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REVITALIZING the *traditional* trade show

Many trade shows seem to be trapped in a Catch-22. While they continue to be a concentrated repository for contractors to explore new products and ideas, they haven't changed much in decades, which leaves some attendees indifferent to the same old show. The new team that runs the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation (OTF) show is trying to shake up that "same old" sentiment with fresh ways to present information and products. The OTF, which runs the show — Dec. 5-8 in Columbus, OH — is celebrating its 50th year as an organization. Its show is nearly as old.

"We look at OTF as a place where people who provide solutions can meet up with people who need solutions," says Steve Jurick, executive director of the Ohio Turf and Golf Trust, which oversees the show, and of OTF. "The tried and true turf care professional needs to use products that are available. Our role is to help in that stewardship between the two."

Landscape Management talked with Jurick to learn just what his organization is doing to give the show a bit of a facelift.

The new management team for the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation show breathes new life into the staid model.

BY **DAN JACOBS** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

of factors in our day-to-day lives that we really don't have a lot of support in. Some of that is technology.

Also, we're trying to do more programming on the show floor so people will stay on the show floor longer. We've taken a flat, straight pathway from the entryway to a platform in the back that's a presentation stage. There will be seating for about 400 people.

We will start Tuesday and Wednesday mornings on the show floor with a keynote speaker. The idea is to have everybody start out on the show floor and they can migrate back out when they need to go to their sessions.

Is it just the education portion of OTF that's changing?

Trade shows typically have lost participation, lost vendors. The world's become more efficient. Consequently, turf conferences have struggled with how to address that efficiency. We have put a show floor plan together to allow our partners, our vendors, to be as efficient as they need to be. We know there's not a lot of order taking on the show floor, but the networking is invaluable.

Are you updating the layout of the show floor? Our conference floor has been very linear, and it really hasn't changed for a very long time. The show floor has been redesigned, so there will be pods. It won't be going up and down aisles. The idea behind the pods is to specialize in certain parts of our industry. There might be hardscaping in one particular area. That's not to say we're not going to mix some things up as well.

How are you planning to draw vendors back to the show?

We're going to give them some easier opportunities to be involved. A significant number of companies migrated away from the show floor because of the expense. We're going to have innovative product areas. They'll be something other than the traditional booth — a table or designated space on the floor. Vendors will be able to be a part of the show at a lower rate. So for the small company that's trying to get known and wants to have a presence on the floor, they can do that in what is the appropriate economic level. **LM**

Why revamp a show that's been around for nearly half a century?

Organizations often do the same thing over and over and don't look outside the box. We're able to come

into this with fresh eyes. On the conference and show side, we believe the education track is the most important. If OTF cannot provide solid education to make our members' lives better and their professional careers more rewarding, then we're not doing our job. We're not trying to be all things to everybody. It's just that we know there are weaknesses in our association based on what our members are telling us.

So what's going to change? We're working to address some of the traditional shortcomings of typical education. In the past things had been pretty heavily turf and golf-related — we talked about agronomy, mechanics. We feel there are a number



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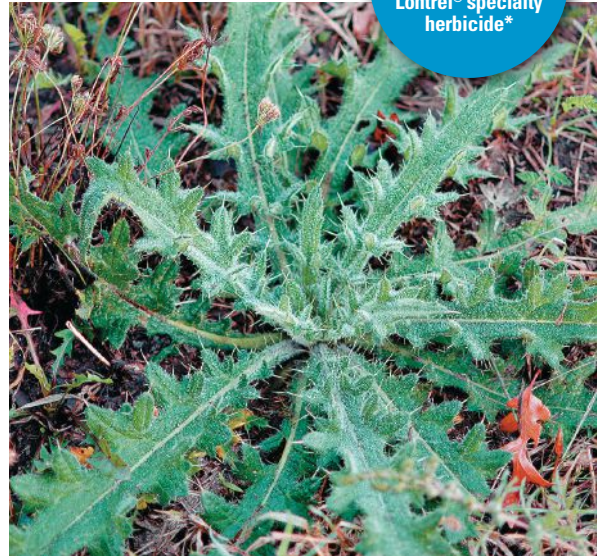
Oxalis stricta L.

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This perennial weed is commonly found in greenhouses, ornamentals and turfgrass.
- ▶ Leaves are divided into three heart-shaped leaflets with small yellow flowers.
- ▶ The presence of underground rhizomes helps distinguish yellow woodsorrel from creeping red woodsorrel (*Oxalis corniculata*), where the stolons are above ground.
- ▶ Five-petal flowers occur in clusters that grow from long stalks at the leaf axils.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ This weed is most effectively controlled by appropriately labeled pre-emergent herbicides.
- ▶ In container and landscape settings, products containing dithiopyr or isoxaben provide excellent control.
- ▶ Yellow woodsorrel is not easily controlled by post-emergent herbicides. Two-, three- or four-way herbicide mixes provide minimal post-emergent control.



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BULL THISTLE

Cirsium vulgare

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- ▶ This invasive, noxious biennial can form large infestations, especially along trails, roads and vacant fields.
- ▶ Plants grow erect, with spines on the leaves and stems.
- ▶ Arranged alternately on the flowering stem, leaves are lanceolate with deeply cut margins. They are coarsely hairy on the upper side, and contain softer, whitish hairs below.
- ▶ Rose to reddish-purple flowers grow at the ends

of the branches, surrounded by spiny-tipped bracts.

CONTROL TIPS

- ▶ The invasive nature of this weed dictates early detection and control. It reproduces only by seed, so application prior to seed set is most effective.
- ▶ For optimum control, apply a post-emergent herbicide containing clopyralid in fall or early spring, when the thistle is in the seedling to rosette stage.

* State restrictions on the sale and use of Dimension and Lontrel apply.

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

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LM REPORTS

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCT RESEARCH

MAINTENANCE: UTILITY VEHICLES



Gravelly

Durably constructed for years of performance, the newly designed 2011 Gravelly Treker utility vehicle features a top speed of 25 mph. The industry-first column shifter, like that of a truck, and three-spoke contoured steering wheel provide optimal driving control in any circumstance. The electric bed lift is standard, allowing you to easily deposit payload right where you want it. A robust 22-hp Subaru engine provides better cold-weather starting with improved bottom end torque. Industry-leading 9.5-in. ground clearance enhances maneuverability, while the new fender design provides better protection from the elements. The in-dash, watertight locking glove box with 12-volt outlet provides multiple storage use. Choose from two- or four-wheel drive models. Gravelly.com



John Deere

The new John Deere Gator Mid-Duty XUV 550 and 550 S4 (pictured) cross-over utility vehicles offer off-road performance, improved comfort, cargo versatility, and the ability to transport up to four people across the most challenging landscapes. With best-in-class, fully independent, double wishbone suspension, the Gator XUV 550 and 550 S4

provide 9 in. of wheel travel, and up to 10.5 in. of ground clearance to smooth out the ride. In addition, for the 550, you can choose from either standard high back bucket seats or bench seats. The 550 S4 comes standard with two rows of bench seats. Both vehicles have a top speed of 28 mph, and 4-wheel drive to quickly traverse all types of terrain. The 16-hp, 570 cc, air-cooled, v-twin gas engine provides greater speed and horsepower than most vehicles in its class, and the cargo box can carry up to 400 lbs. of gear. In addition, the 550 is small enough to fit in the bed of a standard pick-up truck. JohnDeere.com/Gator

Mid-Atlantic Services

The new, lightweight ATT 150 All Terrain Tric has tricycle steering, which keeps load off the ATV tow vehicle. It features a 150-gal., low-profile poly tank with high-flotation 31 x 13.5 terra rib tires — for easy maneuvering even in wet soil conditions. The John Blue ground metering pump system provides a dependable, accurate system for application of chemicals and fertilizer. The system is accurate regardless of ground speed and requires no electronics to work. Optional equipment includes a foam marker and electronic boom controls. MASspray.com



Kioti

New for 2011, the Kioti Mechron 4x4 utility vehicle features 4-wheel, fully independent, rear dual A-arm suspension and front MacPherson type suspension. The wide track offers increased stability and a smooth ride, even on rough terrain. The tight turning radius and rear anti-sway bar provides superb cornering and handling. The ergonomically located controls and instruments allow the driver to view critical functions at a glance. The contoured bench seat is widest in its class, offering room for three comfortably. Three seat belts are standard for safety. Plus, the flat, walk-through design of the vehicle offers excellent leg and foot room for easy entry and exit. Kioti.com

Polaris Industries

Hardest working, smoothest riding. With On-Demand True All-Wheel Drive, legendary smooth Independent Rear Suspension, high ground clearance, and monstrous towing capacity, Polaris Rangers outwork every other vehicle in their class, the company says. Because when you make your living as a landscaper, you need a vehicle that works as hard as you do. PolarisIndustries.com



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MAINTENANCE: TRACTORS & ACCESSORIES

John Deere

The John Deere 4720 compact utility tractor features a sloped hood for im-

proved visibility, and comes standard with 4-wheel drive. The LoadMatch feature keeps the tractor from stalling under heavy loads, while the MotionMatch feature enables the operator to customize the tractor's responsiveness. The 4720 comes standard with rear PTO and optional mid

PTO. The new 540/540 economy PTO allows the user to run at substantially lower engine rpms, while maintaining a 540 PTO speed — saving on fuel costs and operating more quietly. All units come loader ready with a standard dual selective control valve and loader joystick. An eThrottle is standard on the 4720 with an eHydro transmission. *Deere.com*



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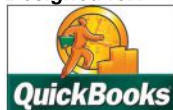
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Designed for:



Massey Ferguson

The new 25-hp MF1526 compact tractor features a three-range hydrostatic transmission and improved ergonomics for more operator comfort and convenience. It's



powered by a Tier IV interim-emission-compliant Iseki three-cylinder liquid-cooled diesel engine. An electro-hydraulic independent rear PTO engages smoothly and allows the operator to separately manage PTO speed and ground speed for optimum results when mowing or completing other projects. A molded rubber floor mat provides traction and helps further reduce vibration. An easy-to-read instrument panel helps keep the operator informed of the tractor's performance.

MasseyFerguson.com

Kioti Tractor

Kioti introduces a completely new line of implements and attachments for its compact tractors and utility vehicles. The new line comprises more than 60 brand-new models designed to bring added productivity and profitability to more than 30 Kioti prime movers. The line includes a full range of three-point implements, including mowers, cutters, tillage and landscape implements as well as implements designed for ATVs and UTVs. All products feature Kioti's proprietary and new E-Coat (Electro-Deposition Coating), Premium Powder Coat or the Powder-over-E-Coat finish. All products are made from high tensile-strength steel with a base rust inhibitor, then feature a baked-on finish for corrosion resistance. *Kioti.com*





Build your bench

In spite of management's best intentions, some companies struggle with excessive turnover. This hurts them most when it happens mid-season with the loss of key positions and is compounded by not having enough talent in reserve.

When a company is small, it is hard to envision building a pool of skilled employees. If you plan ahead, you will find the investment required to develop a bench is far less than the high cost turnover will have on your operations and morale.

For example, the lack of sufficient talent limits decision-making when it concerns marginal employees: You have fewer options. It might limit your ability to take on new work because you don't have the crew. Or, it forces you to promote employees to positions they are not ready for, and they fail. It also creates workplace stress and burn-out as managers and others are asked to step in to complete the work of a missing subordinate.

Attrition to retention

Hire who you know: Your best approach to building a strong bench is to start with the people you know. Develop and promote people who know your culture, your systems and your best practices.

› **Coach:** Do you have a culture rich in mentoring? Before you can build a pipeline of promotable employees, you need to ask yourself if you are willing to invest in their growth. Performance reviews are an important tool but do not take the place of consistent mentoring. Coaches "coach" during the game, they do not wait until the end of the season to do a performance review.

› **Communicate:** Discuss career path opportunities openly. Employees can become discouraged waiting for opportunities that do not come. Communication is ultra-critical during a recession, or during periods of restricted growth. Many longer term employees get discouraged when the positions they aspire to are filled with new employees.

› **Peer Development:** Encourage your employees to develop and mentor their own replacements; when they move up, they have a well-trained person to take over. Make it a factor in determining eligibility for promotion.

› **Performance Pipeline:** Ask each person to identify and recommend employees with potential. Develop a coaching plan that will systematically expose them to experiences and skills they need for career growth. Showing employees their personal path to success will benefit morale and engender loyalty because employees feel that the company is taking an interest in them.

There is no silver bullet to stop attrition. But a strong career development program, and a culture that encourages retention with pipeline development, will turn your 'turnover' problem into a return on your investment.

TIPS & TACTICS

Grow Your Own! The industry has a high success rate with in-house career development programs. There are a lot of talented college graduates coming out of our schools. Hire them and develop your own leaders.

If you bring on a talented graduate and place him or her in a crew leader position at a rate higher than a typical crew leader, the real cost is not the hourly rate but the difference between your crew leader rate and the new hire rate. If the recruit is challenged to improve performance by the percentage of the difference, then the cost is offset.

Poach Not! Often, in the quest for great talent, and a desire for proven performers to hit the ground running, companies seek to hire from their competitors. Before you hire from another company, remember — there are pitfalls to leapfrogging the investment in training and development to get the competitive advantage. Industry companies have low success rates when they hire from other companies. Hire for skills and abilities. Make your investment in developing long-term relationships and goodwill. Fully committed employees, developed in a high-performance culture, are those most likely to be invested in your success.

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