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P R O V E N S O L U T I O N S

LM REPORTS

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

LAWN CARE: PLANT GROWTH REGULATORS



PBI Gordon

Mefluidide, the active ingredient in Embark 2-S, provides a wide variety of benefits depending on the timing and rate of the application. Ornamental shrubs, hedges, trees and ground-covers treated with Embark 2-S four to seven days after trimming or pruning stay within a few inches of their clipped height for up to 12 weeks. PBIGordon.com

Syngenta Professional Products

Applying Primo MAXX prior to the onset of stresses like heat, drought, disease and traffic can strengthen turf, and therefore allow it withstand the stresses of the season. The odorless PGR mixes clear as water, and enables rich color, lateral stems and root mass development. By inhibiting vertical growth, it results in a healthy, more durable blade. SyngentaProfessionalProducts.com



SePRO Corp.

New calibration trays are available free of charge to purchasers of Cutless (0.33G) Granular Landscape Growth Regulator, to quickly measure and adjust the amount of the product as dispersed by application equipment to match the desired application rate per 1,000 sq. ft. Cutless is spread evenly under the dripline of hedges, shrubs and ground covers for shoot growth suppression. SePRO.com

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EXPERIENCE THE PRO-TECH DIFFERENCE



Sno Pushers come in sizes to fit loaders, backhoes, skidsteers, and compact tractors.

Pro-Tech Sno Pushers are the most complete line of containment plows in the industry. Whether your snow removal application calls for a rubber edge, steel trip edge, pull back functionality or fold up wings for transport, nobody builds more than Pro-Tech.

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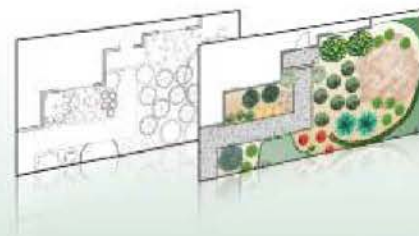
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Eric Larson, Green Systems Turf Management
Site: Astor’s Mansion
Newport, Rhode Island

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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www.nufarm.com/us

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IRRIGATION: GENERATORS

Briggs and Stratton

The PowerSmart Series inverter generator touts computer-controlled technology that continuously adjusts the engine speed so it produces only the power needed for the application in use. As a result, the 1600-watt (2,000 watts starting) unit uses less fuel and reduces exhaust emissions. Featuring a 1-gal. fuel tank, the unit runs as long as 6.5 hours at one-quarter load. BriggsAndStratton.com



Subaru Industrial Power Products

Powered by Hatz four-cycle, single-cylinder diesel engines, the RGD3300H and RGD5000H provide convenient yet durable operation. Both models include a full-power switch, voltmeter and 12-volt DC charging, as well as a spark arrestor that lessens noise and ignition risk. A large 4.4-gal. fuel tanks allow for hours of continuous operation. Subarupower.com



MAINTENANCE: ZERO-TURN MOWERS

Wright Commercial Products

The newly improved Stander incorporates a suspension platform to provide an even smoother ride, and a full-length thigh-to-knee pad to improve comfort and reduce fatigue. This latest 48-, 52- and 61-in. mid-mount Z also has cut-speeds up to 9.5 mph, while still maintaining the control and traction to tackle all terrain, including steep hills. WrightMfg.com



The Toro Co.

The 10 models in the Z Master G3 series have been designed with a lower center of gravity, greatly enhancing hillside stability and traction for better control and less "crabbing." The lower center of gravity results from a vertical shaft engine that sits lower in the chassis, a lower operator position and the 12-gal. fuel tank that is now located under the operator's seat. Toro.com

LESCO

The 2010 commercial mowing lineup includes two highly maneuverable, stand-on zero-turn mowers, which feature dual-lever direction and speed controls and a 1.5-in. to 4.5-in. height-of-cut adjustment. They allow for maneuverability and reduce turf compaction. Johndeere.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

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Nufarm Turf & Ornamentals: 800-345-3330
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The Grasshopper Co.

Clean-running MaxTorque diesel units are available with up to 30-hp engines; they meet and exceed Tier 4-I emissions requirements and are B5-ready. The fuel-injected diesel engines are fuel-efficient, saving up to 700 gal. of fuel over 1,000 hours of use (compared to gasoline units) — and offer powerful performance in tough mowing conditions. GrasshopperMower.com



John Deere

The seven models in the ZTrak Pro 900 lineup offer mulch-on-demand capabilities. The series includes a ground-drive transmission featuring a piston motor, internal wet disc brakes and a gear reduction final drive, providing more torque to the drive tires. Ergonomic control levers include built-in PTO shutoff and electronic deck raise and lower. Deere.com

Husqvarna

The new PZ Series features a standard Hydro drive system that uses 16-cc Hydro-Gear fan cooled pumps and Parker wheel motors to achieve ground speeds up to 12 mph. The combination of over-sized pumps, cooling fans and large 1.5-gal. reservoir reduce heat for extended service life and provide high torque and smooth operation. Husqvarna.com

Cub Cadet

Unlike traditional ZTRs that incorporate lap bars to control speed and direction of rear wheels, the Z Force S uses foot pedals and a steering wheel. When a rider makes a zero-turn, its Synchro Steer technology synchronizes all four wheels based on direction and speed to improve traction, stability and user control. Cubcadet.com



Gravely

The Gravely Pro-Turn 200 line of commercial zero-turn mowers has 20% fewer parts and 89% fewer leak points than previous Gravely 200 models. Offering 17 cutting positions in 0.25-in. increments, and maintenance-free XL spindles with durable cast iron housings, the mowers have an Ogura GT 3.5 electric clutch and foot-operated deck lift system. Gravely.com

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When using Cutless® Granular Landscape Growth Regulator, it's easy to be green and realize more profit generated from the most efficient use of your labor and resources.

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For more information about Cutless Granular Landscape Growth Regulator visit www.CutlessGranular.com or call 1-800-419-7779.

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SePRO Corporation Carmel, IN 46032

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LMREPORTS

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Ariens

The two re-designed Zoom mowers feature an updated deck designed for better air flow, which results in a quieter operation, enhanced quality of cut, improved side discharge with reduced blow back from discharged clippings, and increased belt and spindle life because of lower HP requirements. They offer seven cutting positions, six forward and three reverse speeds, and 2.5-gal. fuel capacity. *Ariens.com*



Hustler Turf Products

Zeon is billed as the world's first all-electric zero-turning-radius mower. With no belts, filters, fluids or engine noise, the compact unit offers up to 80 minutes of mowing time — enough to mow more than 1 acre. Features include a high blade-tip speed for cut quality, a welded steel deck and tubular frame, and dual electric transmissions for true ZTR maneuverability. *HustlerTurf.com*

DESIGN BUILD: SOFTWARE

DynaScope

The DynaScope Manage software program, a modular, Web-based program that helps landscape professionals manage their businesses more efficiently and professionally, has been revamped. The software helps contractors follow best practices for estimating, bidding, sales and management. The end-to-end system automates proposal writing, scheduling, project management, job costing, billing forecasting and financial analysis. *DynaScope.com*



NuPoints LLC

SiteCapture Pro, version 2.0, has features to make it easier to document and draw a job-site property while on site. The software allows users to add notes from a dictionary of commonly used terms or custom notes that can be saved for use in later drawings. The optional "hide notes" feature gives a clean view of progress in documenting the site without any notes. *NuPoints.com*

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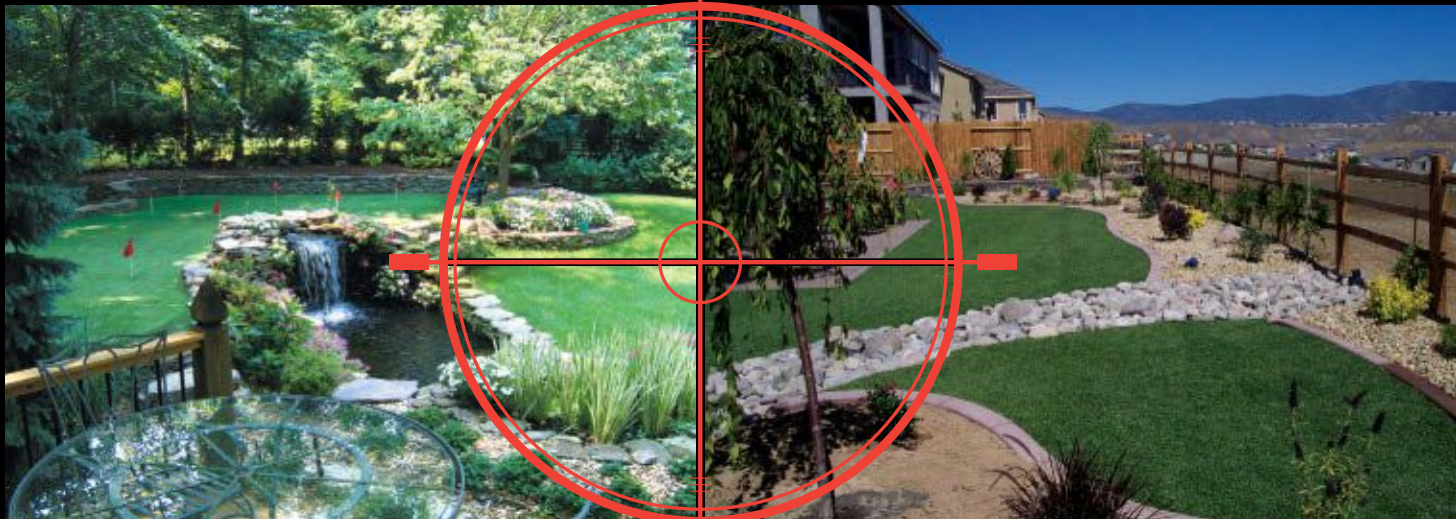
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Sharpen your estimating pencil

One of today's biggest issues is the low-price environment that's challenging landscape companies in most markets. This has been the case during past recessions, too, but perhaps not to the degree we see it presently. Usually, it's caused by construction-heavy contractors trying to enter the maintenance market or grow that portion of their businesses to make up for declining construction revenue.

This time, there's also aggressive pricing by national companies that seem to be leading the low-pricing charge. During the recession of the early '90s, some upstart companies were pricing work aggressively. Most of these companies were launched by employees of larger companies. They were successful because they built companies from scratch with lower operating and overhead costs.

Contractors need to learn from the past. For example, several large companies have made difficult choices to reduce costs recently, and in the process, they realized they had let themselves become top-heavy and inefficient. After the cost reductions, they've been able to carry on with much lower cost loads to cover and adjust to the lower price environment.

Now that the recession has lasted more than a year, most companies realize the market is different and that they need to figure out how to survive, grow and prosper again. Ask yourself, "If I were to start over, what would I do differently when building my company?"

Each of us can better hone our ability to estimate more accurately.

Many companies still use rather subjective methods of estimating. They are content to lean on an experienced eye for quick guesstimates of material and labor costs. While this method has worked OK for some companies, it's far from a

"best practice." Also, this method is not accurate enough to scale up or down as companies change in size and their costs and competitive pricing pressures fluctuate.

Remember: The practice of guesstimating is prone to overestimating.

Usually, the people subjectively estimating hours for jobs are the same ones who will have to manage the projects to be profitable. This leads to padding estimated labor hours — so if they get the jobs, they can manage the work more comfortably. Estimating hours during the high workload season influences them to bid more hours. The opposite is true during slower seasons.

Companies that have developed production rates, and measure jobs and count plants, eliminate much of the guesswork. If you estimate by factoring in production rates, frequencies and degree of difficulty, and compare that estimate to a subjective look by an operations staffer, you can zero in on the right price.

Another helpful estimating strategy: Compare each job, on a square-footage basis, to similar work you're doing (or have done) for which you have accurate cost information.

Additionally, consider the average hourly wage of the crew that would be assigned each job. Larger crews usually have lower average hourly wages because of the ratio of low-paid workers to the higher-paid crew leader. Most companies ignore this fact when estimating and use one hourly rate for all jobs, regardless of crew size.

If you tether several of these estimating strategies, you will develop more confidence you have the right price. There's no need to leave dollars on the table and/or come in over budget.

There are many little things that, when put together, can make a big difference when looking at pricing. In a market like this, your estimating pencil needs to be laser sharp — so you can compete successfully and continue to profit and grow with tighter pricing.