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# LM Reports

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## North American Green

Guardian Seed Protection Mulch Mat protects seed and soil from being washed or blown away and serves as mulch. Mulch Mat features a uniform layer of 100% agricultural straw securely stitched with degradable thread between two layers of lightweight polypropylene netting that degrade when exposed to the sun. Each roll weighs only 10 lbs., and can be easily rolled out, cut to conform to the size and shape of the area to protect, and quickly secured to the ground.

For more information contact North American Green at 800/772-2040 or [www.nagreen.com](http://www.nagreen.com) / circle no. 256



## Green Industry Innovators

The New Mini Mule by Green Industry Innovators is a new design incorporating a rust free aluminum frame covered in a lighter high-density impact resistant composite floor and side walls. This makes the Mini Mule light enough to be pulled by a smaller one ton pickup truck while still being as rugged as its bigger brother the original Mulch Mule. Options include, 16-hp leaf vacuum, extension conveyor, canopy, remote control and more.

For more information contact Green Industry Innovators at 330/875-0769 or [www.mulchmule.com](http://www.mulchmule.com) / circle no. 257

## Easy Lawn

Easy Lawn's Contractor Series features John Deere Turbo Engines, stainless steel tanks and mulch grinders, and an aggressive paddle design, which keeps even wood mulch and bonded fiber matrix in suspension continuously. Machines have a large deck storage capacity, many standard safety features and are



the only units that have ZDM — zero daily maintenance points. The C280 and C330 have the only digital display control panel available in a hydroseeding unit. C SERIES machines are for large seeding jobs, and erosion control.

For more information contact Easy Lawn at 800/638-1769 or [www.easylawn.com](http://www.easylawn.com) / circle no. 258

## Express Blower Inc.

Express Blower's RB-20 is designed to blow aggregate materials all day at great distance. Blows soil behind retaining walls, in drainage ditches, into indoor gardens or up four stories for rooftop terraces. Works for erosion and sediment control, topdressing, mud control, Terraseeding or safety surface application. Also check out the EB-30 and TM-30, entry-level models for the entrepreneur who wants to be in the blower application business. The TM-30 can be truck mounted, trailer mounted or configured as a roll off.

For more information contact Express Blower at 800/285-7227 or [www.expressblower.com](http://www.expressblower.com) / circle no. 259

## Finn Corp.

The T75 HydroSeeder fits right between the big trailer-mounted models and the little tank units. Trailer mounted, its 700-gal. tank covers 8,700-10,500 sq. ft. per load with spray distances up to 150 feet from discharge gun. Other features include hydraulically controlled paddle agitator, liquid recirculation, toolbox in hitch for storing nozzles, and in-line common-shaft clutch for centrifugal pump.

For more information contact Finn Corp. at 800/543-7166 or [www.finncorp.com](http://www.finncorp.com) / circle no. 260

## Sundance Equipment

The Sundance Kid III compact horizontal grinder yields the best fine grind for your compost, mulch or energy requirements. Redesigned concaves provide improved grinding action for a finer, more uniform particle size.

The patented grinding process eliminates



troublesome screens that tend to plug with wet or stringy material. Other improvements include a central control panel for both engine and grinder functions, a telescoping tongue and more horsepower.

For more information contact Sundance Equipment at 800/570-3551 or [www.sundancegrinders.com](http://www.sundancegrinders.com) / circle no. 261

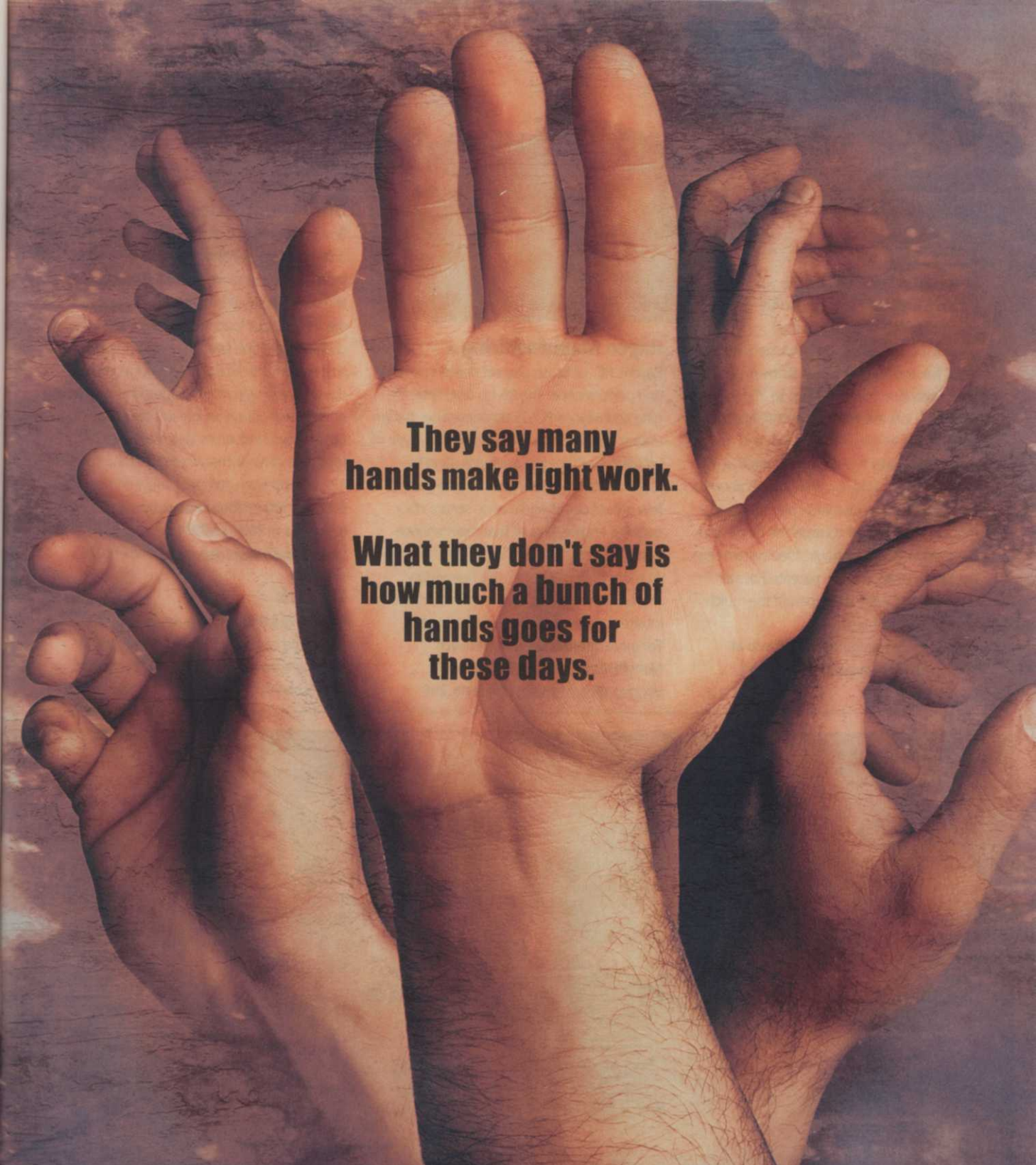
## Turbo Technologies Inc. ▼

Turbo Technologies' HM-500-HE is a 500 gallon hydroseeding system that is both a mechanical and a jet agitated unit. It is available as both a skid type and a pull type system. It will seed 6,600 sq. ft. per load. It is equipped with a 13-hp Honda electric start engine that is directly coupled to a 3-in. by 3-in. high volume centrifugal pump and an 8-hp Honda electric start engine that drives an aggressive mixing paddle. The paddles allow you to easily mix even the most difficult products such as 100% wood and BFM's (Bonded Fiber Matrix.) The unit also incorporates a jet mixing action that eliminates the dead spot many mechanically agitated units have.

For more information contact Turbo Technologies Inc. at 800/822-3437 or [www.turboturf.com](http://www.turboturf.com) / circle no. 262



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**They say many  
hands make light work.**

**What they don't say is  
how much a bunch of  
hands goes for  
these days.**

Sprayable PREEMERGENT BROADLEAF Herbicide

Fact is, hand-weeding can strangle your profits in no time. Maybe that's why so many nursery operators are opting for the proven, long-lasting weed control of Gallery\* specialty herbicide. Gallery effectively controls 95 species of broadleaf weeds – including chickweed, spurge and oxalis – for up to eight months. And Gallery can be used on 440 field-grown and 230 container-grown ornamentals. Gallery can also be applied in an over-the-top application on more than 400 ornamentals. This year, take a hands-off approach to weed control with Gallery.

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**Saves on Labor Costs.**

Dow AgroSciences  
**Gallery\***  
Specialty Herbicide

# LM Reports

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## Reinco

Reinco power mulchers are designed to stand up to the rigorous requirements of the professional contractor. Models range from the TM-Jr, rated for two tons of hay or straw mulch per hour, with direct discharge up to 35 feet, with hose kits available for remote applications, to the M-90 — the biggest and most productive trailer mounted unit, rated at 20 tons per hour of hay or straw mulch at up to 100 foot effective discharge placement range. One operator controls the range and the feed rate. The hydraulic feed system segments the bales into the patented beater chamber to thrash and separate the mulch for uniform discharge.

For more information contact Reinco at 800/526-7687 or [www.reinco.com](http://www.reinco.com) / circle no. 263



## Rayco Manufacturing ▲

Rayco's RC 12 brush chipper delivers power and performance. The 86-hp Cat diesel engine and Rayco's PULSE downpressure system ensure top-notch performance on any type of material. Features like a self-adjusting hydraulic clutch, planetary feed wheel motor, few grease points and a large service door over the engine, ensure that maintenance costs and downtime are kept to a minimum. At more than 6,000 lbs., this heavy-duty, drum style chipper is built to withstand harsh jobsite conditions over years of service.

For more information contact Rayco Manufacturing at 800/392-2686 or [www.raycomfg.com](http://www.raycomfg.com) / circle no. 264

## Bowie Industries

Bowie Industries' hydro-mulchers were the first machines designed specifically to handle seed slurries containing a mulch material. The shredder bar breaks mulch bales into small pieces for quick loading, and the superior mechanical agitation keeps the mulch slurry in suspension. The straight through plumbing design prevents pump clogging and the extra horsepower allows for greater discharge distance. Bowie Industries also manufactures four sizes of strawblowers from 25 hp to 125 hp and two models of straw crimpers.

For more information contact Bowie Industries at 800/433-0934 or [www.bowindustries.com](http://www.bowindustries.com) / circle no. 265

## Unifork

Lightweight and carefully designed, the Unifork is the easy way to transfer mulch and landscape bedding material, more efficient than a pitchfork and easier to handle than a





shovel. The Uni-fork's unique shape means that it scoops under the material you wish to pick up without digging into the soil below and making the task harder. The tapered and profiled tines guide the material into the high back of the Unifork allowing quite large loads to be moved without it falling off.

For more information contact Union Jack Stable & Garden at 800/672-8119 or [www.unionjackstable.com](http://www.unionjackstable.com) / circle no. 266

### TGMI Inc. ▶

TGMI's Tailgate Mulcher is the fastest compact straw blower on the market. Capable of handling straw and hay, wet or dry, two to three bales per minute, belt drive, skid or trailer mounted, 18- or 20-hp engine. The Aqua Mulcher comes in 500-, 800- and

1200-gallon sizes. Paddle agitation, positive displacement gear pump, 100 feet of hose and spraying tower are included. Unit will pump thick slurries through as much as 300 feet of hose.

For more information, contact TGMI at 800/241-8464 or [www.mulchers.com](http://www.mulchers.com) / circle no. 267



### Bobcat

For optimal performance when grinding through branches, trees and limbs, customers can turn to the new 8B high-flow chipper attachment from Bobcat. The Bobcat 8B high-flow chipper attachment reduces branch volume 10-to-1, thus limiting trips to the dumpsite and improving wood decomposition. The high-flow chipper also has several new features, including a variable gpm setting, a reset override system and a smart valve and pressure valve to maximize chipper performance. The attachment is approved for use on Bobcat machines with high-flow hydraulic systems.

For more information contact Bobcat at 866/ 823-7898 or [www.bobcat.com](http://www.bobcat.com) / circle no. 268

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Harmony In Growth



# Zeros remain industry's workhorse

While the basic concept of the zero-turn mower hasn't changed much in decades, do yourself a favor, and check out differences among brands before writing that check.

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

**P**rofessional landscape maintainers have their choice of zero-turn radius mowers in just about every color of the rainbow, including a few colors that beg description. At last count, they can choose from more than 30 different brands offering well over 100 models. Not all brands are available everywhere, of course. Some manufacturers' products are strong in one region of the country, and others, in another. This is due to many factors, including differing terrains, grasses and cutting conditions, but mostly, the availability of local servicing dealers.

Is color the only difference among competing brands? Absolutely not. Each manufacturer boasts unique features in its units. These features can offer substantial benefits in terms of increased productivity, durability, and/or ease of

use/operator comfort depending upon a contractor's particular operations and the properties under his/her care. Other important considerations include serviceability (on-the-job and in-the-shop), parts availability and, in recent years, fuel consumption. In other words, while the majority of zero turns have much in common in terms of basic design and function, differences among competing brands are substantial enough to warrant a fair amount of investigation before making a purchase.

#### Take a test drive

Since commercial-quality equipment doesn't come cheap (In this case, you do get what you pay for), it's always a good idea to demo units or, better yet, allow your operators to demo them before writing that check. (See sidebar.) Beyond the large number of brands, property maintenance contractors are faced with many considerations when se-

lecting the best mowers for their operations, three of the more important being the size of mower (cutting width, engine selection, horsepower), style (front-mount, mid-mount, stand-on, articulating) and, in recent years, fuel source (gasoline, diesel, propane).

#### Zero growth

The proliferation of zero-mower choices within the past decade is testament to their popularity, not only with professionals but with homeowners, too. In 2000, shipments of mid-mount zeros totaled just over 60,000 units. By 2005 shipments had jumped to more than 150,000 units.

Much of this demand is coming from homeowners discovering the advantages of mowing with zero-turn units. They're purchasing zeros from "big box" stores and from traditional servicing dealers. Manufacturers are responding to and stoking this demand with effective marketing (often enlisting popular sports figures or celebrities as pitchmen), and with smaller, less expensive versions of their professional models. What they're selling to homeowners, in addition to saving time and ease of use, is mowing fun, judging by the smiles on the faces of the models (some-

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times attractive females) photographed atop these shiny, colorful units mowing green, weed-free turfgrass.

**Still a favorite**

While mid-mount sales have leveled the past several years, the zero-turn category, as a whole, remains the category of choice for most commercial mowing projects as it has been for the past generation. That's not to infer that zero turns are the do-all and be-all of professional mowing; they're not.

In spite of the industry's love affair with their ability maneuver around trees, beds and turn on a dime, increasing productivity considerably, contractors continue to need and buy other style professional-quality mowers, including a

variety of trim and walk-behind power mowers.

Advances in zero-turn mower technology have progressed a step at a time since John Reiger is reported to have built the first so-called zero turn in the spring of 1963 in his shop in Mount Ridge, KS. That unit, named the "Workhorse," had a 36-in. cutting deck. According to information on the Hustler Web site ([www.hustlerturfequipment.com](http://www.hustlerturfequipment.com)), Reiger produced 24 units, which he renamed "Hustler," borrowing the name of a B-58 fighter-bomber.

Eventually Reiger's machines attracted the attention of the partners of Excel Industries in nearby Hesston, KS, which began producing a 12-hp, 65-in. cut version of the Hustler, according to the Web

site. The introduction of hydrostatic drive in 1969 – this time the innovation of Ray Rilling, another persistent tinkerer – was another big step in the evolution of zero turns. From that day, manufacturers have been entering the market with their own variations, adding patented improvements, of that basic concept.

Today's zeros don't much resemble those first production models of 40 years ago, but by greatly increasing the efficiency on contract mowing, their impact on the professional landscape maintenance industry is almost incalculable. It makes you wonder who will come up with the next new equipment breakthrough that will have a similar impact on landscape maintenance. **LM**

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## zero turn radius buying tips

1. Is it really a zero? Can it turn in its own length?
2. Will it hold enough fuel to satisfy your production needs?
3. Is the deck height adjustable in fine increments?
4. Are the controls operator-friendly?
5. How about seat comfort and adjustments?
6. Blade tip speed is a good indicator of "oomph"
7. Will the deck design allow you to mow in different grass conditions?
8. Gas, diesel or propane?
9. How about the unit's traction? Mowing sloped areas can be tricky, if not dangerous
10. Anti-scalp rollers are worth the added cost
11. Width is important. Compact zeros will pass through a 36-in. gate
12. How big is big enough for the properties you mow? Units over 70-in. mowers are tough to trailer
13. Can you get a full line of attachments?
14. What kind of service and parts support can you expect from your dealer?
15. Speed is cool, and we all like to go fast, but remember you can only mow as fast as conditions (safety, quality of cut) allow.

— RH

## Put 'em through their paces first

The best way to evaluate power equipment of any sort, and especially a pricey item like a commercial zero turn radius riding mower that can cost \$10,000 or more, is to try it out — a demo in real-life conditions.

Some dealers host field days where you can operate their models, others bring units to local or regional educational events but almost all dealers will let you test out their units either at their facility or on your properties. Just ask. But since dealers generally offer a limited selection of brands, it's difficult to compare one manufacturer's product against another.

Mark Oct. 25-27 on your calendar and plan on being in Louisville, KY, those days for the Green Industry & Equipment Expo. You can operate dozens of different brands and models on the 20-acre outdoor demonstration area immediately adjacent to the indoor trade show at the

mammoth Kentucky Exposition Center. The Expo will run concurrently with educational conferences hosted by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and the Professional Grounds Management Society. For more information about the Green Industry & Equipment Expo visit the Web site: [www.gie-expo.com](http://www.gie-expo.com). — RH







# Lawn Envy!?

If your lawn isn't the envy of the neighborhood, then you don't own a....

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**27** HORSEPOWER

**60** INCH CUT WIDTH

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# THE OUTDOOR KITCHEN AND *beyond*

Why limit your client's plan to just an outdoor barbeque when today's materials allow you to offer so much more

BY RAY RODENBURGH

Are you leaving opportunities on the table? Many contractors are seeing opportunities for increased business and profits in constructing outdoor landscape features and structures that only a few years ago were not even considered an opportunity. The landscape industry is constantly growing new opportunities and some of us are missing them.

Looking back 30 years, it was rare that a landscape contractor would even construct or install a driveway. When the paving stone was introduced to North

America, it opened up a whole new area of business for landscapers. Soon they were installing driveways and, with the help of pressure treated lumber, constructing steps and elaborate front entrances.

Several years later, concrete segmental retaining walls became a staple of the landscape business, allowing contractors to construct large walls, steps and planters.

Not long after that, gazebos and arbors were added to their repertoire.

Today, there is yet another addition to this growing list of services and skills which you can capitalize on. The "outdoor kitchen" is a trend that is getting hotter and hotter. Built-in grills, bar fridges, sinks and marble countertops can

be economically constructed using a variety of modular concrete blocks manufactured for that purpose. Some systems are much easier to use than others.

If the idea of installing a grill seems daunting, it's time you took a closer look. Almost all of the popular grill manufacturers have installation specs on their Web sites. Your task is almost like constructing a large planter with an opening on one side and the top allowing the grill to be easily set into the structure. (Always use a qualified technician for final gas or propane hook-ups and observe local construction and safety codes.)

One thing you should always consider when designing and building these struc-