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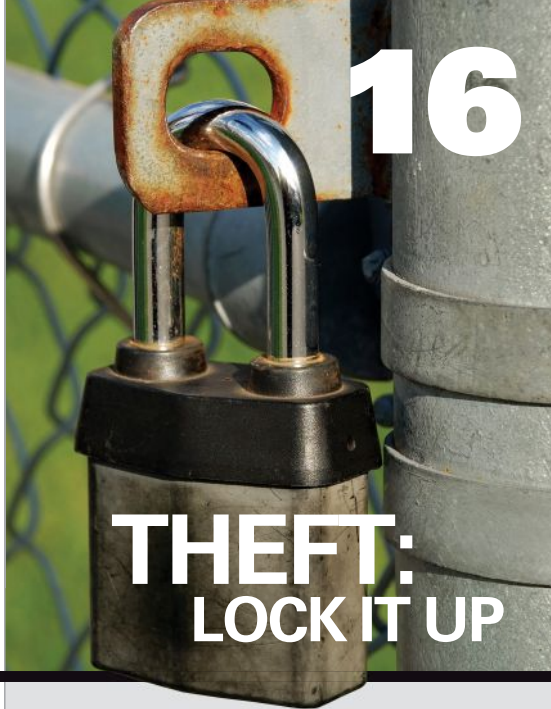


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Create the epitome of Tuscan ambiance with Old World charm. (D/B)

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LD/B Solutions

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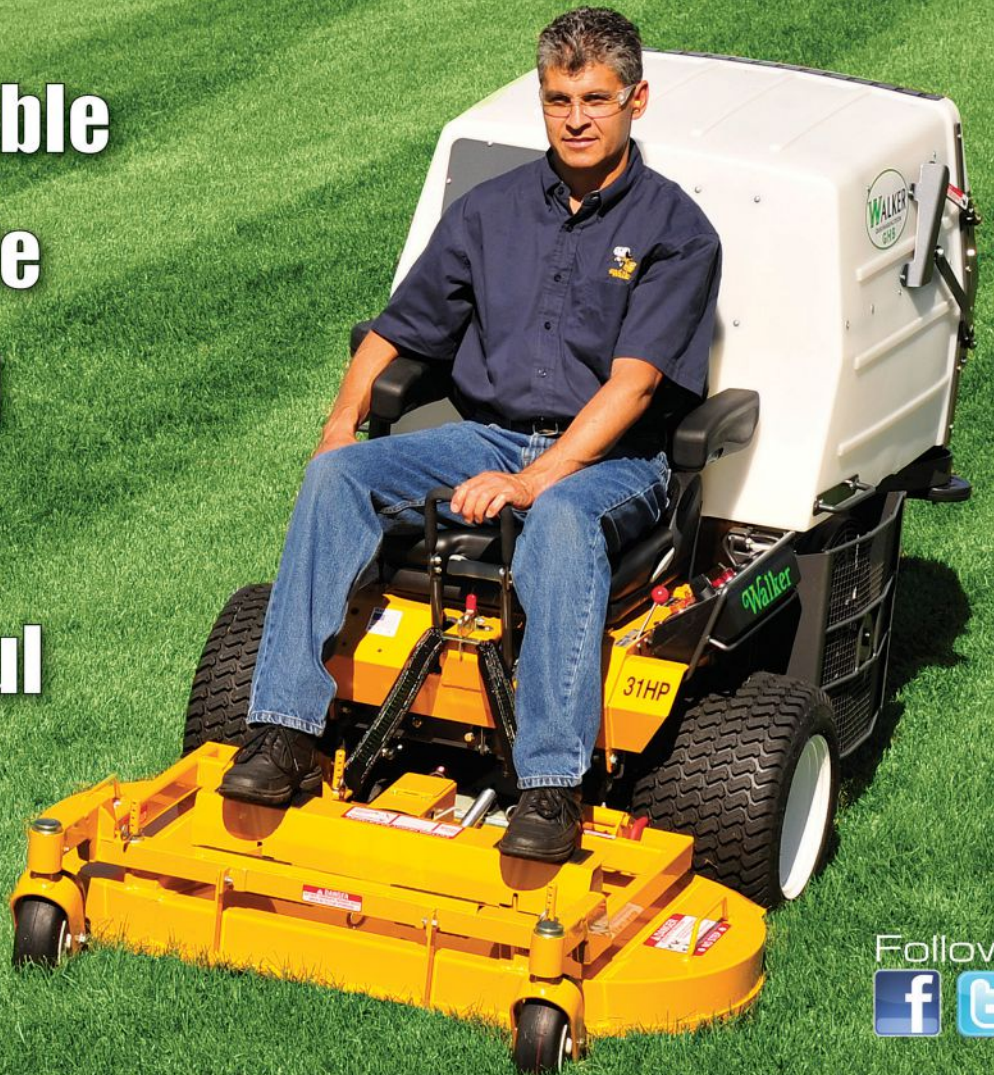
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Detach — it's refreshing every time

On a recent flight, intent on editing magazine copy, I asked my fellow passenger “What do you do?” intrigued by the pile of work with which he surrounded himself. An hour later, I wished I hadn't asked.

Stress seeped out of his every word, his every pore.

I felt bad for him. I had been there before. Did a stranger on a plane listen to me when I laid out all my stress, disguised under deadlines to meet and tasks to accomplish?

Then I took a moment to look around me.

Stress was everywhere. In tense shoulders hunched over laptops. In fingers rubbing wrinkled temples over furrowed brows. In eyes staring at distant points out of plane windows.

Intrigued, I did some research: 40% of adults report living with raised stress levels today; 68% of employees say they are highly stressed, fatigued and feel out of control; and 44% of workers say stress costs them an hour of productivity a day.

It's easy to become too identified with work — completely absorbed by it. But detaching from it has its advantages.

When I've detached — whether it's to read a book to my daughter (inserting voices for characters), enjoy a walk or run or quietly sip a glass of wine — it's not only cleared my head but also brought increased productivity and fresh ideas.

Harvard Business Review has more suggestions for controlling stress: Manage your energy, not your time; identify and banish time thieves; find a buddy or mentor at work to vent to; and protect time outside work so you can refresh.

It's not easy to take necessary breaks, particularly when your time is limited, but it's a part of reminding ourselves we are more than just our jobs. As leadership coach Gill Corkindale advises: “Take time to reflect on what you want to achieve in life and think about your definition of personal success. This should help when work gets difficult and pressure becomes unbearable.”

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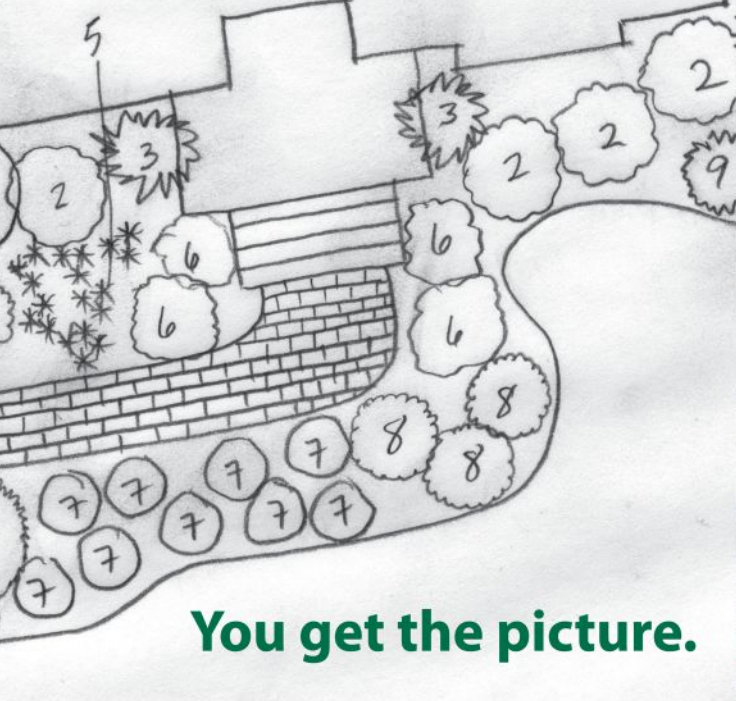
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Fertilizer prices on the rise; here's why

Fertilizer prices are rising again. This from Bruce Erickson, Ph.D., Purdue University in his latest TurfTip e-newsletter. Here he details his findings.

Why so high?

Fertilizer prices are on the upswing again, buoyed by the high prices of agricultural products that have stimulated increased demand. While the general U.S. economy struggles to recover from the financial crisis of 2008, the demand for agricultural products continues in a strong position due to favorable exchange rates, grain usage for biofuels, production concerns related to recent unfavorable weather in key crop growing regions, and a host of other factors. Higher fertilizer prices have put heavy users, such as farmers, lawn care companies, and golf course superintendents, on the defensive trying to best manage the input costs of their businesses. The following explains some factors that influence fertilizer prices and possible strategies in dealing with high and fluctuating prices.

Prices Influenced by World Markets and Energy Fertilizer prices reached record levels in 2008 just prior to the financial crisis, with the prices of some key fertilizer materials, such as anhydrous ammonia and diammonium phosphate, exceeding \$1,000 per ton. Prices retreated in 2009 and 2010, but began increasing again last fall. The price of urea is approximately twice what it was a decade ago. In the 1980s, the U.S. was a significant nitrogen exporter —

now more than 57% of nitrogen used in the U.S. is imported (2008 data). Most commercial nitrogen fertilizers originate from a process that uses natural gas to convert the nitrogen gas in the air into a form usable by crops. Natural gas prices in other parts of the world are a fraction of what they are in the U.S., so it is often more economical to produce there even considering transportation costs. Trinidad and Tobago, Canada, Russia and the Middle East are major suppliers to the U.S.

Phosphorus (P) and Potassium (K) fertilizer sources such as DAP (Diammonium phosphate, 18-46-0) and muriate of potash (0-0-60) originate mostly from open or underground mines, with the bulk of production controlled by a handful of companies. The U.S. is the world's leading supplier/exporter of phosphorus fertilizers, but imports most of its potassium from Canada. Investments in fertilizer mining and manufacturing are often long-term commitments, and companies often lack the ability to adjust quickly to short-term market conditions.

Fertilizer pricing is complex

Fertilizer is not traded on a common exchange like stocks, currencies or grains, so it can be much more difficult to get a read on prices. In addition, fertilizers are heavy, bulky commodities and their transport involves expense, time and logistical constraints. Many customers also depend on their suppliers for fertilizer storage and specialized application equipment. So the market is not as fluid as many other inputs — users aren't



as likely to shop around and then just go pick up what they need as they might for chemicals or seeds.

Dealing with high fertilizer prices

Using the correct form and amount of fertilizer to achieve the desired plant response maximizes efficient input use and keeping costs in check. Fertilizer suppliers may be willing to enter into contractual arrangements with their larger customers that specify a future quantity and price, to help them manage their own price risk as well as that of their customers. In addition, some larger fertilizer users have also built their own bulk storage facilities that allow them to capitalize on seasonal price advantages or other price trends.

For more information on fertilizer pricing, check out:

› Illinois Production Costs Report, Illinois Department of Agriculture: http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/gx_gr210.txt

› Agricultural Prices, United States Department of Agriculture: <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1002>

› Factors Shaping Price and Availability of the Fertilizer Market, Purdue Agricultural Economics: http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/news/financial/Fertilizer_Market.pdf

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PROGRESS

The power of landscaping

“*Beautify with trees.*”

This was the theme of 1969’s International Shade Tree Conference, as reported in the November 1969 issue of *Weeds, Trees & Turf*, which is known today as *Landscape Management*.

The group met at the Portland Hilton Hotel in Oregon. To “capture the atmosphere and interest of a particular area ... to design in a way that fits the region’s historical background,” the hotel chain incorporated a park with 70 trees, more than 100 shrubs, a dozen different ground covers, several thousand flower bulbs, a number of ferns and vines, a swimming pool and the usual tables and chairs on its second story.

There was a concern when the hotel was being planned in 1960 “about what was going to happen to downtown as outlying shopping centers became more numerous.” They realized using trees, turf, shrubs and flowers in the downtown shopping centers was bringing people in. “Lots of landscaping seems to capture people’s fancy,” explained Ford Montgomery, Portland Hilton general manager, at the time. “People feel a close relationship with living things.”

In 42 years, that hasn’t changed. Portland is proud of its parks and its legacy of preserving open spaces. And so are numerous other large metropolitan cities across the U.S.

In fact, the environmental, lifestyle and economic benefits of green spaces have not only been researched and logged thoroughly, they are the reasons many urban environments continue to add green spaces within their boundaries.

Statistics recorded over the years by many groups, including Project Ever-

Trees, shrubs, plants and turf continue to provide benefits to urban areas.

Green, have shown landscaping’s positive effects.

- ▶ Trees in a parking lot can reduce on-site heat buildup, decrease runoff and enhance nighttime cool down. A test in a mall parking lot in Huntsville, AL showed a 31-degree difference between shaded and unshaded areas. Lawns are 30 degrees cooler than asphalt and 14 degrees cooler than bare soil in the heat of summer. In Atlanta, temperatures have climbed 5 to 8 degrees higher than surrounding countryside where developers bulldozed 380,000 acres between 1973 and 1999, according to NASA. Scientists predict the heavily developed corridor between Boston and Washington will be the next big hot zone.
- ▶ The Virginia Cooperative Extension



sion says a dense cover of plants and mulch holds soil in place, keeping sediment out of lakes, streams, storm drains and roads, and reducing flooding, mudslides and dust storms.

▶ Trees, shrubs and turf remove smoke, dust and other pollutants from the air. Every tree that’s subtracted from a city’s ecosystem means some particulate pollution remains that should have been filtered out. In Washington, that amounts to 540 extra tons each year, according to *Time Magazine*. One tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually, equaling 11,000 miles of car emissions. One Virginia Cooperative Extension study showed that 1 acre of trees has the ability to remove 13 tons of particles and gases annually.

Ah, the power of landscaping. In 1969, the Portland Hilton sacrificed income-producing rooms to make space for \$50,000 worth of it. And, says Montgomery, “we cannot afford *not* to have it now.”

The atmosphere landscaping creates, Montgomery adds, is where people will go. In 50 years, some things don’t change; in fact, they grow.



▲ THEN & NOW ▶
Today, trees, shrubs and plants are important assets to the city of Portland, OR just as they were in 1969.

