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Who says there are no sure things in construction? Hardscapes built and designed with VERSA-LOK are a cinch to go up quickly and easily. Our pinned in place design makes perfect installation and structural stability a sure thing. When you use VERSA-LOK, once it's built, it's built to last. And last. And last. To create retaining walls, freestanding walls, columns, steps and more with no need for special units, there's only one product to trust. Simple, reliable and beautiful. That's the VERSA-LOK promise.

To find out why contractors prefer VERSA-LOK, call **(800) 770-4525** or visit **www.versa-lok.com**.



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Mosaic Random Face Patterns



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Multi-Angle Corners

VERSA-LOK[®]
Retaining Wall Systems
Solid Solutions[™]

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AT A GLANCE

COMPANY: Competitive Lawn Service, Downers Grove, IL

FOUNDED: 1982

TITLE: Owner/president

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: One

MARKET AREA: Downers Grove, IL

EMPLOYEES: 45

SERVICES OFFERED: Lawn care, lawn maintenance, bed maintenance, landscaping/landscape renovation, spring/fall cleanups

WEBSITE: CompetitiveLawn.com

This past December, **Eric Hansen** drove to Livonia, MI, to receive the keys to a new, propane-fueled Ford F-350 from Jack Roush of Roush Performance. Over the past several years, Hansen has been converting his fleet of landscape maintenance equipment to propane power, which he believes offers better value for his energy dollars — while delivering more environmentally responsible service to his clients.

What made you decide to become a lawn service business owner?

"I started cutting lawns and shoveling snow for neighbors when I was 10 years old. When I was 14, I worked with the next-door neighbor and his brother to start Suburban Lawn Service. We cut 50 lawns per week. When they went to college in 1982, I bought a trailer and some new mowers and started Competitive Lawn Service. I was 16. It was the easiest way for a high school boy to make money. I hired three employees in the first few years, and it paid my way through college."

After nearly three decades as an owner, what's the most important lesson you've learned about running a lawn service business?

"You can always train skills; you can never train attitude. Hire for attitude. Throughout our 28 years in business, we have hired hundreds — maybe even 1,000 — employees. Our best employees might not have the most impressive resume, but where they

shine is on attitude. Our people define who we are, what we do, and how we do it. We want to be a great attitude company defined by our employees."

What would you have done differently in building your company? "I used to think no one could ever do a better job than me. I would sell myself, my work, my effort, my ultimate stamp of approval, and me at every job, estimate and task. Ten years ago, I realized what we need to sell is the company. We need to sell services that we could systematically supply to the client."

You offer services in basically one Chicago suburb, Downers Grove. Why work in such a small area, at least geographically? "What we work to achieve is market share in this location. This reduces our fuel expense and employee travel time.

When we maintain a property 32 times per season, the drive time associated with that contract must be accounted for. All of our routes are literally minutes between jobs, and with GPS tracking and routing, we create efficiencies and cost savings to pass on to our clients. Expansion within our service area will be based on increased market share."

Why does your company use propane to fuel equipment and service vehicles?

"We experimented with propane for two years and studied the costs/benefits first. We started running lawn equipment on propane about two years ago. We initially wanted to see whether it was possible to run from early spring until late fall and what the costs were associated with it. We found there was less maintenance, reduced oil changes, and significantly

less fuel cost — especially when gasoline was \$4.50 a gallon. With 60% less emissions, we also were reducing our total annual output of carbon dioxide.

"We currently use about 35,000 gallons per year of unleaded gasoline and diesel. In 2009, we were able to use 1,500 gallons of that as propane. For 2010, our goal is to use between 5,000 and 10,000 gallons of propane and cut our usage of unleaded and diesel fuel to about 25,000 to 30,000 gallons. The heavy initial cost should pay for itself over the next few years."

WE NEED TO **SELL SERVICES** THAT WE COULD **SYSTEMATICALLY SUPPLY** TO THE CLIENT."



You've got enough things to worry about. But the proven performance of **Pendulum® AquaCap™ herbicide** means weeds aren't one of them. Its water-based formulation gives you long-lasting, broad-spectrum preemergent grass and broadleaf weed control, with reduced staining and odor, plus easier clean-up. So don't worry about weeds popping up. Use **Pendulum AquaCap**.

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WEEDWATCH

STANDING SENTINEL TO PROTECT PLANT HEALTH



Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
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Gallery® specialty
herbicide

WHITE CLOVER

Trifolium repens

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

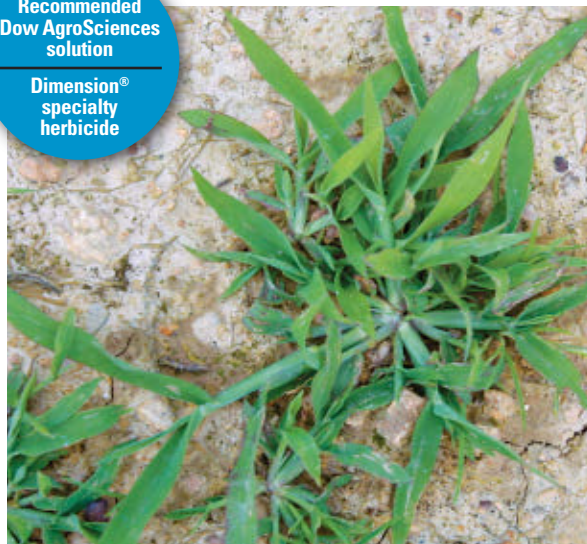
- › Low growing, creeping winter perennial with stems that root at nodes.
- › Elliptical leaves in groups of three that usually have a light-green or white band like a watermark, plus some toothing on edges.
- › White to pink-tinged flower clusters grow from long stems that usually rise above the leaves.
- › Active growth from seeds or plants begins with cooler temperatures and increased moisture.

CONTROL TIPS

- › Apply a herbicide in late winter or early fall — before the white clover seeds germinate.
- › Clean up any clover that may have survived the winter frosts with a spring application of a two-, three- or four-way post-emergent herbicide product that contains an active ingredient such as fluroxypyr, triclopyr or clopyralid.

Recommended
Dow AgroSciences
solution

Dimension®
specialty
herbicide



LARGE CRABGRASS

Digitaria sanguinalis

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- › Crabgrass is a bunch-type grass, light green in color, with seedhead spikelets in two to nine finger-like branches along the stalk.
- › Summer annual germinates when soil temperatures reach a consistent 55° F.
- › Tall, membranous ligule has jagged edges and no auricles.
- › Leaves are rolled in the bud, and the collar is broad with long hairs.
- › It grows under close mowing and prefers open areas with thin turfgrass.

CONTROL TIPS

- › When soil temperatures reach 55° F in the spring, apply a pre-emergent grass herbicide.
- › Choose the formulation that works best for your operation. There are several liquid, granular and fertilizer granule options.
- › Consult the appropriate product label for recommended rates for your area, reseeding and overseeding recommendations.

For more information regarding these and other turf weeds, and related control technologies and tips, please visit www.DowProvestt.com or call 800/255-3726.

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Specialty Herbicide

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It takes courage to admit there's a problem.

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“In **this** neighborhood,
PERFECTION
is the only acceptable
RESULT.

That’s why I use
4-Speed™ XT.”

Eric Larson, Green Systems Turf Management
Site: Astor’s Mansion
Newport, Rhode Island

With contracts for many of the world’s most famous mansions, Eric Larson faces customer expectations that are as high as the real estate prices. So when ground ivy, clover and other tough weeds started showing up, he turned to 4-Speed XT. Its combination of four active ingredients makes weeds ‘Deader. Faster.’ For more on 4-Speed herbicide brands, and more of Eric Larson’s story, go to www.nufarm.com/us.

Better Choices. Better Business.

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LM REPORTS

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

LAWN CARE: FERTILIZERS



Scotts Professional

New Osmocote with Fusion Technology securely binds the fertilizer to growing media for a “no-spill prill.” After the fertilizer is surface applied and watered in, an innovative polymer compound forms a web-like adhesive matrix that does not interfere with the release of nutrients to the plant. This matrix bonds the fertilizer prills to each other, and to the surface of the growing media. Re-wetting the growing media through subsequent irrigation maintains the Fusion activity, ensuring the fertilizer will stay in place for an extended period of time. *Scotts.com*

Agrium Advanced Technologies

Spread it & Forget it, driven by Duration CR, is a new controlled-release fertilizer that feeds lawns and professional turf for six months or more with just one application — saving turf professionals time and money. According to the manufacturer, a single application of Spread it & Forget it delivers green, healthy turf for an entire growing season. *SpreadItAndForgetIt.com*



IRRIGATION: CONTROLLERS

Rain Bird

After installation and programming, the new WR2 Wireless Rain and Rain/Freeze Sensors automatically sense and measure both rain and cold temperatures to prevent unnecessary irrigation, saving water and reducing wear on irrigation system components. The WR2 interrupts an irrigation controller's pre-scheduled cycle if one of six programmable rainfall set points (ranging from 1/8 to 1/2 in.) or one of three temperature set points (41°, 37° or 33° F) is satisfied. It also features a Quick Shut-Off feature that suspends irrigation immediately during any rain event without requiring significant rainfall accumulation. *RainBird.com*

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Airigation Solutions

The AIR-igator is a complete collection, storage, and distribution system, consisting of reservoir, pump and controller. It collects condensate from central air conditioners, and stores it until there is an adequate amount to run a drip irrigation cycle. The hotter it gets, the faster water is collected. The collected water is then distributed through standard low-flow tubing and drip emitters. A float inside the reservoir will start the pump, and shut it off when the tank is empty. Dealer opportunities are available. *Airigator.com*

BETTER RESULTS



4-Speed™ XT Saves Contracts

APPLICATION RATE:

1.3 oz/1,000 sf of 4-Speed XT plus spreader-sticker (1 oz/gallon finished spray)

APPLICATION EQUIPMENT:

LT Rich Z-Sprayer, 1/3 gal spray tips

TIMING:

July 13, 2009

SUMMARY:

“This was not ideal herbicide application timing for ground ivy control, but we still had great results on it and all the other weeds on the 4-Speed XT label. As a result, we saved several contracts. We'll be using a lot more 4-Speed XT and other Nufarm products in the future.”

4-SPEED™ XT

Better Choices.
Better Business.



www.nufarm.com/us

Nufarm Turf & Ornamentals: 800-345-3330
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ET Water Systems

New Quickdraw software turns any mobile phone with Web access into an easy-to-use remote control for the newest generation of ETwater smart controllers. Quickdraw allows landscape managers to remotely access a series of key commands for real-time control of their ETwater irrigation system, including Water Now, Instant Suspend and Real-Time Connect. It not only eliminates the cost and hassle associated with a dedicated remote control; it lays the technical foundation for additional mobile communication capabilities in the future. *ETWater.com*



DIG Corp.

The new LEIT-2ET is an ambient light (solar) powered, wire-

less irrigation control system that adjusts daily irrigation programs according to site and real-time weather information provided locally by the system's wireless weather stations. The LEIT-2ET system is programmed to monitor, control and adjust irrigation schedules for each zone through the weather information received from the solar powered, wireless weather stations, along with programmed site information received from the LEIT RC2ET handset. *Digcorp.com*

Our QuickBooks integration is so smooth

Smooth. Real smooth. One click, and minutes later your entire customer list, employee list and item list is automatically synched with QuickBooks. Any change you make in QuickBooks or QXpress syncs in real-time.

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Scheduled jobs convert into QuickBooks invoices with only a couple clicks! Quick and easy. With no double-entry, you'll save time and prevent costly mistakes.

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"The moment I started using QXpress, all of my apprehensions disappeared. It looked just like QuickBooks and imported my QuickBooks data, so I had a full database from the very start. My staff and I were literally scheduling in QXpress right away. Within no time, our crews' mowing schedules were full and we were even scheduling landscape projects. It was the best transition I could have asked for!"



Discover why lawn & landscaping professionals have rated QXpress the easiest scheduling add-on to setup.

Contact QXpress for a FREE demo today!

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DESIGN BUILD:

TRACTORS AND ACCESSORIES



Bobcat

Bobcat will soon launch a semi-synchronized gear transmission (SST) option that will be available on the CT335, CT445, and CT450 models. This transmission will feature 12 forward gears and 12 reverse gears with shuttle shift capabilities for ease of use, which will complement the hydrostatic transmission (HST) models offered today. The SST transmission will provide optimal Power Take-Off (PTO) output and efficiencies for use in applications such as mowing, tilling, spraying and seeding — where a specific speed needs to be maintained. In addition, the company is offering front-mounted implements that attach directly to the tractor frame and can utilize the mid-PTO for power. *Bobcat.com/utility_machines/tractors*

continued on page 30

HELLO HUSTLER

GOODBYE REGRET

Seriously. Go ride any of our competitors' mowers and then visit your local Hustler dealer for a demonstration on a Hustler zero-turn mower. They sell themselves. And you end up with a beautiful lawn, minimal maintenance and no regrets.



AND CHECK OUT THE WORLD'S FIRST **ALL-ELECTRIC**
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ZEON

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NO FLUID, NO BELTS,
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NO MESS**



WWW.HUSTLERTURF.COM/ZEON

HUSTLER 



continued from page 28

Caterpillar

The D7E Track-Type Tractor uses an electric drive system that delivers 10% to 30% greater fuel economy, greater productivity and lower lifetime service costs, compared with conventionally designed crawler tractors of equal weight and horsepower. In addition, the engine runs in a narrow speed range (1,500-1,800 rpm) to further reduce fuel consumption and extend engine life. Interior sound level is a quiet 73 dB(A), and an integrated display screen provides a range of machine status information. The tilting cab allows wide-open access to major components. Cat.com/D7E



MAINTENANCE:

OUTFRONT MOWERS & ATTACHMENTS

Grasshopper

The new Model 725DT is a FrontMount commercial mower that combines the power of a 25-hp MaxTorque diesel engine with zero-turn radius maneuverability. The direct-port, fuel-injected engine is Tier 4-compliant and B5-ready. Front-mounted DuraMax decks in 52-, 61- or 72-in. widths let you trim while you mow under and around obstacles. 725DT offers airflow with even dispersal of clippings and easy conversion from side-discharge to optional mulching or PowerVac collection. GrasshopperMower.com



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KisCutter™ Sod Cutter

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LS-22™ Lawn Overseeder

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Danuser

The Danuser EP Heavy Duty Auger Series offers a lifetime warranty, covering output pull-out. Its design features fewer internal components completely sealed and running in oil. The compact, utility-style housing features hoses routed out the top, to allow users to dig deep, even in tight locations. It offers a 2-in. hex output shaft and a three-year warranty on the drive unit. Danuser.com

completely sealed and running in oil. The compact, utility-style housing features hoses routed out the top, to allow users to dig deep, even in tight locations. It offers a 2-in. hex output shaft and a three-year warranty on the drive unit. Danuser.com

Ariens Co.

The Gravely Pro-Master Rapid XZ out-front mower features a 30-hp, air-cooled engine, an ergonomic seat with adjustable suspension and lumbar support, and an exclusive Hydraulic Transfer System that automatically transfers weight for greater stability. It offers a front-mount, steel X-FACTOR cutting deck to speed trimming around obstacles.

Other features include 24-in. tires, a hydraulic lift to raise the deck for easy maintenance, and all-season attachments. Ariens.com

