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**CLIP Trak** - Instantly know where your trucks are, then have this data automatically download into **CLIP** via GPS.



**Router** - go paperless and send your crews out with Palms that have the day's work on them.



**Bill on website** - your customers can view their bills on the web.

**Bar Code Scanner** - print bar coded sheets for the crews and scan as they get to each property.

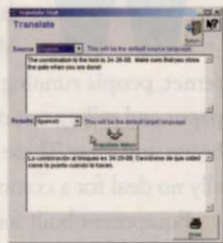
## Software Links:

**Links with MapPoint** - automatically route all your customers on the map.

**Links with Microsoft Word and Excel** - Make estimates and letters inside the customer's file.

**Link with Scanner** - Save the signed contract right inside the customer file.

**Language Translation** - Route Sheets notes print in Spanish and Portuguese.



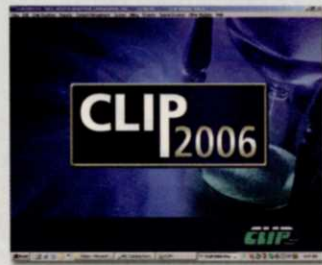
**Links with Microsoft Outlook** - Send email to customers from within the **CLIP** program.

**Links with QuickBooks Pro** - Send all billing data directly to QuickBooks.



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Step 1

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Step 2

Re-load by turning knob on head.



Step 3

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## Get a Grip

TECHNOLOGY SMART SHOPPING

Buying equipment from big box stores, newspaper want ads or eBay is **NOT** a good idea



## Find a good dealer

BY ALLEN SPENCE

**W**e have all seen the great deals on outdoor power equipment at discount hardware centers, Web sites on the Internet, people running ads in the local paper and selling out of a storage warehouse and eBay. These purchases are usually no deal for a commercial operator.

Equipment built for homeowner use doesn't last as long as those created for professionals. Commercial handheld equipment manufactures say pros expect at least 1,000 hours of reliable use from tools. Try that with a \$69 discount special.

Landscapers depend on durable equipment, competent salespeople and qualified technicians to be successful. Commercial equipment dealers need the same. Consider these points when choosing a dealer:

► **Is it a known brand?** Some well known manufactures are regional in their specific offerings. So, just because you haven't heard of it doesn't mean it isn't good stuff. Do a little research when you have doubts about a brand name.

► **Can I get parts for it?** Make sure you aren't getting something that is out of date or will be hard to purchase repair parts for in a short period of time.

► **What is the shop's turn around time?**

Before you buy, ask the technicians. While you are asking, ask for repair references.

► **Do the technicians attend update schools on a regular basis?** Most dealers send their technicians; some don't. As new EPA friendly equipment comes to the market place, there will be a need for training. Make sure your dealer is up to snuff.

► **How clean is the place?** This means a lot to me. The cleaner he keeps his workspace, the better he will care for my equipment.

► **Does the dealer have a significant inventory of repair parts?** The more parts on hand, the less down time on equipment.

► **How accessible are the shop personnel?** When I need telephone assistance? Sometimes a phone call is all that is needed.

► **Will the dealer start the equipment and go over the procedure with you?** You know it will run when you leave, plus you have had a chance to ask any questions you may have. You might get a free tank of fuel also. A dollar is a dollar, right?

The dealer/consumer relationship is important. Treat it that way.

— The author is turf equipment management instructor at Hinds

Community College in Raymond, MS. Contact him at [haspence@hindsc.edu](mailto:haspence@hindsc.edu).



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► A skid steer with a grapple attachment carries away a downed tree.



# Steer clear of trouble

It's not easy being clean – on the job site that is. Landscapers are often given tight spaces and time frames in which to get their work done.

Whether it's selective thinning and beautification for a private landowner, trail development and maintenance for park projects, or clear-cutting for a commercial endeavor, skid steers can help finish a project quickly, efficiently and with minimal surface disruption.

Trees Unlimited in suburban Chicago, for example, employs a number of skid steers and attachments to achieve a common land clearing goal.

## Skid steer attachments boost productivity and minimize site damage

Owner Curt Pfaffinger purchased a Bull Hog mulching head, a shear and a grapple, which gave his company the opportunity to do more work for park and conservation districts. Those particular customers were looking for selective thinning, so the highly maneuverable skid steers were a perfect fit.

"They want to make trails

without taking much down. Everyone wants to save a tree," says Pfaffinger. "With the Bull Hog we can do that work. We get around the big oak tree but we don't destroy anything that you don't want to."

The low ground pressure imparted by skid steers was another big selling point for the municipal work. Trees Unlimited uses a rubber-tracked Cat

287 and a John Deere 280.

"There is no compaction," Pfaffinger says. "We don't hurt the root structure so the keeper trees continue to grow and develop."

The maneuverability of the skid steers enhances efficiency with commercial projects where all of the vegetation must be removed. Pfaffinger

*continued on page 66*



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*continued from page 64*

uses a skid steer with a Bull Hog mulcher head to clear away the undergrowth before bringing in skid steers with shears, grapples, saws and other equipment to clear away larger diameter materials.

"We'll go in with a Fecon head first and get rid of all of the minus 4-inch material. That gives us room to maneuver around without brambles and thorns grabbing at the operators," Pfaffinger says. "The Fecon head goes in the day beforehand, mows it all off and gives the other guys room to work."

Often landscapers use grapples, tree saws and bunching shears to fell larger diameter trees before hauling them to a chipping location.

"We've got a 2000 Vermeer with auto-feed, which we feed with a Bobcat," Pfaffinger says. "One guy just feeds the grinder and two guys bring the material to him. He doesn't have to waste time schlepping logs."

Sticking to their specialized roles has helped increase productivity, both individually and for the crews as a whole. But that's not to say that operators never switch attachments.

"We're using all implements on any given job. We flip flop all the time, because the time to change from one to another is minimal," Pfaffinger says.

Depending upon the terrain and site conditions, operators may start using the tree



▲ A grapple attachment helps turn trees into mulch.

saw to fell large diameter trees and then switch to the bunching shear for more control.

"Both will handle the same diameter materials – about 16 inches – but the shear gives us more control since we're still holding onto the tree after it has been sheared," Pfaffinger says.

That's important in tight working areas, especially residential or where there are other crew members working in the vicinity.

Pfaffinger brings more equipment than he plans on using, so, in case of a breakdown, the project can continue. If the project calls for removal of the mulched material, then Trees Unlimited blows the chips into one of the

company's fleet of chip trucks.

"We've got 6-wheelers with a box on the back, and a box inverted on top" Pfaffinger says, "so we can handle 20 yards of chips at a time."

Someone takes the chips to the company's gravel pit and runs them through a tub grinder to produce mulch, which is then sold or used on internal projects. As the land clearing business expands, so does the mulch production. Pfaffinger produced 20,000 yards of mulch last year – up from 12,000 the previous year.

But not everything that his crews touch turns into "black gold." Sometimes they'll mulch the materials with a Bull Hog mulcher head, and then leave them onsite, which helps to control erosion. As the mulched materials decompose, they return nutri-

ents to the soil. Mulching and leaving the material on site is operationally easier and eliminates the hauling of chips and further processing at the gravel pit.

Whether they are removing the materials, or leaving them to Mother Nature, Pfaffinger wants his crews to get in, complete the project and move on to the next one. Or as he says — "Get in, get done and get on." His variety of attachments and capabilities allows Trees Unlimited to do just that. Pfaffinger estimates that they've completed projects as small as a single-tree removal to 12 to 15 acres.

"It is nothing for us to clear two or three acres a day," Pfaffinger says

That is a testament to the crews and the productivity of their attachments. **LM**



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# Project Portfolio

DESIGN/BUILD

HOME OFFICE / POOL / HOT TUB / PRIVACY / WOODED LOT

## The design

A riverside getaway with a pool house office for a retiring executive

## The site before construction

A small backyard along a river on a wooded lot

## Project Requirements

- Create a vacation area in the client's yard
- Include a pool and hot tub
- Must have wheelchair access to the home from the lower level
- Keep as many trees as possible, especially a treasured dogwood
- Maintain privacy from neighboring properties



**ABOVE** The completed arbor and curved steps welcome homeowners and guests. A large *cryptomeria* (Japanese cedar) backdrop and a fireplace provide privacy.

**RIGHT** A before view of the pool house/office as the pool and spa are being formed. Note the closeness of the adjacent home.

## Challenges and Limitations

- The backyard was constrained by river corridor setbacks, so the sideyard space had to be maximized
- Did not want the design to go past the front facade of the home
- At two feet above the 100-year flood plain, drainage was critical
- Wheelchair access and safety concerns near the pool
- An elaborate French drain system was needed for the client's integral dogwood tree
- The sideyard pool and office needed a large privacy barrier







**ABOVE** Upon completion, the elevation of the dogwood is visible. Situated 18 in. below grade due to a topographical map error, a series of French drains was installed to ensure the tree's viability.

**LEFT** The fireplace incorporates bluestone and brick detailing and an elevated 18-in. hearth for seating. The dining area on the terrace takes advantage of the warmth and charm of the fireplace.



**ABOVE** The water-fall spa and the gazebo are easily accessible from the office. A Lebanon cedar silhouettes the existing house, while a Japanese maple adds color.

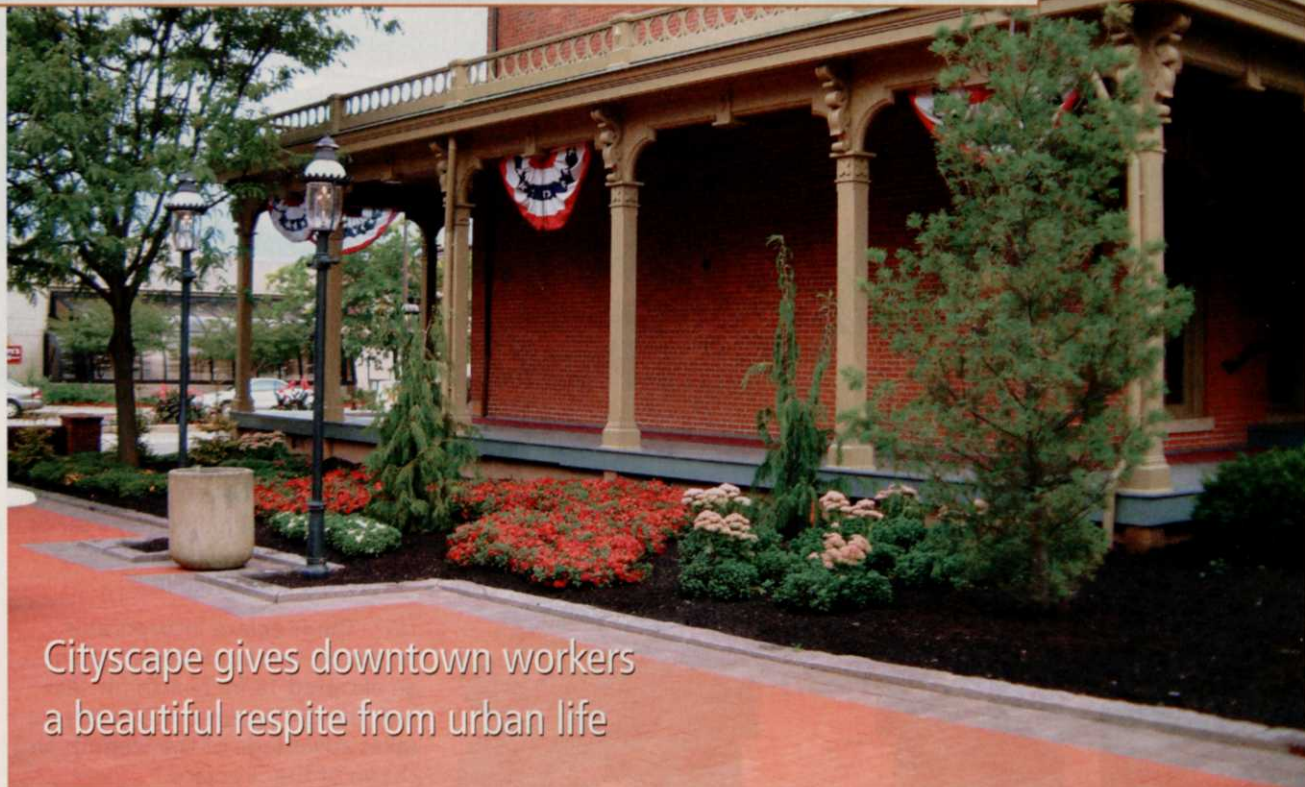


### Project Principals

- Scapes, LLC, Atlanta, GA
- Pete Wilkerson, vice president of DesignBuild and landscape architect
- Jim Lesti, landscape architect
- Neptune Pools, Sugar Hill, GA, constructed the pool

This project was a Grand Award winner in PLANET's Environmental Improvement Awards program. For more information on this program, or other services of the Professional Landcare Network, please call 800/395-2522 or visit [www.landcarenetwork.org](http://www.landcarenetwork.org).

## First Ladies National Historic Site



PHOTOS COURTESY: TODD'S ENVIROSCAPES INC

Cityscape gives downtown workers a beautiful respite from urban life

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

Some of the most honored individuals our country has ever known are recognized in Canton, OH. No, not football players at Canton's NFL Hall of Fame. We're referring to First Ladies.

The First Ladies National Historic Site honors the better halves of the 43 men who have held our country's highest office. And a visit in 1993 by the current occupant of the White House gave Todd's Enviroscapes Inc., in nearby Louisville,

OH, just three weeks to overhaul the site's 12,000-sq.-ft. garden courtyard before Laura Bush arrived.

"We laid 40,000 brick in one week working double shifts," says Terry Pesek, a landscape designer with Enviroscapes. "They had an existing garden courtyard there that they wanted to renovate. We needed to do both paver work (hardscape) and plantings, the greenscape. We had to make it look like a lovely park. It's very beautiful."

An architect designed the overall look for the \$200,000 project, but the details were left to Enviroscapes.

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The Saxton home, built in 1841, is part of the National Parks Service. (Bottom) Workers had to be extra careful because of the pedestrian traffic in an urban environment