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PROGRESS



Spreading the wealth

From push-alongs to ride-alongs, sprayers and spreaders have modernized with the times.

With the rise of chemical use and lush suburban landscapes, the 1950s facilitated the creation of the perfect lawn. By the 1960s and 1970s, that concept was a blossoming American obsession and the job of spreading plant food, lime and seed had become a necessity.

Since then, spreading and spraying via dusters, granular applicators, field sprayers and broadcast spreaders has become more sophisticated. When organics gained a solid foothold in the 1990s, topdressing applicators for compost teas and organic fertilizers became an integral part of the mix.

No one knows the evolution of spreaders better than Joseph Carrizales, sales, marketing and operations manager for White Castle's PSB division. Although White Castle is well known for its hamburgers, less known is its manufacturing of more than 3 million Scott's spreaders. "Our first drop spreaders were made from surplus WWII gun barrels, then to rotary, and finally to powered spreaders," Carrizales says.

Now, its high-end spreaders are made with stainless steel frames, fiberglass hoppers and plastic gears.

The mechanization of spreaders/sprayers also has grown in sophistication, based on modifications in large-scale agricultural machinery. "Our spreaders/sprayers started out as push-alongs, followed shortly after that by motorized walk-behind machines, and then stand-on-and-ride units, all by the late '90s," says Tom Jessen, president of PermaGreen Supreme. At the same time, L.T. Rich Products introduced its first ride-on spreader/sprayer.

Today's spreaders and sprayers offer more comfort and bells-and-whistles than early models did. PermaGreen's Triumph features ergonomic handlebars, fingertip controls, all-wheel braking, drop-down handles and more.

As contractors expand their businesses and bring on new people, it's more important than ever to make machines that are easy to operate and offer increased productivity, says Scott Kinkead, vice president at Turfco.

"Our new hands-free speed control makes operations easy," Kinkead says. "It reduces the learning curve and increases overall productivity."

L.T. Rich's Z-Spray offers its own set of luxuries. "We were one of the first zero-turn sprayers and spreaders on the market," says Sales Manager Andy Walters. "We incorporate a pressure gauge and a speedometer to ensure proper calibration. Our machines can even tell you the temperature outside and your average ground speed over the entire lawn. We are the only machine with a foam-marking system to allow you to see exactly what areas have been treated."

Topdressing, using organic topsoils and compost teas, is leaving its mark on the landscape industry, too. Once considered essential only in the maintenance of athletic fields and golf courses, it is now used on residential and commercial lawns.

And whereas topdressing used to be a cost-prohibitive option for smaller jobs, the advance of specialized spread-

ers/sprayers has changed that. Ecolawn president Daniel Cote says the invention of the Ecolawn Applicator topdressing machine helped bring smaller mechanical compost spreaders to new markets.

Tanks, tips and liquid pumps have become larger for high-volume organics. With the push for organics, leading spreader/sprayer manufacturers have adapted. "We are now offering different tip sizes and liquid pump sizes to accommodate the push towards organic fertilizers, compost teas and other products that require higher volumes," says L.T. Rich's Walters.

As fuel costs rise, spreaders/sprayers are becoming more fuel-efficient, and metering and guidance systems with LED light bars are gaining momentum.

Spreaders have come a long way from the days of the walk-behind drop spreaders of the 1950s.

So, operators can easily find the best routes to take and gauge the amount of treatments to spread or spray from area to area.

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PREPARING FOR AN INSECT INVASION



The winter of 2011-2012 was one of the warmest winters on record. While that might be a good thing to a lot of people, it means early pest pressure for trees and compressed treatment windows for applicators.

Why is it so warm?

Meteorologists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) say that because it is a La Niña year, the jet stream is farther north than usual. This means that the cold air we're accustomed to in the northeast United States has stayed even farther north than usual, creating warmer temperatures throughout the country. The same goes for precipitation — it's been a relatively dry winter, too.

The biggest variant in weather patterns is caused by the Arctic Oscillation (a natural seesawing of atmospheric pressure between the Arctic and mid-latitudes of the North Pacific and

An unusually warm winter means additional stress on trees from increased pest pressures.

BY JOSEPH DOCCOLA

North Atlantic Oceans). This year, it's been in its positive phase, which contributes to the warm weather.

What to expect this growing season

First off, expect an early start. Because the weather has been so consistently warm, the season likely will be pushed forward. Leaf and bud emergence, as well as pest activity, will occur sooner than usual.

An early spring season can jeopardize plants. With early bud break, trees are more susceptible to a cold snap or

being damaged in storms.

Consider the snowstorm that pounded the Northeast in October. Trees sustained severe damage from the weight of snow on full canopies, and those wounds are susceptible to wood-boring insects and canker disease.

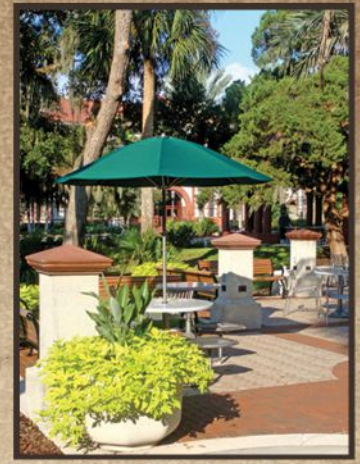
Cold winter temperatures have a significant effect on insect survival. Extreme temperatures reduce survival of overwintering pests. In the absence of cold, insect survival is favored. If temperatures remain mild, pest emergence will occur earlier than usual. With relatively mild temperatures and wet spring conditions, you can expect greater disease outbreaks as well.

What to do about it

In preparing for the season, be ready for an early start.

Local extension agents are a wealth of knowledge, so consult them. They offer helpful information about pest

continued on page 16



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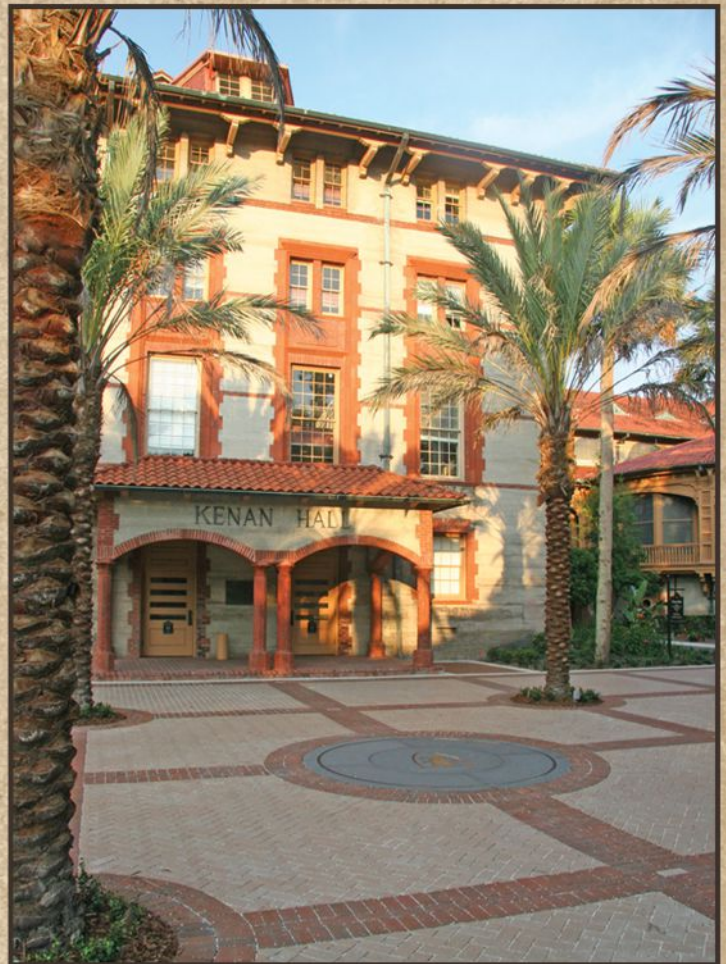
Water pooled up into ankle-deep mud directly in front of Kenan Hall At Flagler College each time it would rain. The City of St. Augustine didn't allow any new tie-ins to its storm sewer system and required all new construction to keep its storm drainage on site. Secondly, the design had to tie in with the historic nature of its surroundings.

Solution...

Pine Hall Brick StormPave® permeable clay pavers provide an effective way to drain away stormwater while at the same time, picking up colors of the nearby building - in line with local historic-district guidelines.

The 5,300-square-foot space has become a popular gathering spot for students.

The plaza is paved in gray as the primary color with autumn as the accent.



The Plaza at Kenan Hall/Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida
 Landscape Architect: Sharon Fowler of Hauber Fowler & Associates
 Builder: A.D. Davis Construction
 Mason Contractor: Paverscape Inc.
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BUG OFF

continued from page 14
emergence, often online.

Extension offices also can help you identify the phenological indicators of when to treat for common pests. For example, in New England, treatments for winter moth are applied when forsythia blooms.

As the season continues, if temperatures rise rapidly and stay elevated, expect overlap in insect emergences. That means treating for a number of pests early. Researchers have forecasted that areas with dry climates are likely to become drier and wet areas wetter.

Dry regions like Texas and the West can expect increased pressures from pine bark beetles and Ips beetles, which attack drought-stressed stands of trees. Pine sawyer beetles attack stressed trees, and vector pine wilt. Mites, more active in hot, dry weather, damage evergreens.

Wet areas such as the Northeast and Florida, on the other hand, can



expect an increase in foliar diseases such as anthracnose and insects such as whiteflies. In the upper Midwest, elm bark beetles can transmit Dutch Elm Disease. Expect earlier beetle flight, and earlier DED applications.

Many species of scale insects that infest trees and shrubs are most susceptible to treatment at the crawler stage. Crawler emergence and new leaf development usually are coordinated. Though hemlock trees develop later than many hardwoods, expect an early push of foliage this year. Treatment for elongate hemlock scale, for example, should be made earlier.

To manage all of this, check weather conditions and anticipate having to

The mild winter we've had is likely to bring higher populations of pests such as emerald ash borers (left) and whiteflies (right).

apply treatments early. Read all label instructions and dilution rates. Lastly, inject trees when soils are moist and have warmed in spring. In summer, inject trees early in the morning, when conditions are cooler. In dry conditions, water your trees before treating them.

Whatever the weather, by planning properly this season, we can prevail. **LM**

The author is an ISA-certified arborist and plant health care specialist with Arborjet and has more than 30 years' experience in the horticultural and arboricultural field.

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Lost and found: *Be willing to ask for help ... and use common sense*

A few years ago, I lost our son Jamie while I was looking for a new pair of jeans at a JCPenney store. After organizing a search party comprising just one increasingly frantic father, I decided the best course of action was to run around the department store like a mad man.

Failing to uncover a single trace of Jamie's whereabouts, after 10 minutes, I shelved my ego and asked for help. I came clean with one of the store's security guards. Shaking her head, the security guard sternly said, "Follow me."

I thought to myself: *I ran past this security guard a few times before I asked her for help. I understand her disappointment with me.*

Walking briskly, the security guard unclipped her colossal walkie-talkie, depressed the speak button and shouted "Code Adam! Code Adam!"

Then she turned to me and said, "We're closing off all entrances and exits." I felt reassured ... for a few seconds — until the word "exits" echoed in my ear. I'd never considered that option: the thought of Jamie wandering around the parking lot like a human pinball. My perspective and fear grew.

"We're walking to the mall entrance. We don't need to make this search any larger than it has to be."

Oh no! I forgot this store was attached to a mall. God help me! Please, please help us find Jamie!

En route to the mall entrance, the security guard made a pit stop at a cashier kiosk and grabbed a clipboard with a form and a pen.

"What color shirt is your son wearing?" the security guard asked.

"Blue, I think. Maybe black, gray or green. Something dark for sure ... I think." The security guard shook her head, further disappointed.

"Pants?"

"Yes, he has pants on — or at least he did when I last saw him." ... Just kidding. That's not what I said, but it is a line a wisecracking neighbor interjected when I shared this story with him.

"Jamie's wearing black or blue sweatpants, I think," I told the security guard.

Then, out of nowhere, I demonstrated the gift of common sense. I believe it was God doing for me what I couldn't do for myself.

Oh my God! I'm sitting on a gold mine of information! All I have to do is share these four nuggets and we'll find Jamie in seconds.

"Jamie has glasses, red hair, Down Syndrome and a stuffed fake snake around his neck that he likes to shake," I proudly offered.

But this by-the-book security guard didn't write down, or share with her coworkers via walkie-talkie, even one of those nuggets — clearly just because we hadn't gotten to that part of the form.

I wanted to scream, "You must be kidding! You're not going to share these nuggets with the entire world? But my cell phone vibrated just then. It was my wife, Bridgid. She no doubt wondered where Jamie and I were. I didn't have the heart (or guts) to take the call and tell her I had lost Jamie.

For a split second, I imagined bargaining with the security guard: *You find me a kid with red hair, Down Syndrome or a stuffed snake, and I'll take him home and fool the wife until we find the real deal.*

Thankfully, better thoughts prevailed. A few minutes later, someone found Jamie. He was "hiding" in the women's dressing room.

This month's take-home lessons:

1. Never be afraid to ask for help;
2. Common sense isn't so common; and
3. Jamie clearly is much brighter than his Old Man and the by-the-book security guard.



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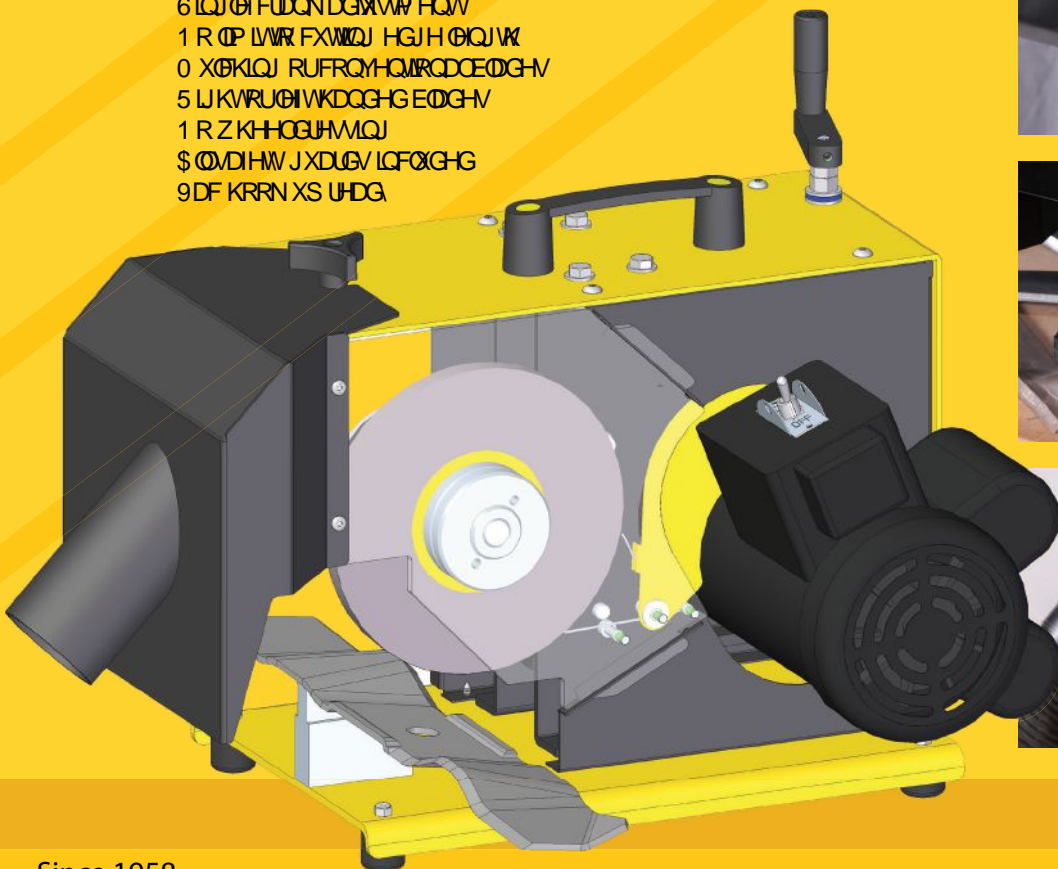
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