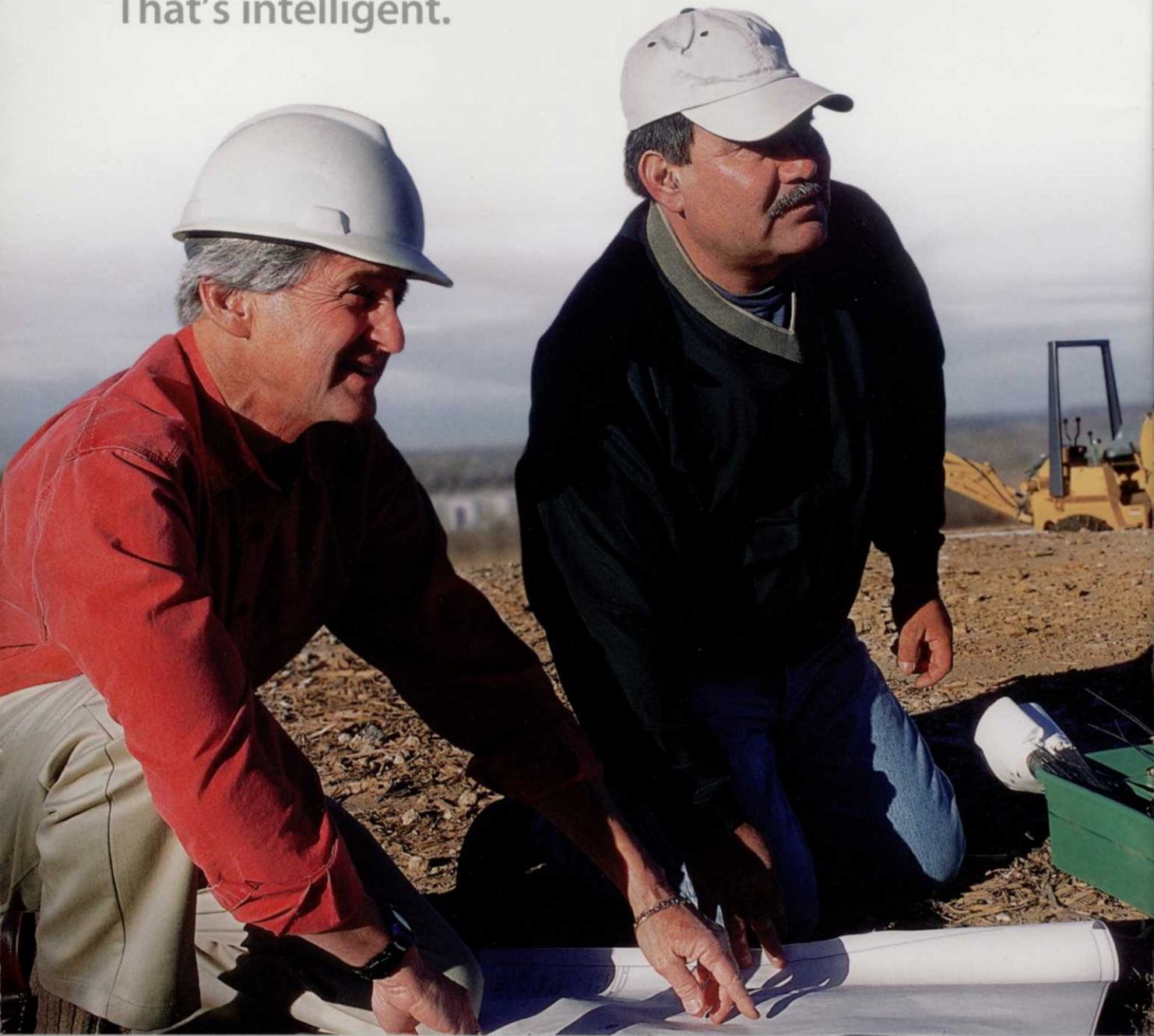


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**Based on U.S. Rain Bird® list pricing effective March 23, 2009, and Hunter® list pricing effective January 1, 2009.

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10 cost-effective, sustainable, low-impact and attractive tips from a landscaping professional.

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While nothing can replace building one-on-one relationships with customers, social networking sites can supplement that direct contact.

Get Growing

The right pond plants help maintain a well-balanced eco-system, which will keep the water clean and clear.

Clarification: The revenue listed for OneSource Landscape & Golf Service in the LM State of Industry Top 150 was a year old. The current figure is \$60 million.

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Differing visions of sustainability

If you've ever witnessed a hog being slaughtered on a family farm, as I did many years ago as a youth, you get some idea what bloody business sustainability can be. Or at least how it was on the rocky Appalachian homestead where my mother grew up with five brothers and sisters and where my grandparents lived until their deaths in the 1970s.

Witnessing my grandpa Silas and my uncle Ray dispatch and dissect that squealing hog more than 50 years ago colors my perception of the word sustainability. That, and the times — wide-eyed, fascinated and repulsed — that I watched my grandma ring the neck of a chicken, pluck it over a cauldron of boiling water and sacrifice it to the frying pan.

My grandparents lived, for the most part, "off the grid" and in a manner that practically none of us would wish for ourselves. But looking back on it, I suppose you could describe their lifestyle as green, organic or natural; take your pick.

Today, I marvel at the chasm separating my grandparent's existence with the consumerist, resource-churning life-style we now take for granted and, to the point of this column, how we too often run our businesses.

Sustainability to them meant using everything

they had as efficiently as they could. Everything. They wasted virtually nothing.

So, what does this have to do with the landscape/lawn service industry?

Whenever I grapple with the term sustainable, especially as it's applied to the landscapes we design, install and maintain, I keep coming back to the question of waste — wasted effort, wasted time and materials and especially wasted resources such as water and energy.

To survive as a company or an industry, that can't continue. We're facing a future of rising resource costs and escalating concern over environmental issues. While we can't see the degree to which these trends will play out, let's begin now to ensure the future of our companies and our industry by adopting strategies to more efficiently deliver services, protect and enhance beneficial ecosystems, and, most especially, to conserve resources such as water and energy.

Let's consider yet another meaning for the word sustainability as in generating sufficient revenue from year to year to enable us to continue to providing the attractive and resource-conserving landscapes that provide so many benefits to our customers and our society, in general.

Customers recognize that their landscapes are sustainable only because of us. They remain healthy, attractive and provide the property-enhancing and life-enriching benefits they appreciate only through our expertise, and the intelligent use of our time, materials, water and energy.

I'm convinced that we can and will adapt to whatever new economic and environmental challenges arise, and that we will create a more prosperous and environmentally focused future for our industry.

Certainly, our goal is to build a models of sustainability very unlike the depression-era existence that my grandparents experienced well into the 1950s. Even the most committed proponents of sustainability wouldn't want that.

Urban landscapes are sustainable only because of us. They remain **healthy, attractive** and **life-enriching** only through our expertise and the intelligent use of our time, materials, water and energy.

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GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS, TRENDS AND TIPS

CLIPPINGS

Digging myself a deeper hole

FROM THE FIELD



BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

If you didn't know any better (or didn't look that closely), you might think the photo above shows a contractor working hard on a job, diligently preparing a site for a project.

Take another look.

Yup, that's me doing a passable imitation of an excavator operator. I'm sitting on Bobcat's 418 excavator. The Bobcat folks invited

journalists up to a site near their manufacturing plant in Bismarck, ND, to learn about the company's new M-Series loaders and excavators. The M-Series skid-steer and compact track loaders feature the most significant design changes ever undertaken, according to the company. Changes include:

- ▶ A hydraulic system that provides more power to attachments and makes changes easier;
- ▶ Larger fuel capacity;
- ▶ Holes for frame-mounted counterweights that increase lifting performance and tractive effort by 15% to 20% to provide better pushing and digging power; and
- ▶ Increased lighting, improved visibility and additional cab comfort.

With the M-Series, Bobcat reengineered its compact excavators and introduced a couple new products, the E32 (conventional tail swing) and E35 (zero tail swing), which fit into the 3- to 4-ton weight class. The E80 is categorized in the 6- to 8-ton weight class.

The machines, which offer an auto-idle feature to save fuel and reduce sound, feature a new engine, air intake, pump and valve system, and cooling and exhaust systems.

For more about the company's new offerings, visit Bobcat.com.

PBI/Gordon develops marketing relationship

KANSAS CITY, MO — PBI/Gordon Corp. finalized agreement with Mitsui Chemicals Agro, Tokyo, Japan, giving PBI/Gordon marketing rights to dinotefuran in the U.S. professional turf and ornamental markets. PBI/Gordon also received EPA approval for T-Zone broadleaf herbicide, which contains triclopyr, sulfentrazone and phenoxies.

JCB earns stripes with the U.S. Military

SAVANNAH, GA — JCB continues supplying the U.S. Air Force with essential Wheel Loaders. The ongoing relationship resulted in 92 JCB Wheel Loaders in the 100hp and 165hp range shipped to date in 2009, and more than 250 units contracted during the past five years. Used for base maintenance and to clear runways for B-52s in the U.S., the 416HT (100hp) and the 426HT (165hp) will serve various applications overseas.

Contractors have new tool to combat pests

WILMINGTON, DE — DuPont Advion insect granule has been registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and state approvals are in progress. Pest control and lawn care professionals now have a granular formulation that controls household and commercial pests across a wide range of applications. Advion insect granule is a nonrepellent bait that's highly attractive to a broad spectrum of insects including ants, cockroaches, silverfish, house and field crickets, and earwigs.

WORD ON THE STREET

“Are customers delaying payment? What are you doing about it? Is it causing payment delays for materials, equipment and services received?”



“As the economy in Southwest Florida worsened, we experienced an increase in bad debts in our construction division. Our maintenance division has a dedicated client base — established communities have managed to make payments on time; however, upstart communities have struggled to make payments. Working with these communities to reduce costs by streamlining services has kept our receivables stable. The established relationship we have with our bank has allowed us to pay our vendors on time and make any necessary purchases.” — **Joe Gonzalez**, president/owner of Venice, FL-based ArtisTree Landscape Maintenance & Design



“Good question. In 2008, we saw our accounts receivable increase 2 to 2.5%. To combat this, we're being more vigilant monitoring accounts 30 days or more past due. Our employees are using predictive dialers to touch base with late pays, and we're sending letters to some customers who are more than 60 days late notifying them that their accounts will be turned over to collections within 10 days. These measures and others have helped us keep accounts receivables in check and keep paying our accounts payables in a timely manner.” — **Jennifer Lemcke**, chief operating officer, Weed Man USA based Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

ValleyCrest throws a party for its 60th anniversary

Calabasas, CA — More than 700 guests attended a garden party to celebrate the 60th anniversary of ValleyCrest Landscape Companies on June 25.

ValleyCrest Landscape Companies' Burton S. Sperber, founder, CEO and chairman, and Richard A. Sperber, president and CEO, hosted the afternoon event at the company's corporate campus.

Included among the attendees were customers, company employees, business partners, community members, friends and dignitaries such as the mayor of Malibu, city of Calabasas council members, and representatives from California Senators Alex Padilla, and Fran Pavley, Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, and Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Zev Yaroslavsky and Michael D. Antonovich.

The company, which has annual revenues of \$1 billion, has more than 11,000 employees and more than 100 locations nationwide. ValleyCrest operates six business units and one subsidiary that deliver a full array of landscape services.



Angel F. Barnuevo, Jr. (center), field deputy for California State Senator Alex Padilla, delivers a procolomation honoring ValleyCrest's Richard (left) and Burton Sperber.

BELIEVE IT

OR NOT ...

Customer bites back

In April, a man filed a lawsuit against Chicagoland's Lurvey Supply & Garden Center, claiming he was attacked by a snake that emerged from fieldstones sold by the landscaping company. The customer claims he was bitten by the snake, and as a result, suffered injuries to his head, body and limbs and was temporarily unable to work. He's seeking more than \$50,000 in damages. (Note: LM's Managing Editor, Dan Jacobs, took the accompanying photo while walking on a golf course. Jacobs wasn't attacked by a snake, but he was bitten by a poisonous swing.)



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



The Fockele Garden Co. named **Wade Harmening** project manager in Huntsville, AL. Harmening, who has 22 years of experience in landscape, maintenance and nursery operations in the Huntsville area, will oversee all company projects in Huntsville. He's certified in landscaping and the setting of landscape plants by the state of Alabama.



Dow AgroSciences announces changes to its Turf & Ornamental business division. **Ryan Messner** is black belt in the Strategy Acceleration



& Productivity group, and **Maureen Clark**, sales representative, replaced Messner.

Girard Environmental Services, a full-service landscaping company based in Seminole County, FL, has promoted **Tim Dyer** to branch manager of its Tampa location, **Mike Furber** to branch manager of its Melbourne location and **Bobby Shaw** to branch manager of its Sanford operations.



DuPont Professional Products added **Adam Neate**, Turf & Ornamental sales representative, to its sales force. Neate will focus on West Virginia, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North and South Dakota

Lebanon Seaboard named **Ken Bevilard** director of business development for its consumer products division. Bevilard, who has more than 25 years experience in the consumer lawn and garden industry, previously was vice president-North America for Hydro Industries. The company also named **Tom Lokitus** product manager in the consumer products division.



Netafim Ltd., a worldwide manufacturer of drip irrigation systems, promoted **John Vikupitz** to president and CEO of **Netafim USA**. Vikupitz succeeds **Igal Aisenberg**, who accepted the position of president and co-CEO of Netafim Ltd.

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

DEEP ROOTS

In business 130 years and counting, employee-owned **Davey Tree** serves as a case study on surviving and thriving in any economy.

EMPLOYEES OF The Davey Tree Expert Co. always have direct access to at least one of the company's owners. One can simply walk over to the nearest mirror and look the reflection squarely in the eye.

Since 1979, any full-time Davey Tree employee with at least 90 days of service is eligible to purchase stock in the 130-year-old, \$600-million-a-year business. Davey Tree is one of the largest and oldest ESOPs (employee stock ownership plans) in the country.

Granted, a heart-to-heart with the person in the mirror won't resolve all issues, but employee ownership is one reason the company has survived a dozen recessions and the Great Depression — and expects to handle the current recession without too many troubles.

"We essentially have 6,000 employee-owners," says Karl Warnke, chairman, president and CEO of the Kent, OH-based company. "Our company has really blossomed in great part because of employee ownership. We pride ourselves on strong internal leadership and have grown without direction from outside investors or partners who have equity or management interests in the company. The ESOP business model has served us well."

It's that combination of strong management and employee ownership that has allowed the company to develop deep roots that serve as a strong foundation on which to grow and support healthy branches throughout the country.

"Just having employee ownership is not the answer," Warnke says. "It's what those employees commit to and accomplish."

Employee ownership helps motivate staff, but it's also essential Warnke and his co-workers make savvy business decisions at the top level and communicate them throughout the company. "That, as much as employee ownership, if not more, is what makes any company successful," he says.

Balanced offerings

One of those good decisions was to diversify the company's offerings. As the company's name implies,

