my whole yard?" asked a customer. "Stop racing your mowers," demanded another.

We found our best workers worked a little faster than normal and did a good job as always, no matter what the pay system. Other workers, though, were a little too highly motivated. They finished quickly by mowing at the highest speed, cut only areas that really needed it, skipped string trimming and raced back to the shop.

Our solution was to send the crew back to a job when we received a complaint. They didn't get any billable time credits for the return visit. If they messed up, they had to go back on their time. Unfortunately, many customers either called days later or didn't call at all. In the end, quality issues cost us four good customers.

We found out later that some of the workers believed their piecework pay rate would be cut if they mowed too many lawns in a day. Others were afraid they

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