

# EPA and scientists attest to safety of Milorganite

By **ELLIOT MARAS**  
Editor

**S**uppliers of Milorganite are counting on assurances from scientists to quell an alleged link between the fertilizer and Lou Gehrig's disease. National media reported the alleged link in February.

At this point, it is too early to tell if the allegations, which have been publicly denounced by the EPA and epidemiologists, will have any effect on spring sales. Milorganite is an organic fertilizer made by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewer District.

The link was first sug-



gested after it was learned that three former San Francisco 49ers had contracted the fatal disease (Bob Waters, Matt Hazeltine and Gary Lewis). Three out of a total 55 team members is an unusually high ratio for ALS.

While no one could confirm Milorganite was used on

the field when the three played, one researcher told the *Milwaukee Sentinel* that the fertilizer might have been the cause. Some research has suggested a link between the disease and exposure to a toxic substance in diet or environment.

Researchers and U.S. En-  
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## LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving lawn management and chemical lawn care professionals

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### New law targets illegal aliens

By **JAMES E. GUYETTE**  
Associate Editor

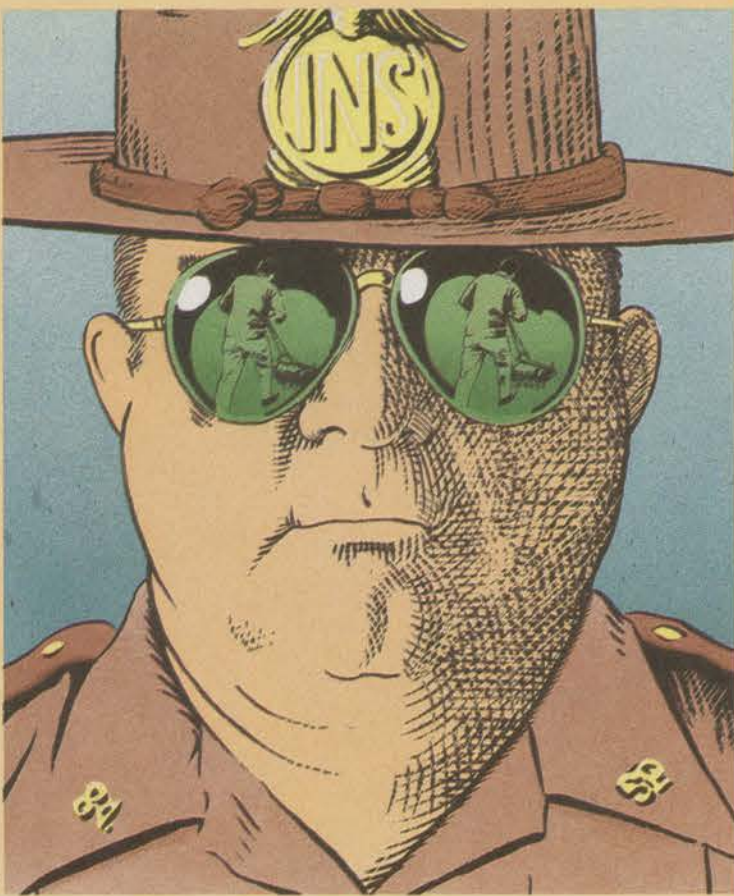
**A** new, stricter, immigration law that goes into effect in May has some lawn management contractors concerned.

Others are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

Agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service will be able to hold business owners responsible if their employees do not supply information indicating that they are in this country legally.

The Immigration Reform Act of 1986 provides that employers who hire illegal aliens will be warned first; a fine results from a second offense. A year later the full penalties go into effect—with fines of \$1,000 per illegal alien and prison terms of up to six months for repeatedly and knowingly hiring illegal al-

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### ChemLawn agrees to offer by Ecolab

By **ELLIOT MARAS**  
Editor

**COLUMBUS, OHIO**—Responding to an offer more generous than many stock analysts would have believed, ChemLawn Service Corp.'s board of directors has agreed to sell all outstanding shares to St. Paul, MN-based

Ecolab Inc. for \$370 million. The \$36.50 per share offer could enable ChemLawn to thwart a bid by Waste Management, Inc. to gain control of the company. ChemLawn has resisted Waste Management's attempted takeover, which began in February.

Ecolab, which provides cleaning and sanitizing products and services to institutions, approached ChemLawn after learning of Waste Man-

agement's offer. Ecolab had been looking for a chance to get into residential services.

Waste Management, based in Chicago, IL, raised its original \$27 per share offer to \$33 and then \$35 just before

ChemLawn announced its acceptance of Ecolab's offer on March 21. Waste Management reported that only 121 shares had been tendered to it by March 19.

The merger agreement provides that if Ecolab does not succeed in acquiring ChemLawn, ChemLawn would pay Ecolab \$20 million.

The agreement was praised by officials from both companies.

"I think Ecolab's strength in the institutional/commercial marketplace and Chem-

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#### ADVERTISING

More lawn care companies turning to professional image builders to meet competition.

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### Pollution coverage slowly coming back

By **ELLIOT MARAS**  
Editor

**P**ollution coverage, cut from LCOs' general business insurance policies in 1985-86, is slowly coming back.

While most LCOs think

they have no choice but to chance a pollution suit without protection, a handful have secured some coverage.

Chicago-based CNA Insurance Companies began providing LCOs limited pollution coverage this year. A few other insurance companies have also reportedly been offering limited pollution coverage.

Expect still more companies to begin offering pollution coverage this year, said Jeff Telego of the Risk Insur-

See **POLICIES**, Page 7

#### LATE NEWS

##### ChemLawn offers 3 new options

**COLUMBUS**—ChemLawn Services Corp. is introducing three alternative lawn care programs to the Buffalo, NY area this season. They include a fertilizer-only plan, a limited pesticide plan and a dry lawn care plan.

The options are being introduced in Buffalo to halt criticism expected from anti-lawn care groups. Anti-lawn care activists generated an unusual amount of publicity last year that resulted in public hearings and legislative initiatives.

Mary Jane Goldthwaite, vice president-general counsel, told the Buffalo media the options are being test marketed in Buffalo.

The fertilizer-only option will consist of four applications of fertilizer, with no weed control or insect control materials. The limited pesticide option will treat pests only after they have appeared; preventative materials will not be used.

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- LAWN CARE INDUSTRY's first listing of million dollar lawn management contractors.
- A look at where lawn care prices are headed.







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## Groundwater studies called useful to LCOs

LOUISVILLE—One factor LCOs seldom consider in selecting a pesticide is its propensity to contaminate groundwater. It is a difficult factor to know because it rests on a variety of other factors—soil properties, cultivation practices, climatic conditions and the chemical's own properties.

Arthur Hornsby, extension specialist in the Soil Science Department at the University of Florida, discussed the factors contributing to pesticide contamination of groundwater at the Kentucky Agribusiness and Pesticide Conference in Louisville.

The study of groundwater contamination is relatively new. Hornsby said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found 17 pesticide compounds in groundwater throughout the U.S., and plans to recommend maximum contaminant levels in drinking water.

"All chemicals, under certain conditions, will get to groundwater," Hornsby said.

The chemical's own propensity to move through the soil is one factor that will determine how likely it is to contaminate groundwater.

The amount of water present is the principal force driving the compound through the soil. Low organic content in the soil also enhances the compound's mobility through the soil.

Other factors to consider include volatilization, chemical decomposition and biological decomposition, Hornsby said.

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## Methods to contain wastewater explained

LOUISVILLE—Concern about groundwater contamination is encouraging more lawn care companies to upgrade their containment of wastewater. Design considerations for pesticide storage tanks were discussed by Tom



Coors: Lower premiums.

Coors, manager of Chem-Lawn's Louisville branch, at the Kentucky Agribusiness and Pesticide Conference in Louisville.

One of the benefits of minimizing pollution risks is lower insurance premiums, Coors

noted.

He said companies should have a secondary wastewater containment area, which can either be underground or above-ground. Be aware, however, that the contained wastewater could be let loose if too much rainwater gets into the system.

Coors said he prefers an above-ground system, since leaks can be sighted easier. In addition, an underground system requires periodic soil testing.

Wastewater recycling was addressed in a followup session by Darrell Rester of Delta South Engineers, Inc., Baton Rouge, LA. He said pesticide tanks should be cleaned every two to three weeks.

Once the tank is rinsed, Rester said one part washwater should be mixed with four parts clean water for future rinsing.

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## MEMOS

**Public grounds are looking more promising** as a potential market for LCOs and lawn management contractors due to the budgetary problems afflicting municipal governments and other public entities. Dr. Forrest Stegeline, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Kentucky, made the point while discussing market opportunities to the Louisville Lawn Care Association.

The recently-organized, 40-member association hosted Stegeline at a dinner meeting during the Kentucky Agribusiness and Pesticide Conference in Louisville. Stegeline said LCOs are not aggressive enough in pursuing new markets.

**Regional lawn care associations are popping up from coast to coast** as LCOs and lawn management contractors become more aware of the need to organize.

In the last few months, the relatively new Louisville and Kansas-Missouri organizations held well-attended workshops that addressed both technical and business topics. Both associations scheduled presentations on 2,4-D toxicology by Dow Chemical Co. consultant Wendell Mullison.

In southeast Virginia, the newly-formed Hampton Roads Professional Lawn Care Association also held a get-together.

High on the agenda of each of these associations is being prepared to deal with the news media this spring. Sessions dealt with this topic.

**Acclaim has received registration** from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The herbicide, produced by Hoechst-Roussel Agri-Vet Co., controls crabgrass, goosegrass and other grassy weeds. It can be tank-mixed with pre-emergence products as part of a planned program or used alone as a single-application post-emergence treatment. Acclaim can also be applied selectively to specific problem areas.

**Groundwater protection legislation will be introduced** to both houses of Congress this year. The good news for the lawn care industry is that as far as pesticide contamination is concerned, attention will be focused on agricultural applications.

Phil Metzger, co-author of the National Groundwater Policy Forum's recommendations to Congress on groundwater legislation, said legislation will almost exclusively deal with agricultural sources of pesticide contamination. He said the residential sector is a low priority.

The forum is an independent policy and resource group. Its recent book, *Groundwater Protection*, calls for federal legislation encouraging states to implement groundwater strategies.

**Homeowners are counting on the professionals more than ever**, says A. J. Powell, extension turfgrass specialist at the University of Kentucky. Years ago, extension seminars on turf care brought around 300 homeowners. Nowadays, you can count them on one hand.

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"I don't see the homeowner interested in education any more," Powell told the Louisville Lawn Care Association recently. "They want a quick fix."

**Rohm and Haas plans to sell its herbicide trade to BASF AG** of West Germany for an undisclosed sum, it was reported in *Chemical Week* magazine. Both companies have supplied herbicides to the turf market.

A Rohm and Haas official said the decision to sell reflects an unwillingness to commit resources needed to sustain Blazer, a post-emergent soybean broadleaf herbicide, in the face of growing competition.

**LCOs get top marks for regulatory compliance** among pesticide users as a whole, according to Mike Stivers, director of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's pesticide division. Stivers gave his accolades at the Kentucky Agribusiness and Pesticide Conference in Louisville.

**Posting regulations are being pondered** in New Jersey and Connecticut.

The Garden State proposal is still under preparation by state officials. Public hearings are expected sometime during the summer, according to Ilona Gray of the Alliance for Environmental Concerns, Inc., Wayne, NJ.

The Professional Pesticide Users of Connecticut, Inc. is confident that a pre-notification posting law will not be approved. The proposal does not have the support of many politicians, according to Don Kiley, executive director of the PPUC.

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# Feb. 26—'C-Day' for lawn care industry!

ALL SHOULD FOLLOW CHEMLAWN'S LEAD AND ASSESS MARKET VALUE

History was made on Feb. 26, 1987. The first takeover attempt of a lawn care company was launched.

C-Day (Waste Management's unsolicited \$270 million offer for ChemLawn) took Wall Street by surprise. With all the regulatory initiatives and bad press afflicting the lawn care industry, securities analysts had downgraded ChemLawn's stock over the last several months. Just the day before the stock exploded, three analysts told me not to consider buying it unless I had more patience than a used Pinto salesman.

A lot they knew. C-Day came, and as a result, the investment community is now more concerned with the industry's earning power than the controversy it has attracted.

As Jerry Faulring of Hydro Lawn pointed out, every LCO is worth more today than before Feb. 26.

So now is a good time for companies to assess their market values. Most LCOs have never had their companies appraised.

The company's tax accountant is good for the largest portion of this sort of task. But someone with experience in the industry is needed to determine the less tangible factors.

Let's consider the key elements of a lawn care company's appraisal.

We begin with the amount of money that would be needed to start the company from scratch and bring it up to its current business volume. This is known as the "floor value." It is the total assets minus liabilities, potential bad debts, long-term debts and intangible assets.

Next, we factor in short-term profit potential. Take the "floor value" as explained above, and add to it the company's profit projection for the next few years minus what would be reasonable compensation for the owner, should he leave.

Now for the less tangible factors.

Customer base. This is measured by the customer retention rate, the company's penetration of its market, the size of the average property serviced, average revenue per customer and customer payment habits.

Staff. Its value is determined by the employees' capabilities, their turnover rate and their average length of service.

All of these factors, taken together, determine a company's market value.

LCOs also have to decide

what role they want to play in an industry that will be dominated by a smaller number of bigger companies. Their choices will be like those that faced independent brewers in the 1950s: to sell, to buy, to merge, or to remain a very small independent company.

Mergers and acquisitions are escalating. The Waste Management offer for ChemLawn is one of several buyouts proposed in the lawn

care industry in the last few months.

In the last decade, the lawn care industry grew faster than many observers could believe. They didn't believe the high growth could sustain itself indefinitely, and they were right. Investors waited for the spout to lose steam to discern a more permanent view of the industry.

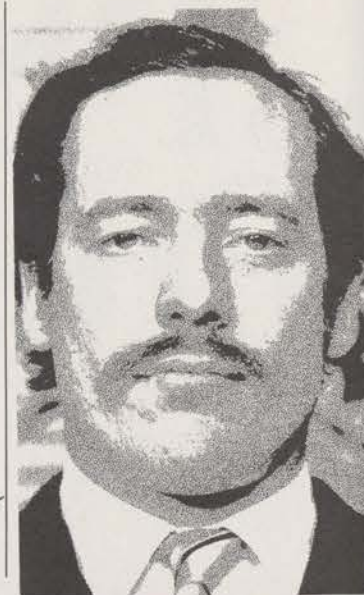
Now the industry's market potential is better

understood, and investors are ready to make their moves.

C-Day marked the beginning of a new era for the lawn care industry. Now is the time for all companies to understand their market values.

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*Elliot Marus*



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## POLICIES

from Page 1

ance Management Society. "There is more interest by other insurers for writing pollution insurance," he said, but they aren't making it public yet.

No insurer offers or is expected to offer the \$1 million ceiling that is considered necessary in the event of a pollution suit. And, except for the CNA policy, what is available is very expensive.

(Companies who do lawn care as a sideline, such as full-service landscape management contractors and interior pest control sprayers, have

been able to secure pollution coverage for their lawn care, but have been advised to limit their growth in lawn care.)

### The CNA policy

CNA is offering \$250,000 in pollution coverage as part of its general business insurance program at no additional cost, said Linda Powers, senior media relations specialist.

What many would consider most unusual about the CNA coverage is that it is offered on an occurrence basis.

Occurrence is the favored type of coverage since there is no expiration date for claims to be honored by the carrier. Much business insurance is

now provided on a claims-made basis, which requires claims to be reported by specific dates.

To qualify for the pollution coverage, Powers said LCOs must comply with all government regulatory standards on pesticide use. She emphasized that it is off-premises coverage, not on-site coverage. On-site coverage would be for damage caused by a gradual leak from a storage tank.

(The gradual coverage, also known as environmental impairment coverage, has never been available to LCOs by commercial carriers.)

"While CNA doesn't generally offer pollution liability



Faulring: Pleasantly surprised.

coverage, a limited exception has been granted to lawn care contractors insured under the ALCA (Associated Landscape Contractors of America) program," she said.

CNA carries the ALCA group business insurance plan.

Powers pointed out, however, that the plan is offered independently of ALCA.

Higher policy limits will be considered on an individual basis, Powers said.

CNA reinstated pollution coverage after learning that several states require it of licensed pesticide applicators, Powers said.

Plymouth, MI-based New England Green, Inc. and Gaithersburg, MD-based Hyrdo Lawn, Inc. are two CNA policyholders who learned of the pollution reinstatement in early January. They were pleasantly surprised.

"We didn't ask for it," Faulring said. "They decided to reinstate because they discovered their previous assessment of the industry doesn't hold true." He said the \$250,000 limit is too low, but added, "I'd rather have \$250,000 than nothing."

### Other policies

A few other LCOs have secured pollution coverage as a separate policy and at great cost.

Jim Wilkinson, general manager of Old Fox Lawn Care, Inc. and president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, said he secured a separate pollution policy on a claims-made basis. He said it was very expensive. He did not want to name the company.

Patrick Norton, president of Columbus, OH-based Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Inc., also secured what he termed a low amount of coverage at a high cost.

An exceptional case is that of Perma Green, Inc., Boise, ID. The company never lost its pollution coverage.

The insurer, Industrial Indemnity, made an exception on the basis of Perma Green's excellent record and long patronage, said Pat Roark, special accounts underwriting manager for Industrial.

### Is it worth it?

Most of the LCOs interviewed for this article said pollution coverage is not available. They include Tru Green Corp., Atlanta, GA, the nation's second largest lawn care firm, and Rochester, NY-based Lawn Medic, Inc.

Those who were aware of any availability often called it cost prohibitive.

"It's not worth it," said Ernest Sampson, president of Crestwood, KY-based Excelawn Corp.

ChemLawn Services Corp. isn't covered for pollution either. A spokesman who did not wish to be named said the company can get coverage should a state actually require it.

While several states do require LCOs to have pollution coverage, most have changed, suspended or ignored the requirement in the last year. LCI



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# ADVERTISING

## LCOs turn to pros for stronger marketing plans

By ELLIOT MARAS  
Editor

As competition stiffens, companies are turning to professional image builders to gain distinction in the marketplace. In the words of one management consultant, slick image packaging can give a one-man operation the pizzazz of a multi-national conglomerate.

In the past, only the large lawn care companies ventured beyond direct mail and Yellow Pages listings.

But in recent years, many one-branch operations have budgeted for exposure through radio, television, newspapers, magazines and billboards—media that reach the masses but have a less-than-direct impact on sales. And such programs require professional help.

How this help should be enlisted—by an in-house staff or an outside agency—is the subject of a perennial debate in the business world. An outside agency oftentimes gives a fresher perspective on the client's needs and saves the client some personnel responsibilities. An in-house staff, on the other hand, keeps all decisions within the company and enables it to better monitor the return on its investment.

The bottom line is that more lawn care dollars are being invested in advertising. Professionals, in-house or out, provide companies the creative talent they need to polish their images and the assistance they need to buy media space.

"We need the professional help," said Henry Schmid, marketing director for Davey Tree & Expert Co., Kent, OH. "We just feel we need to have the overall image out there." Davey uses an agency.

"With the competition and the sheer number of (direct mail) pieces per household, you've got to go to somebody with professional ability in designing these pieces," said Peter Connelly, president of Southern Lawn, Inc., Roanoke, VA.

The company designed its own, one-color brochure when it started in the business back in 1977. Noticing the quality of the competition's brochures, Connelly soon decided that a slick, four-color piece was necessary, so he hired an agency.

The agency also upgraded the customer newsletter. "They took something that was kind of dull and maybe too wordy and put some steam into it," he said.

Jerry Faulring, president of Hydro Lawn, Inc., Gaithersburg, MD, admits

there is nothing wrong with ready-made, boilerplate brochures. However, "There's ego involved," which is why his company spends more to have a specially-designed brochure.

Southern Lawn and Davey are among the many companies that have recently decided to expand from direct mail to mass media—where the return is more nebulous.

The radio, television and print ads are usually run in the spring, in conjunction with direct mail and telemarketing efforts.

"Advertising is an integral element of a marketing plan," said Russell Frith, president of Lawn Doctor, Inc., Matawan, NJ. "We try to use a balanced program—mass media, local media and direct mail."

Tru Green Corp., Atlanta, GA, has also increased its budget for mass media advertising in recent years. "It's a coordinated tie-in approach as opposed to one (where one medium) is first and one's second," said Paul Anderegg, vice president of marketing.

To use mass media successfully, a company needs the services of someone who is familiar with the demographics of a given market and the various media reaching that market. Even then, effectiveness will be determined on a trial and error basis.

Davey Tree & Expert used television in 1984 and didn't feel it was worth the cost.

### Some tips

Rudd McGary, senior partner in All-Green Management Associates, Columbus, OH, thinks LCOs should first ask themselves what they expect to accomplish through mass media advertising.

"It is tremendously ego-satisfying to see that stuff," he

said. But the return on investment is long-term.

Remember, McGary said, most new customers come from personal referrals. Re-

investment. "We judge our (ad) agency on the number of inquiries, cost per inquiry and the number of sales from the campaigns," he said.

look like a well-established company with the right marketing pieces."

Hydro Lawn's Faulring believes in agencies, after having tried to handle some of his advertising in-house. "Buying the agency services gives me a whole lot more flexibility than I'd have in-house," he said. If he has a sudden budget crunch, for example, he can have the agency cut back on its hours for the month. This would be more difficult with an in-house staff.

Nor does Faulring think he could get the level of professionalism as economically by hiring an in-house staff. About six well-seasoned account executives work on his account.

How does he know he's getting his money's worth? "It boils down to any other professional service—there has to be a very high level of trust between the people," he said.

Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Inc. is probably the largest firm that doesn't use an agency. President Patrick Norton believes in the in-house method. His team includes about six people, some of whom he's sent to school to hone their creative skills.

"The key part now is that we've got a lot of experience" with advertising, he said. It would take an agency a long time to learn what they'd need to know to promote his business, and he's skeptical he could find one that would be willing to invest the time.

Norton said he has tried with three or four agencies. "It's never blossomed to where we felt comfortable they had the same goals we had," he said.

"Advertising is supposed to be a black box you can't measure" results of, he said. "I disagree with that." And having an in-house staff, he feels, enables him to know what he's paying for.

Frith of Lawn Doctor only recently switched from doing everything in-house to having an agency. "You need, from time to time, an outside look at your operation," he said.

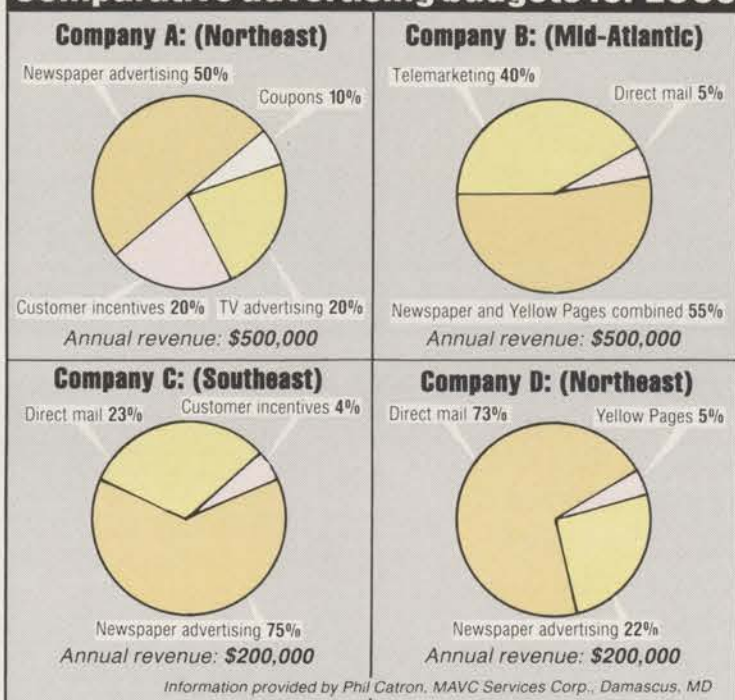
But he retains some in-house staff. The in-house graphic artist does some customer handouts and materials for the franchise outlets. The agency does the media buying and the creative work for the direct mail, broadcast and print ads.

Many of the LCOs interviewed said they had worked with several agencies before finding one they liked.

One suggestion is to hire an agency for a single project to see how well it performs. If a good rapport evolves, the agency can be given more responsibility. LCI

Agencies & Services	Advertising Agencies	Agency or in-house?
ALPHERN ALLEN ADVERTISING AG 720 W Gordon Terr 2634 W Touhy 282-116	AMANDA GROUP THE Advertising/Marketing/PR 2634 W Touhy 282-116	Most lawn care companies that have made a major investment in advertising have opted to use agencies as opposed to in-house staffs. Agencies charge between \$60 and \$120 an hour. The choice, however, is hotly debated.
ASSOC 343 S Dearborn 944-5522 ASSOC 6430 N Central 461-1985 R & ASSOC 2744 N Midland 763-4616 M LUBETKIN & COMPANY INC 348-6009 746 W Fulton Pkwy 327-8008 AMB INTERNL Chgo 664-5308	AMERAD ADVERTISING SERVICES INC Industrial Marketing Specialists & Typesetting 853 Dundee Elyon Chgo 261-8000 AMERICA'S MARATHON CHGO 223 W Erie 951-0660	
AAADVERT ASSOCIATES INC We're Local, National, International 1920 Wagon Rd Glenview 998-0600 ABELSON-TAYLOR-FITZSIMMONS 35 E Wacker Dr 781-1823 ABELSON-TAYLOR INC 35 E Wacker Dr 781-17 ABRAHAM & WEISS LTD 612 N Mich 266-09 AD-VENTURE ADVG 310 S Mich Av 341-10 ADAMC ADVERTISING AGENCY INC 348-1090	AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES AAAA An assoc of full-service, independent agencies selected for standards of integrity & excellence, & dedicated to creating successful advertising. AYER N W INC 111 E Wacker Dr 645-8800 B B D M CUNNINGHAM & WALSH 444 N Mich 644-96 BBDO CHICAGO INC 410 N Mich 337 BERNARD HODES ADVG 205 W Wacker Dr BROWN ADVERTISING F 20 N Wacker Dr BURNETT LEO Prudential	
Convention Services 010 Jorie Bl Oak Brk 655-1550 RK COMMUNICATIONS GROUP INC 010 Jorie Oak Brk 325-8880 NTAGE ADVERTISING INC 23 W Surf 549-6416 RTISING AGENCY INCORPORATED THE Service-All Media-Graphics 07 S Wabsh 341-0044 RTISING ASSOCIATES INC 33 N Mich 346-7346 RTISING UNLIMITED INC 535 W Petrus 329-0377 525 W Petrus 478-7766		
Serv-Black Consumer Mkt Specialists 44 N Mich 644-2318 ADVG 1520 W Montana 477-7100 MARKET 1 INC hgo O'Hare Airport 686-0425 ANDER & ASSOC 411 N Troy 764-8833 EDIA ADVERTISING AGCY 034 W Lawm 777-0054 V SANDER ADVERTISING INC		

### Comparative advertising budgets for LCOs



media for immediate customer response as opposed to just image building. Radio and television ads include a toll free number for customers to call.

This is more expensive, notes Tru Green's Anderegg, since it requires a longer ad. But it enables the company to better monitor its return on

financial backing, I'd go (with an agency) right from the start." Without one, he said, "You can't see the forest through the trees. You're too tied to the business."

Catron said lawn care firms should use agencies for whatever creative work they need, no matter how little. "You can make a one-person company



# How can a communications agency help your firm?

By JAMES A. SAMPLE

**S**hould you hire a communications agency to handle your advertising, sales promotion and public relations needs?

That decision rests on the opportunities and problems in your particular business. Here are some reasons LCOs use an agency:

- They and their staff are too busy to handle communications themselves.

- They don't have enough experience in communications or marketing.

- They want another expert's opinion or point of view.

- They need communications help in a community that's new to the LCO or in a new business venture.

Just what is a communications agency? It is a company that sells its communications abilities to clients. It uses these abilities to inform, persuade and motivate people to buy products or services.

Large agencies offer a full range of services such as market research, planning, production and placement of advertising in print and broadcast media, production of sales promotion literature and audio-visual presentations, product publicity (including news and feature story placements), direct mail, trade show displays, telemarketing and more.

Medium and small-sized agencies concentrate on a few of the above. They can arrange with another specialist on a subcontract basis if they need something beyond their normal capability. For example, they might write the script for a videotape but retain a production company to shoot it, record sound and edit the final tape.

What kind of an agency is right for a lawn care business? One that understands its problems and opportunities, and one whom the clients involved are comfortable working with.

## How much to spend

An LCO should invest an amount of money for communications equal to the competition if:

- The LCO's company is well known already.

- There is not much customer turnover or competitive pressure.

- The company is satisfied with its market share.

- The company doesn't need many different types of communications services or require them often during the year.

An LCO should invest more than the competition for communications if:

- The company is not well known or if it is trying to overcome a bad reputation.

- The company has lots of

customer turnover or new-found prospects.

- Competition is strong.

- The company wants to increase its market share by introducing an innovative service, a lower price, or by entering an area where it's not well known.

- The company needs a variety of communications services relatively often during the year.

Agencies are most effective when they help the client design a marketing plan rather than receiving a plan to carry out. A marketing plan spells



## About the Author

James A. Sample is president of Marcomm Marketing Communications, Inc., of Minneapolis, MN.

out the respective roles of customer service, the sales force and the agency.

## Agency organization

A typical communications agency includes the following components:

- Administrators (owner or president) manage the agency. They are supported by an accounting department.

- One or more experienced leaders (vice president or account supervisor) direct services to clients.

- An account supervisor or account executive is responsi-

ble for individual accounts.

- Various agency departments (creative, art, production, media, research, direct marketing, audio-visual, etc.) support the people mentioned above.

One person from the client's company should be chosen to work with the agency. This person should be as high ranking as possible, with authority to make decisions.

(Editor's Note: Marcomm Marketing handles public relations for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.) LCI



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Best of all, Poast saves you all the time, labor and expense of handhoeing.

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# How do you select a communications agency?

FINDING CANDIDATES IS EASY; KNOWING WHAT TO LOOK FOR REQUIRES PLANNING

By LARRY TEIEN

**S**o you've decided to interview communications agencies to handle your advertising and related needs. Where do you look to find at least three agencies to interview?

You can't turn to your competitors. If they've got a good agency, they won't want you to find out. And if they know of another good agency but it already has a lawn care account, there would be a conflict of interest if it tried to serve you, too.

What you need is a directory. In most towns, the agencies are listed conveniently in the business-to-business or consumer Yellow Pages telephone directory. They're found under advertising agencies, public relations agencies and marketing agencies.

Some cities may have a special directory of agencies and their services—ask the librarian at a good business library or at the chamber of commerce. Large cities may have communications organizations such as the 4As for advertising or the Public Relations Society of America for public relations which could help you.

The first thing an LCO must do is select a high ranking person on staff to be the chief liaison with the agency. The person must be familiar with the company and its goals, and have authority to make decisions.

Next, the liaison person should gather a copy of your company's history, operating plan and marketing plan if you have them.

Agree internally on what you expect to achieve from the communications program. In addition, decide how you will approach budget setting:

- Do you have definite communications needs in mind? Explain them to your candidate agencies and ask them to give a rough estimate of what it would cost.

- Do you have a budget ceiling in mind? Tell your candidate agencies and ask them to describe the work they could do for that amount of money.

Some agencies bill on an hourly basis, plus out-of-pocket expenses. For advertising, some bill a combination of hourly for production and a commission on advertising placed. Arrange a method that makes sense to you.

## What to ask

It's okay to have the agencies in your offices, one at a time, to make a presentation. However, it's always illuminating to go to each agency's office for the presentations. You can get a better feel for the entire operation.

Should you ask each agency

to present a detailed communications plan? No.

First, it isn't fair to you as a client. The agency can't prescribe a cure until it's made a complete diagnosis. That requires quite a bit of interviewing and creative thought.

Second, it isn't fair to the agencies. The good ones simply may refuse to give away their efforts.

It's best for the LCO to ask for the agency's capabilities and a general description of the agency's approach. Some-

times, the client will agree to pay for a certain amount of planning by candidate agencies. At the end, regardless of which agency is picked, the client owns the plans and the agencies are compensated for their efforts.

How important is the prospective agency's knowledge of lawn care?

It's a great benefit if you find an agency with that background. But chances are remote that an experienced agency would have no compet-

ing accounts. So consider related experience—elsewhere in the green industries, for example.

More important than that is communications experience and problem-solving ability. After all, your company has plenty of experts on lawn care. What you need are experts in communications. Accept no substitute for that!

Some inexperienced clients say, "I'm not going to pay for you to learn about my business." That attitude will only

hurt you if you want the agency as a marketing partner. If you wish, set some limitations on the amount of time to be spent on background study.

Another consideration is personality matching. You've got to be comfortable working with the agency personnel. If you like the agency but dislike someone on the account team, bring it up—you're the boss.

Beware of "bait and switch!" Some agencies sell accounts with their top people, then assign them to mid-

# Ford shapes the American landscape



## Industrial tractors

Big site preparation projects require a tractor with extra strength and performance... and that's exactly what a Ford industrial tractor or tractor-loader offers.

Four heavy-duty diesel models are available with 49 to 63 SAE net horsepower. Tractor-loaders offer up to 4,500 lbs of lift capacity, with single-lever loader control and return-to-dig.

Choose from three power-matched transmissions—4 speed torque converter, dual range 8-speed, or manual-reversing 6x4.

Ask your dealer about the Ford Extended Service Plan. ESP covers many specific repairs for 36 months or 2,500 operating hours, whichever comes first. At a modest cost, it's smart protection for your rig.



## Compact tractors

Hardworking Ford 1000 Series diesel tractors are ideal for a wide range of mowing, loading and site preparation jobs.

Choose from six models, 13 to 32 engine horsepower. Standard equipment includes important features like 540 rpm PTO, Category I 3-point hitch, full-time live hydraulics and a 10 or 12-speed transmission.

Options include front-wheel drive. Hydrostatic or Synchronized Manual Shuttle transmission, depending on model. Creeper speeds. And turf tires. Over 50 matching attachments and implements are available, including 15 different mowers.



## Tractor-loaders

You can equip virtually every Ford tractor with a matching Ford loader. These quality loaders combine strength with smooth control. Double-acting lift and dump cylinders are standard. Lift capacities range from 530 to 5,000 pounds. All loaders offer a choice of buckets.

Quik-Tach loader models for many tractors make for great flexibility. You can easily mount or remove the loader to suit the work at hand.

Ford also offers many other attachments for grounds maintenance work: rotary cutters, flail mowers, front and rear blades, landscape rakes, scoops and posthole diggers.



dle level staff. Good agencies will introduce you promptly to the people who will work on your account.

#### A checklist

Following is a checklist LCOs can use for selecting an agency:

#### General background: (15 points)

How long has the agency been in business? Does the agency have quality accounts? Is the agency growing at a manageable pace? What accounts does the agency have?

#### General attitude: (15 points)

Is the agency's business philosophy like yours? Is the

agency businesslike? Is its accounting computerized? Does the agency listen to clients? Does it also voice its own beliefs?

#### Physical organization: (10 points)

Are agency offices well-organized? Is the agency staffed to handle your business? What work might they subcontract to outsiders? Who at the agency would work on your account? How many other accounts would these people be working on besides yours?

#### Compatibility: (15 points)

Do you like the agency people personally? Would you like doing business with the



#### About the Author

Larry Teien is executive vice president of Marcomm Marketing Communications, Minneapolis, MN, the agency for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

agency?

#### Experience: (30 points)

Has the agency solved problems similar to yours before? Can they identify problem areas in your business? Do they approach problems like you do? Have they developed communications campaigns that appeal to you? Have they had experience in lawn care or related fields? Are they willing to experiment with new communications techniques if you should desire that?

#### Related qualities: (15 points)

Can the agency place news releases and feature stories in print and broadcast media? Could they write speeches? LCI

## Posting proposed in R.I.

By ELLIOT MARAS  
Editor

**RHODE ISLAND**—Don't be surprised if the LCOs in Rhode Island don't ask the Department of Environmental Management for any more favors.

As a result of asking the department to intervene when a township threatened to enact its own pesticide regulations, the state's LCOs and other turfgrass managers will have to post pesticide warning signs.

A posting regulation is scheduled to go into effect May 15. Warning signs, 4 by 5 inches, must give the operator's name and phone number. They must be posted for 72 hours after application, and "in conspicuous points of access to the property."

Homeowners will have the right to be given 48-hour pre-notification upon request.

The regulation applies to golf courses, parks and recreational grounds, but not do-it-yourselfers.

The regulation was agreed on by a task force consisting of department officials, lawn care firms and environmentalists. The department organized the task force after LCOs, facing local regulations, asked for some state-wide standards governing pesticides.

"We thought it would be easier to get something livable for the whole state," said Dave Wallace, vice president, Tuckahoe Lawn Care Co., Warwick, RI.

Wallace and other LCOs who participated in the task force said the regulation would have been more restrictive without their input. "We addressed the pre-notification issue and got it toned down very nicely," Wallace said.

Joe Merlino, regional technical manager for ChemLawn's Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York operations, said ChemLawn favored the regulation as it stands. "We generally supported it. We appreciated the opportunity to work on the committee," he said.

Jim Wilkinson, general manager of Old Fox Lawn Care, Inc., Providence, and president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, also sat on the task force. He feels the law is discriminatory because it excludes homeowners.

The Department of Environmental Management held a public hearing in late February to give all concerned parties a chance for input. One more is to be held before the law is final. LCI

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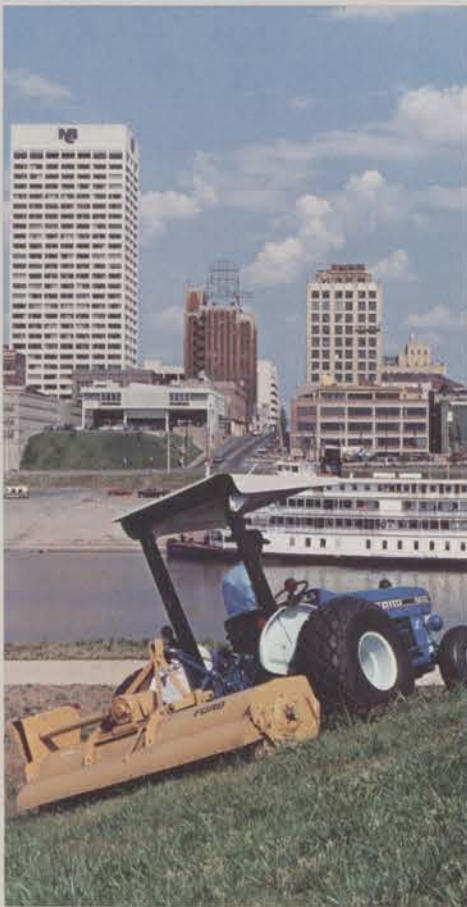


#### Industrial backhoes

With a Ford industrial backhoe loader, you'll be well equipped for trenching, drainpipe installation and other heavy-duty earthmoving jobs.

With Ford you can count on awesome power and precise control. The 14-foot backhoe gives you 9,735 pounds of digging force, and the 12-foot model 8,800 pounds.

Two or four-lever controls offer precise operation. Ten-foot stabilizer spread provides a wide stance. A selection of buckets lets you equip your backhoe for a variety of digging jobs.



#### New mid-range tractors

The new Ford II models are versatile tractors that make short work of big-area mowing, loading, site preparation and other tough jobs. They're easy to operate and offer excellent all-around performance.

Choose from five diesel models from 34.3 to 60 maximum net engine horsepower. Standard equipment includes 3-point hitch, independent PTO, and power-assist steering. A new optional cab on selected models makes them an excellent choice for snow removal work.

Other options include front-wheel drive, synchromesh transmission, and turf tires.

Ford also offers 40.5 and 60 maximum SAE net horsepower low-center-of-gravity Ford II tractors.



#### Skid-steer loaders

You can cut your costs and increase productivity with New Holland Super Boom loaders. High capacity hydraulics handle a variety of attachments including tree spades, backhoes, pallet forks, landscape buckets, trenchers and posthole diggers.

Eight models available with operating loads from 600 to 2,050 pounds.

To find out how much better a skid-steer loader can be, see your New Holland dealer.

Your Ford Tractor dealer is listed in the Yellow Pages under "Contractors' Equipment & Supplies" and/or "Tractor Dealers."





# Building contractors need lawn management firms

IT PAYS TO TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION MARKET IN YOUR AREA

There are many opportunities for lawn management companies to work as subcontractors for construction companies. In most cases, the construction companies do not have the necessary background or equipment to do landscaping or lawn management and seek outside companies able and professional enough to do the work.

Here are some of the opportunities that we see for a lawn

management company to become involved with construction companies:

1) Landscaping around a new development. You can provide both design and installation services for the construction company.

2) Providing services such as lawn management, ongoing installation, and facets of design work after the construction is completed.

3) Providing design support backup for contractors and

construction companies. This can be done without any physical work being purchased by the construction company.

4) Providing hydroseeding, sod and total landscape installation services either for existing structures or pending ones.

5) Providing soil preparation and seeding for new construction, once again without the other physical services.

6) Providing equipment rental to construction firms who don't want to add the ad-

ditional costs of landscaping equipment on a permanent basis.

7) Providing lawn preparation services to home builders with the opportunity to market landscape services directly to the consumers at a later date.

Each one of these types of services requires some marketing effort on your part. In particular, new construction starts require that you be aware of construction activity



McGary

Wandtke

## About the Authors

Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke are senior partners in All-Green Management Associates, Inc., Columbus, OH.

in your area.

You can find out about these by checking with the Dodge Reports, finding a local Builders Exchange or like institution, or through continuous contact with your local builders. Remember that you must be in front of these people long before they begin to build so that you are a part of their bidding process.

For the follow-up type of work you should contact each of the major builders and construction companies in your area. This can be done through a direct mail effort, but it is generally better if a personal contact can be made. You will find that by putting together a contact list, one which tells you how often you have contacted potential customers, that you can space your visits to these people.

One final thought. In positioning your marketing effort to the construction companies, you must understand what they are looking for. We have worked with a wide variety of companies and there are two dominant buying motives.

First, they are going to be interested in the price of the services you offer, particularly if they are bidding jobs. However, the price factor is balanced against the second consideration, the quality image and ability to service the clients that you have as an organization.

Low price does not always become the major factor. For quality construction companies the key is both a fair price and your ability to deliver services professionally. If these two factors match, you will find that you can charge more than the lowest possible and that you will have good relationships with construction companies based on your performance.

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EA-3 Aerifier



JR-4 Aerifier



VCD-14 Verti-Cut



TM-60 Aerifier



TB-60 Aerifier



TM-140 Aerifier  
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### Walk-behind Aerifiers:

The JR-4 was designed especially for the lawn care professional. Self-propelled, fast and maneuverable. Just 34½ inches wide, it cultivates a 23 inch swath, to aerify 26,000 sq. ft. an hour, at an easy 3 mph. walk. Holds 40 tines.

The EA-3 is for smaller lawns. Very durable and easy to operate, it is virtually maintenance free. Holds 16 tines.

### Verti-Cut De-Thatcher:

The VCD-14 is a proven performer for maintaining a healthy, thatch-free lawn. Also used for renovating or seed bed preparation.

### Tractor-drawn Aerifiers:

The TM-140 cultivates a full 6 ft. swath, for the most economical aerification of large turf areas. Attaches to the 3-point hitch of your category "3" tractor or, add a conversion kit and it's a tow-type. Kit includes transport wheels, draw bar and hydraulic lift jack. Fourteen discs, hold 140 tines or blades.

**NEW** The TM-60, cultivates a 32 inch swath for fast aerification of smaller turf areas. Attaches to the 3-point hitch of your category "0" or "1" tractor (with 500 lbs. lifting capacity). Six discs, hold 60 tines or blades.

**NEW** The TB-60, a tow-type unit to cultivate a 32 inch swath. Can be easily towed by most small lawn tractors. Utilize the towing vehicle's hydraulics or add Hahn's Pow-R-Pak. Turf protecting tires and six discs to hold 60 tines or blades.

### Turf Maintenance Vehicle:

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# The big thing in spring is lining up your customers

By JAMES E. GUYETTE  
Associate Editor

If you happen to cruise through Gap, PA, around now you're likely to see Amy L. Burman out pounding the pavement. "It's a good time to take time to meet with the customers," she said. "I like to meet personally with the customers."

These meetings are spent "reviewing with the customer how last year's proposals met their needs," Burman reported.

Burman and her husband Craig own Burman's Landscape Service.

Spring marketing is "the most important push of the year," said Ronald W. Collins, president of R.W. Collins, Inc., Satellite Beach, FL. (The firm was recently sold to Tru Green Corp.) "The marketing people are busy stuffing brochures." Another task is to "scout out the neighborhoods to see what areas we want to strengthen."

"I think phone calling is better suited," said Stefan Michael of Milford Landscape and Maintenance, Milford, CT. The company also sends out a color brochure to help solicit commercial accounts, and it places advertisements in a local business magazine and newspaper.

"Our market here is pretty big because there's a lot of Fortune 500 companies," Michael said. "We really try to get our bids out in the early spring." The competition "is very stiff—there are quite a few contractors around so you have to be competitive," he said.

A letter soliciting bid invitations is sent to Kansas City area businesses in mid-January, said John Folker, president of Landscape Management Services, and the jobs are hopefully lined up by mid-February. Personal visits to potential accounts are made in February and March.

Homeowners also are now taking bids, Folker said. "I've found that residentials are

looking at it more like commercial businesses."

He targets his efforts toward the more upscale customer. "I'm more on the high-maintenance end of the business—the person who's looking for better service, not better price," Folker explained. "There's always some kid down the street who can give you a better price."

At Ranier Lawn & Landscape, Inc., Tacoma, WA, a computer is used to send out personalized letters to current and potential customers. "One letter can be addressed to

just about everybody," said Operations Manager Christopher K. Walls. "All we have to do is change the name and it's ready to go."

Each customer of Shovels and Rakes, Narragansett, RI, is contacted by phone or mail by the end of March, Owner David Ousterhout said.

At Lawn Master Inc., Missoula, MT, President John M. Bass starts calling his previous customers March 1, plus they get a letter offering a pre-payment discount.

A large-scale direct mailing is sent out when the weather

breaks. It doesn't do any good to start earlier. "In Montana it's still pretty cold, so if you start advertising then people don't get too excited," Bass pointed out. "We really have to wait until good weather before people get excited about their lawns."

It's the same story in New England, as Frank Reardon's North Country Landscaping, Inc., clients in South Burlington, VT, are concerned with skiing, snow removal and heating bills. "No matter how much we try to sell in the winter it's impossible," he said.

People won't sign contracts until they're good and ready. "Then they want the work done yesterday," Reardon joked. "That's kind of a screwball they throw at you."

Even his largest commercial customer, a huge multinational firm, waits until the last minute to sign up each year, Reardon said.

In Alaska, Michael Christensen at Landscaping Resources Corp., Anchorage, doesn't finish lining up his customers until April.

"We have such a short season," Christensen said. LCI

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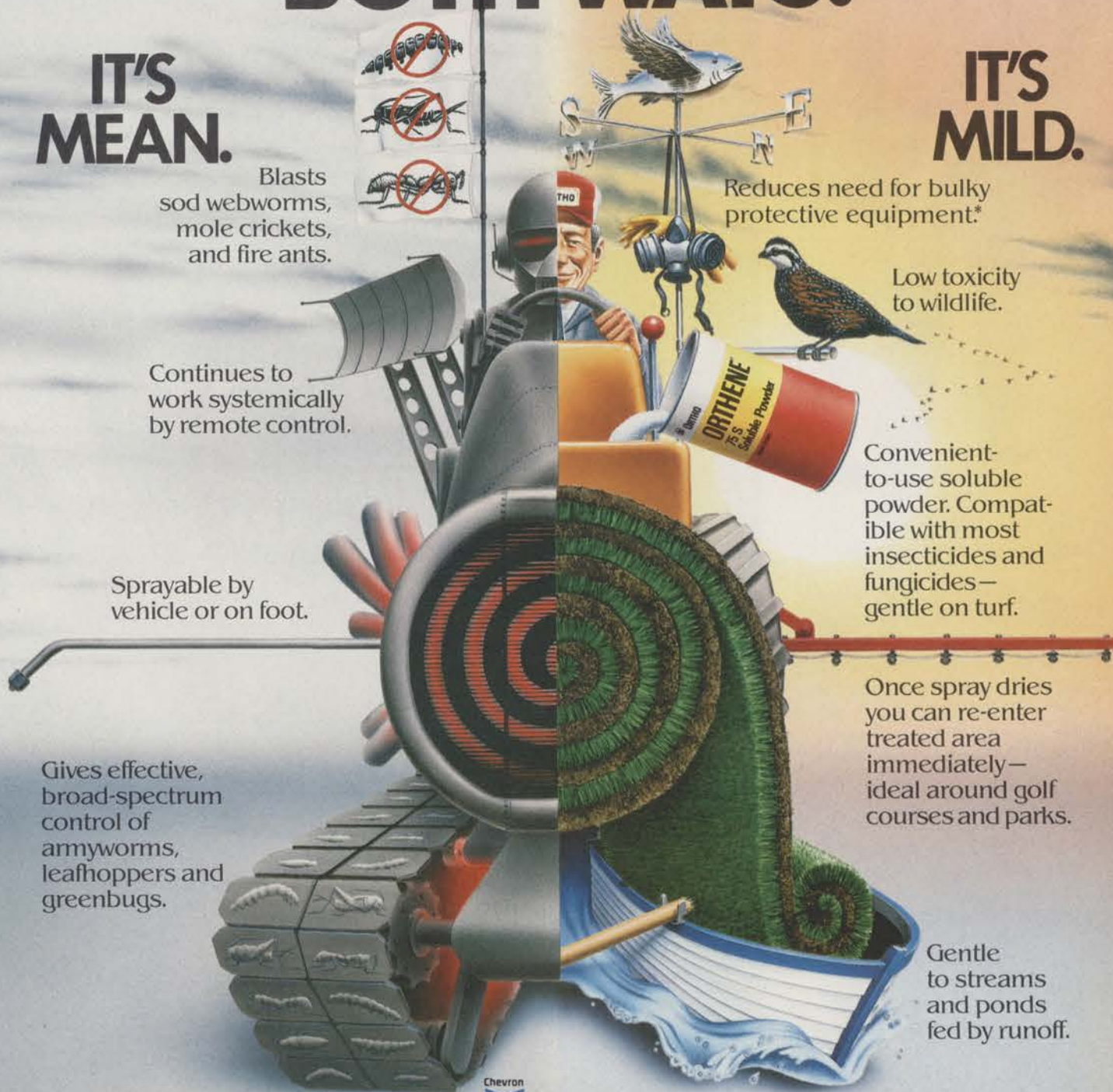
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### Thoreau awards given to Massachusetts firms

BOXBOROUGH, MASS.—Ten Bay State companies are winners of 1987 Thoreau Awards from the Associated Landscape Contractors of Massachusetts.

The Grand Award winners were: DeRosa Associates, Inc., Rockport; and Homestead Landscaping Co., Rowley.

Merit Award winners were: Peter R. Cook & Associates, Inc., Norwell; Concoran Management Co., Baintree; Crossroad Landscape Design, Inc., Brewster; Homestead Landscaping Co., Rowley; Jameson Landscape, Inc.; and Landscape, Inc., Edgartown.

LCI



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# Create lasting impression with uniform apparel

By JAMES E. GUYETTE  
Associate Editor

**W**earing uniforms is standard procedure for lawn care firms, but increasing numbers of lawn management contractors are donning matching outfits. Supervisors are finding that uniforms create a better impression with customers and a more positive attitude among the crew members.

An informal survey shows that most lawn management firms are indeed wearing some sort of uniform.

Cost is about the only reason cited for not having uniforms.

"I'm too cheap to buy them," said a lawn management contractor in California.

"We never stopped to think about it," said another in the Midwest.



Bizon: Use walking billboards.

In North Carolina, Environments by Eileen, Greensboro, has a display advertisement in the yellow pages, but the five to seven employees do not yet wear uniforms. "I'm a new company and I haven't developed the funds necessary to get uniforms," said Owner Eileen Mooney.

"I think it would be nice but I don't think it's vital. I think it's more important to have the equipment in tip-top shape," Mooney said.

Equipment is indeed a big factor in the business, but others are saying that uniforms are crucial—and affordable.

"For 25 bucks a year per man you can put a crew in uniform," according to Fred Zarick of Wear-Guard Corp., Norwell, MA. He was referring to a set of five t-shirts at \$5 a piece.

Zarick said a full outfit is desirable, but the small operator can get by with just the shirts: "From a customer's standpoint it doesn't matter ... as long as it's the same color."

A simple white t-shirt is no longer acceptable garb for a business person, even one who works outside. A potential client will "go with the guy who looks like he knows what he's doing instead of some guy who shows up in his underwear," Zarick said.

"If you have two of us come in for bids and one is in a uni-

form and one is in jeans and a flannel shirt, who are you going to hire?" asked Stephen Bizon of the Bizon Maintenance Co., Wilsonville, OR.

In business since 1979, "we've always had uniforms from day one," Bizon said.

The public is secure in knowing that the people walking in neighborhood yards belong there. "When the homeowners see these uniforms they know it's us."

Bizon spends \$5,000 annually on uniforms for his 25 employees. Each worker gets five shirts, five pants, two hats

and one coat per season. "We pay for everything but the pants." An employee is reimbursed after working there six months to avoid wasting money on those who quit.

Is the cost worth it? You bet, said Bizon. "They're like a walking billboard."

Also, "it assures myself that they come to work looking good," Bizon said. If an article of clothing gets torn or overly dirty, the employee's pay is docked for a new one. "We just go ahead and charge them for it and give them a new one—there's no discussion."

At Gore Landscaping, Oakland, IN, the workers wear red Gore Landscaping t-shirts (sweatshirts in the fall), and they come to work clean-shaven and with short hair. "If you look neat you do a good job," Owner Robin Gore said.

Mandatory haircuts and uniforms are also the rule at Ranier Lawn and Landscape, Inc., Tacoma, WA. "We're kind of particular about details," said Operations Manager Christopher K. Walls.

Strader Lawn Care, Indianapolis, IN, is a small firm, but owner Jack Strader and his





two sons are always decked out in smart white shirts and green pants. "I put a lot in appearance," Srader said. "I think you get more business that way. People are more likely to sit up and take notice than if they're out there with holey t-shirts and cutoffs."

Srader pays \$6 a week per man to a local clothing rental firm: "A clean shirt every day. I think it looks more professional."

"It provides a *much* more professional look," said Rick Patton of Rick's Lawn Service, Indianapolis. "I know I've gotten work because of the shirts." Neighbors see the advertising and neat look.

His five employees wear golf-style shirts. "I don't like t-shirts, golf shirts aren't that much more." The workers pay \$1.50 a week, and Patton retains ownership of the garments to prevent the sleeves being torn off and the shirts being worn after hours.

#### Feeling good

Patton said his workers perform better because they look—and feel—good about themselves. "I think that makes a big difference. It makes them feel like more of a team."

"It gives you an image," said George Alexander of Alexander's Trim Turf, another

Indianapolis firm. He pays \$280 a year for each of his six workers to wear golf shirts and kakki pants. "I think it's worth it."

Like most companies interviewed for this piece, Alexander's workers are not allowed to doff their shirts when it gets hot. "I would not let anyone take off their shirts," he said. "It just looks better."

"Usually we don't wear a shirt at all," said Tom Cassady of Cassady's Cutting Co. He cited hot Indianapolis summers. "It gets unbearable." They do wear uniform shirts when "going into restaurants and presenting bills to cus-

tomers. When I'm discussing contracts I make a point of it." Cassady said.

Cassady added that this year he intends to buy red or green mesh shirts in an attempt to look good and keep cool.

Ah, beware Mr. Cassady! According to James P. Kelly of Apparelmaster, Inc., Cincinnati, OH, the polyester and nylon used for those mesh shirts makes them hotter than regular cotton-blend shirts.

Mesh-backed hats, though, do a good job of keeping the wearer comfortable, in addition to looking sharp, Kelly said.

Some firms in hotter cli-

mates are buying shorts for workers in an effort to keep them cool and avoid the use of cutoffs. "With shorts, obviously, you need to get into socks," Kelly said. He referred to the matching shorts and socks worn by postal workers.

Don't overlook shoes, either. At Clark-Morrell, Inc., Lithonia, GA, "sneakers are definitely out," said Vice President George Morrell. For safety reasons, "we don't let anybody go to work without leather shoes. If they come to work in sneakers we send them home."

Crew members wear t-shirts and supervisors wear golf shirts. "We buy the t-shirts and golf shirts with our logos on them and we sell them to them at half price," Morrell said. "That gives a more stable environment—paying for it," he added. "You get such a high turnover."

Lawn management contractors should make sure they buy enough shirts for their crews. "To me it seems crazy to get anything less than five for a five-day week," said Kelly. This way you avoid having a dirty, smelly worker saying, "I didn't have time to wash my clothes." Kelly noted, "the more shirts you have the crisper it'll look and the more professional you'll look."

Wear-Guard's Zarick agreed. He added that extensive laundering does the shirts in. "They don't wear out so much as from being on your back as they do from being washed," he said.

#### Looking good

Some other advantages to uniforms were described by Zarick. "It's the final chapter of putting together a successful small business. If the crew looks sharp, they're going to be sharp. They're wearing the boss' name on the back—they're going to behave better," he said.

Customers will be impressed when they see a truck with a uniformed crew roll up, Zarick said. It will make your business look larger. "They don't know if there's one truck or 50," he said. LCI

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## Double up on fungicides, LCOs are told

**ROCHESTER, N.Y.**—Contact and systemic fungicides should both be used in a disease control program, Elanco's Dr. Tom Perkins told attendees at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America regional seminar in Rochester, NY.

The reason for doubling up on the fungicides is that some diseases—most notably dollar spot and the Fusarium complex—have developed resistances, he said.

The fungicides can be alternated or tank mixed, he said. LCI



# Regulations related too much to politics, says LCO



Great Debate: Feldman speaks as Wilkinson waits to respond.

By JAMES E. GUYETTE  
Associate Editor

BOXBOROUGH, MASS.—“We are dealing definitely with the politics of spraying,” said Jim Wilkinson, president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. “We’re out there—we’re visible—we come down the street in big white trucks.”

Wilkinson, general manager of Old Fox Lawn Care, Inc., Providence, RI, made his comments during a debate over pesticides at the Massachusetts Landscape Con-

ference in Boxborough. His opponent was Jay Feldman, national coordinator for the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides.

Just like the great Lincoln-Douglas debates, this one was civilized yet informative. “People can be brought to understand these things in non-hysterical terms,” said Feldman. His membership includes people in the green industries.

“We’re not saying that every pesticide has to be safe all the time,” Feldman said. “We’re just saying that the

risks should not outweigh the benefits.”

Feldman said he is merely a messenger discussing concerns being expressed throughout the country. “I’m not telling you my own perception—I’m bringing you information published by others,” he said.

According to Feldman, government documents acknowledge that some pesticides are not properly tested before being approved for use. “The chemical industry, by the way, agrees that this is a problem,” he said.

“There are millions and millions of dollars poured into (pesticide research),” Wilkinson said. “The data gaps are being filled by the manufacturers,” he added.

“We’re as concerned as anybody when it comes to whether our chemicals are safe,” Wilkinson said. “We as applicators are exposed as anybody . . . to pesticides on a day in and day out basis.”

“There are methods (for alternative pest control), and they’re out there even at this conference,” Feldman said.

“Pesticides have had a major role in reducing disease,” said Wilkinson. “The idea of zero-risk is absolutely impossible. I think we have done a reasonably good job in managing pesticides.”

“The concern is out there, there’s no question about it,” Feldman said.

Wilkinson agreed: “I think we as an industry have to recognize that the public’s perceptions are changing.” He expressed irritation with the politics behind Massachusetts’ posting law. “We do have a real problem with regulation for the sake of regulation.”

Chemicals are not being overly used by LCOs, Wilkinson said. “Let’s face it, pesticides cost us money.”

Homeowners, tree sprayers, farmers and structural pest control people are not included in the posting law. “Our main concern here in Massachusetts is that these regulations are discriminatory. We are the only ones required to post. We can’t understand why we got wacked,” Wilkinson said.

Feldman said chemicals are creating additional cancer risks, particularly for children. “I’m worried as a father, I hope the people in the audience are. We’re talking about something that is real—we’re talking about something that is hard to identify. The fear is out there—I don’t think we’re creating it,” he said.

A full-service LCO-nurseryman in the audience urged his colleagues in the spray industry to broaden their horizons in view of adverse public opinion. “If the demand goes down they have no more business,”

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# Mild winter bringing more bugs, weeds to Texas

By JAMES E. GUYETTE  
Associate Editor

DALLAS, TEX.—LCOs and lawn management contractors in the Lone Star State are expecting an increased amount of insects and weeds in the coming months. Also, the population of fire ants is likely to expand.

"Anytime we have a mild winter we see a lot of problems in the spring," said Larry E. Brinkley of BLT Landscape Maintenance, Dallas. "It creates havoc with our maintenance program."

Just like last year, lack of freezing temperatures will result in "weeds that bloom early and thick," according to an analysis of weather statistics by the *Dallas Times Herald*.

Weeds aren't the only problem expected to crop up. "The bugs are going to be really bad this year," said Judy Rawles of B&J's Lawn Service in rural Red Oak.

"We can probably expect a severe problem with insects again this year," agreed Neel Brown, western zone coordinator for Lawn Doctor, Inc. "We've basically had no winter. This is going to be two mild winters in a row," he said.

At Las Colinas Landscaping Services, Inc., Irving, Vice President Stan Johnson said rainfall is the big factor when it comes to weeds. "Whenever we have a real wet spring we have a lot of weeds. We haven't noticed that much of a difference with the temperatures," he said.

As in previous years, the population of the notorious fire ant is expected to increase.

## Perennial ryegrasses versatile

PLEASANT HILL, TENN.—The new turf type perennial ryegrasses, *All Star*, *Citation*, *Delray*, *Derby*, *Elka*, *Fiesta*, *Manhattan II*, *Omega*, *Pennant*, *Pennfine*, *Ranger*, *Regal*, *Repell* are the most versatile of any lawngresses available, according to the Lawn Institute.

They germinate rapidly, can be used by themselves or with other grasses in seed mixtures, and are used successfully to establish a new lawn or to improve an old one by overseeding into a poor quality turf.

These grasses do not form thatch and are easy to maintain on low budgets, the institute claims. Disease and insect resistance help to eliminate need for use of pest control chemicals.

Turf type perennial ryegrasses are readily available in packages by themselves as well as in mixtures with bluegrasses and fine fescues. LCI

Temperature has no bearing. Even if it's too cold "they simply move down deeper into the soil," said Ron Wyatt, president of Lawn Doctor of Rockwall/Greenville.

Fire ants have a severe bite and sting, and they will attack anything that disturbs their nest. The hills can be about eight inches high and they pop up in yards after it rains. "You can bend a (mower) blade on some of the mounds," said William L. James of the Ground Crew, Arlington.

"We're seeing more and more of them, and we're seeing



Cormier: Fire ants need a pro.

more and more people concerned about it," reported Roy L. Cormier, owner of Lawn Doctor of DeSoto/Lancaster.

"Fire ants are just a difficult thing to control," said Brown. "You're getting limited control at best with fire ants. As a general rule we stay away from fire ant treatment. The customer isn't going to be happy so we stay away from them."

A number of LCOs said they recommend that a pest control operator be brought in to control the beasts, which are a major hazard to children and pets. "A lot of homeowners treat

fire ants on their own," Cormier said. "What they usually do is drive them over to their neighbor's yard," he added.

"They make their mounds all over the yards," explained Brinkley of BLT.

"If you control one yard they move on to the next—and then they're back again," he said.

Some recommended treatments include Amdro, Dursban, Diazinon, Orthene and Prodrone.

Amdro gets high marks from Mary Buckno of Happy Landscaping, Garland. LCI

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# Dig up extra dollars by tilling flowerbeds and turf

By JOHN CARSON

**W**henver thorough soil preparation is called for, a rotary tiller is the preferred tool for the job.

Just as successful lawn seeding or sodding depends on the condition of the soil, installation of landscape plantings may require better tilth and aeration. In most cases, tilling to a depth of six to eight inches will be adequate for planting.

Tilling also is the best method of incorporating soil amendments and dry fertilizers, since the mixing action distributes such materials evenly through the root zone.

Since their introduction in North America during the 1930s, rotary tillers have made a place for themselves because of the superior results compared to hand methods or the old fashioned plow-and-harrow approach. The ability to chop and mix in vegetation is an advantage, but the big benefit of tilling is the loose, even-textured soil.

## What size to use?

To determine which sort of tiller is best for you, look at the variety of chores you need to accomplish.

If large-scale jobs are your main concern, then a tractor-mounted tiller may be the right choice for your operations. Key considerations for this category are transportation and access to the work site.

Walk-behind rear-tine tillers can get into more places, and are best suited to areas 10,000 square feet or less. Though more labor intensive than tractor-mounts, they're capable of excellent results in all soil conditions.

For flowerbeds and small-space tilling requirements, a front-tine machine might be sufficient. While physically demanding and more time consuming to operate, this kind of tiller might be right if your needs are limited.

## Tiller features

If you're in the market for a tractor-mounted unit, your

choices may be dictated by the particular size and capabilities of your tractor. The best advice is to visit an area dealer to discuss your needs.

With the many different brands and designs of walk-behind tillers available—most of them intended for the homeowner—professional users may find it confusing to sort out their alternatives.

Light-duty tillers may cost less initially, but repair and maintenance expense, plus critical downtime, could reverse the economics of the sit-

uation.

## Transmission

The heart of any ground-engaging machine is its transmission, and that's a good place to start your evaluation. The most rugged tillers will have worm gear drive and roller bearing construction.

The stamped steel cases of light chain drives tend to flex under the extreme loads involved in tilling, which can lead to misalignment of crucial parts.

And as sprockets and

chains wear, the resulting slack often can only be corrected by replacing whole assemblies in the transmission.

Chain drive tillers are best suited for light cultivation chores or occasional use.

Worm gear drive, by contrast, is solid and simple, with fewer wearing parts. When wear does begin to show up, it can usually be remedied easily and inexpensively.

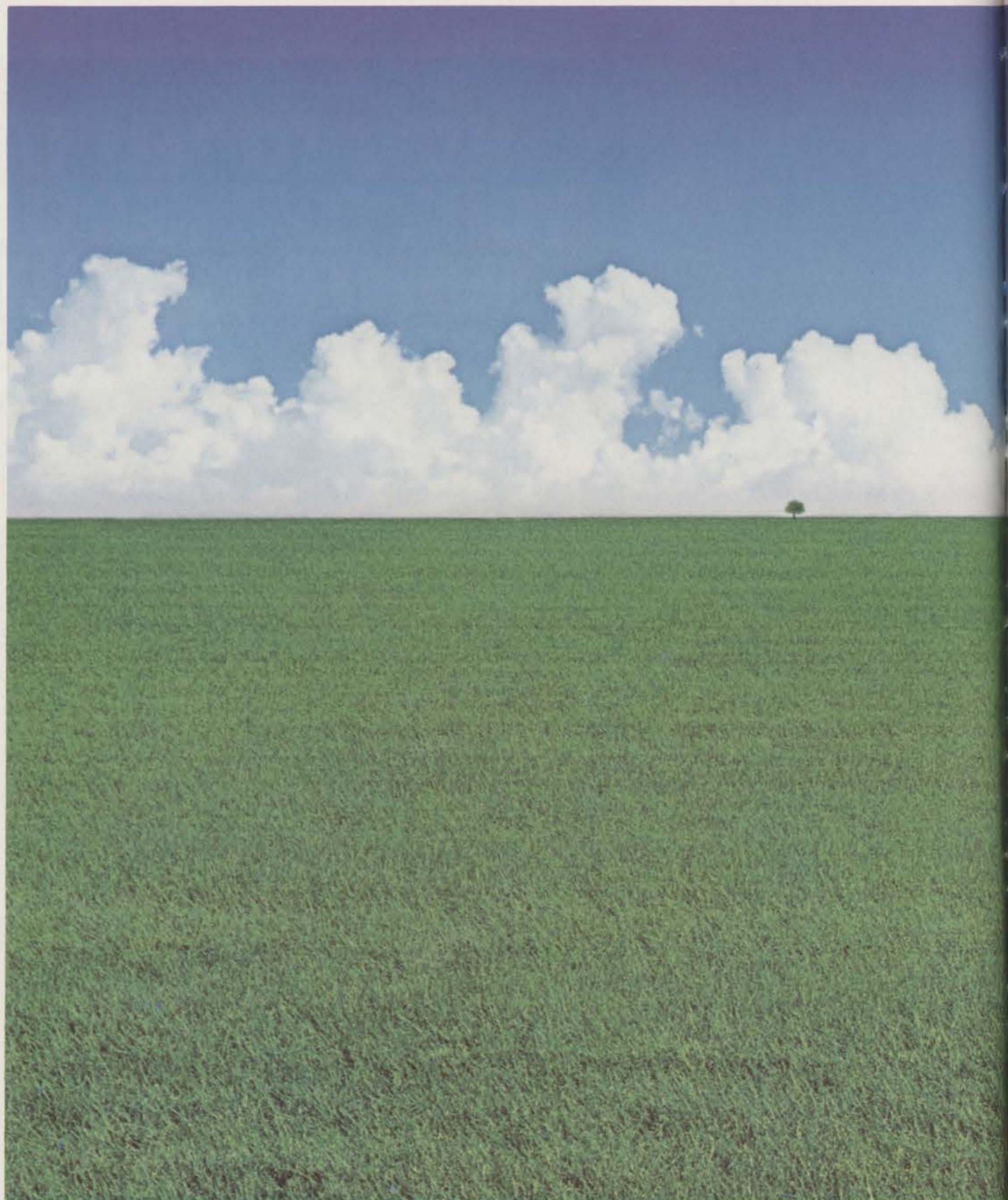
A transmission with tapered roller bearings on the tillershaft and the main drive-shaft will have the greatest life

expectancy under commercial use. Ball bearings just don't have enough surface area to stand up to the heavy loads and thrusts that are normally generated as the tines strike rocks and hard-packed earth.

A tiller with powered wheels that offers you a choice of ground speeds and tine speeds will be able to handle a greater variety of tasks in all kinds of soil conditions.

## Engine

For professional use, an industrial type engine with long-



## About the Author

John Carson is manager of the commercial sales dept. at Garden Way Man. Co., Troy, NY, makers of Troy-bilt tillers.

# Control you can depend on.



life features would be recommended, unless the tiller will be used only occasionally.

You'll need more than five or six horsepower to handle commercial work. A front-tine tiller may need five horsepower or less.

Industrial/commercial features include a dual-element (two stage) air cleaner, ball bearing crankshaft, highly heat-resistant valves and valve rotators.

Electronic ignition is also desirable to reduce engine service requirements.

The engine will likely be the most maintenance-sensitive part of the tiller, so it pays to look for the highest quality.

#### Other features

Many individual points of comparison could be outlined, but the following are some of the most significant:

- Power reverse will greatly improve maneuverability on the jobsite, especially in landscaping work.

- Simple controls, conveniently located, make the machine more user-friendly.

- Safety and instruction decals, preferably illustrating the use of all controls, are vital—especially if the tiller will have more than one operator.

- Overall balance and ease of operation can save a great deal of effort and speed up the work.

- A positive, accurate depth regulator that is easy to use is essential for proper tiller performance.

- Multipurpose tines should chop and shred vegetation easily. Tines with a swept-back cutting edge will shed tangles better than straight-shaped ones.

Many of your questions about performance and handling can best be answered by hands-on demonstrations of tillers you may be considering.

#### After you buy

In addition to evaluating the "hardware," it's important to consider what kind of customer service stands behind

the machine.

If tillers are a sideline for your supplier, it's less likely that parts or service expertise will be immediately available should they be needed. If you buy from a dealer or distributor, rather than directly from the manufacturer, inquire about service support and commercial discount policies.

Is the tiller backed by any warranty for commercial use?

Does the owner's manual that comes with the unit provide service and maintenance information, as well as safety and operating instructions?

And does it come with a parts catalog to help you easily identify every nut and bolt?

These two items can save you plenty by giving you the information you need to perform ordinary maintenance and up-keep yourself.

Finally, does your supplier deal with other commercial tiller users, and does he appreciate the importance you place on having the machine online when it's needed? This is another way of asking whether they are set up to support your needs as a professional.

A tiller can be one of your most productive pieces of power equipment. If you choose the right tiller for your operation, it can give you years of trouble-free service. It can pay for itself quickly while it helps you build your business.

LCI

## A growing opportunity for business

By JOHN CARSON

**W**ith more than 40 million gardening households in the United States, growing vegetables and flowers has become one of the nation's most important leisure-time activities.

A great many gardeners are working their soil with hand tools. And a growing number rely on someone else to handle some of the more time-consuming aspects, such as spring preparation.

That's where custom tilling services come in to fill the demand in the marketplace.

Sometimes such services are offered on a part-time or seasonal basis by power equipment owners supplementing their incomes. They often have more work than they can handle on that basis. Many lawn care and landscape businesses also offer profitable custom tilling services.

While tilling gardens may be a minor percentage of your in-season activity, there are some good business reasons to consider custom tilling opportunities in your market:

- Productivity of employees—fill-in tilling jobs can help you log more billable manhours and even-out manpower requirements.

- Equipment utilization—your machinery doesn't contribute to your bottom line if it's idle.

- Prospecting for additional business—custom tilling customers may have need of your other services.

Your housecall can create an impression of professionalism and lead to additional sales opportunities.

If you've considered diversifying your services, and you're looking for ways to tap into the market of homeowners who take an interest in their yardscape—perhaps custom tilling is one opportunity that you may wish to investigate.

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# High tech seminars help Lawn Doctor operations



**Seminar attendees:** Karen Fulton, Sue Snoddy and JoAnn Honeycutt, all employees of Lawn Doctor of Arlington/Grand Prairie, TX, at a recent seminar in Dallas.

**By JAMES E. GUYETTE**  
Associate Editor

**DALLAS, TEX.**—Owners and employees of the 285 Lawn Doctor, Inc., franchises nationwide are being kept up to date with the latest marketing techniques through a series of five regional seminars in Dallas, New York, Philadelphia, Denver and Washington, D.C.

Lawn Doctor President Russell Frith said the amount of capital spent on the seminars for workers and their families is well worth the in-

vestment.

"Most of them don't have the tools we have," Frith said of the competition. "Most of them don't have the people we have."

Preparation of the high tech seminars is overseen by office manager Mary Lou Balant and graphic artist Linda McLaughlin at the company headquarters in Matawan, NJ.

Entitled, "Stepping Into The Future," the seminars begin with delegates being surprised by banks of flashing lights and clouds of foggy dry ice. The walls of the conven-

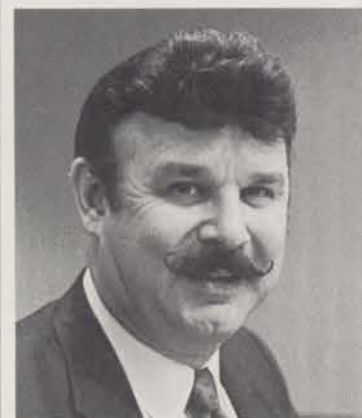
tion site are draped in space-like silver foil that further sets the desired mood.

In addition to being offered the latest in marketing techniques, delegates are treated to a hilarious play, "A Day in the Life of a Lawn Doctor Dealer."

The two-part production is a learning experience, too, as the actors (Lawn Doctor employees) show the wrong—and later the right—ways to run a business.

Act I begins with a slovenly dressed manager attempting to deal with the shortcomings of his workers and difficulties with customers. One late worker comes in dressed like a slob, and his nonchalant attitude continues as he shuffles out of the office while scratching his rear.

Act II begins with a neatly attired manager strutting into work and easily handling the assorted problems that crop up. Misbehaving employees



**Lang:** Use coupons!

are calmly corrected, irate customers are made happy, and a pesky salesman is politely, but firmly, dispatched from the scene.

Seminar attendees also are given serious advice through a series of talks given by company officials, including Frith; Fred W. Diegtel, vice president of operations; Lee Bowles, director of training; and Carl A. Lang, director of retail marketing.

Lang emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive attitude. "If you focus your attention on your goal you're going to reach it," he said. "Dwell on the success—don't get caught up in the fear."

Beating the competition involves making a concentrated effort, Lang said. "Some of you, who are working 80-90 hours a week, will have to find time for marketing," he said.

"Make small improvements on currently successful programs," said Lang. "We cannot sit back and wait for the future to happen."

Role playing was used to illustrate how Lawn Doctor dealers can set up a coupon giveaway deal with another business in town, such as a lawn furniture merchant.

"It's all how you set it up," Lang explained as he told of a monk who was turned down by his superior after asking if he

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could "smoke my pipe while I pray." Another monk got approval after inquiring, "May I pray while I smoke my pipe?"

When setting up a coupon system make sure that they are not just tossed on a counter somewhere: "Treat these coupons like they're \$10 bills." Lang added that customers will feel taken advantage of if they are asked for a coupon and they don't have one. "Don't ask for the coupon, let them give it to you."

Coupons and other promotional material can be enclosed in bills sent to customers. "You have to mail them out anyway."

Lang told the assembled delegates to be aware of the "333 Rule." It goes like this: "If the customer likes what you do, he'll tell three friends—if he doesn't like what you do, he'll tell 33 friends."

The Lawn Doctor advertising program is tops, Lang said. "We're light years ahead of any company in the system." Radio, television and print ads have been prepared, as have personalized letters generated via computer.

"Your advertising committee has been working very hard for you in this area," Lang said. He told of how independent dealers are expressing an interest in joining Lawn Doctor. "They want that advertising and those marketing programs."

Giveaways are another method of increasing business, Lang said. "Premiums are becoming a part of lawn care." Some Lawn Doctor dealers have beverage coolers and garden tool kits to offer this year.

Telephone tactics received some attention as Lang suggested that answering machines be set to answer before the eighth ring. The message should be pleasant. "Call your office sometimes and see how it sounds," he said.

"Most of our communication with customers is either negative or non-existent," said Diegtel, the vice president of operations.

Most customers are not home during the day. Phone contact is usually limited to some kind of complaint. Diegtel suggested that dealers call customers at night to chat and say, "Hi, how are you doing?" He added that this is a greeting and a chance to determine how they appreciate the service, it is not a sales or collection call. "There's no way a customer can turn this 'hi, how ya doin' into a negative."

From a technical standpoint, Bowles, the director of training, described Lawn Doctor's audiovisual selections. "We've decided to go the whole nine yards and (now) we have a complete library," she said.

There are 14 videos, 8 slide shows and 9 cassette tapes available.

LCI



**Acting up:** Lawn Doctor, Inc., employees Dave Schneider and Sue Snoddy emote during a scene from "A Day in the Life of a Lawn Doctor Dealer."



**Library time:** Lee Bowles, Lawn Doctor's director of training, displays a how-to video from the company's selection.

## From the Source.



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## OFFER

from Page 1

Lawn's presence in the residential marketplace provide both companies with unique and new opportunities," said L. Jack Van Fossen, chairman of ChemLawn's board of directors.

"We have long viewed ChemLawn as an excellent company in residential service," said Michael Monahan, Ecolab's assistant treasurer, "We have long wanted to enter that business."

Waste Management officials had no comment. "We're waiting to see their (ChemLawn's and Ecolab's)

papers," said Herbert Getz, assistant general counsel for the company.

Waste Management, meanwhile, extended its tender offer from March 25 to April 2.

Ecolab is a leading provider of cleaning services to hotels, hospitals, restaurants and other institutions. Monahan said the company holds 45 percent of that market. Services include dishwashing, laundering, janitorial services and indoor pest elimination.

Ecolab had sales of \$813 million in 1986 with earnings of \$44 million, or \$1.62 per share.

Monahan said the merger could be finalized as early as

May. "We want to do this as expeditiously as possible," he said.

Monahan said Ecolab will not change ChemLawn's present management. "Our interest is to retain the ChemLawn management," he said. "We're very impressed with the organization they've built and managed. We want them to stay on."

The merger agreement includes a severance plan "to encourage ChemLawn senior management to stay with ChemLawn through the transition and into the future," ChemLawn announced in a news release. It stipulates that should an official be termi-

nated or have duties curtailed as a result of new ownership, the official would receive a payment equal to 2.99 times his average pay for the preceding five years.

### Injunction sought

ChemLawn, in a request for an injunction against Waste Management's offer, claimed Waste Management had failed to provide ChemLawn shareholders with sufficient information. This included alleged illegal actions which Waste Management, in turn, claimed were not pertinent to the tender offer.

ChemLawn attorney Terry Corrigan, who filed the request

for an injunction, said the suit claimed Waste Management's corporate officers violated insider trading laws by purchasing 45,400 shares of ChemLawn stock prior to the tender offer.

Corrigan said the suit also mentioned criminal violations by Waste Management subsidiaries: two officials were convicted of bribing municipal officials to obtain favors, while others were convicted of criminal antitrust violations such as bid rigging and price fixing.

The suit also mentioned environmental violations, Corrigan said, such as deliberately dumping toxic chemicals.

ChemLawn's directors, in conjunction with their acceptance of Ecolab's offer, decided to drop the shareholder rights plan that promised to be controversial. The plan had been arranged to block an acquisition.

The plan, known generically as a "poison pill," stipulated that when any party acquired 25 percent of the outstanding shares, shareholders had to be given the option to purchase an additional share for one dollar. This would have raised the number of outstanding shares as well as the cost for acquiring the company.

Ohio is the only state to allow such plans, according to a recent article in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. The provision was signed into law by Ohio's governor as a result of Sir James Goldsmith's well-publicized attempt to acquire Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of Akron.

### Marketing challenge

Ecolab's Monahan said the image problem ChemLawn has experienced in the last year was not seen as a serious drawback. Ecolab viewed market saturation as the larger challenge, he said, one it feels it can meet.

"We think we offer some expertise in the marketing area," Monahan said. "It's not that we would impose our marketing on ChemLawn. Our senior executives could talk to their senior executives."

Ecolab has a lot of experience in industries with maturing markets, Monahan said. He said Ecolab will look at introducing new services to ChemLawn's existing customer base.

"Our intent is to add new services through the ChemLawn customer base," Monahan said.

ChemLawn, on the other hand, would have access to Ecolab's institutional customer base for lawn care. "We see some tremendous advantages for ChemLawn" for becoming a leader in institutional lawn care, said ChemLawn spokesman Steve Hardymon.

Monahan had no idea what, if anything, would happen to ChemLawn's franchises. **LCI**

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# Waste Mgmt.'s bid signals industry's strength

By **ELLIOT MARAS**  
Editor

**W**aste Management, Inc.'s bid to buy ChemLawn Services Corp. has brought a jolt of confidence to an industry that has wrestled with an image problem in recent years. Lawn care companies see the waste hauler's interest as proof that their industry has a good future.

Several LCOs said Waste Management's size and experience in dealing with environmental issues would make it an excellent leader for the lawn care industry. (At press-time, it was announced that Ecolab Inc. of St. Paul, MN would buy ChemLawn for \$360.5 million, \$36.50 a share. ChemLawn agreed to the terms.)

More important, however, is the fact that such a large corporation (Waste's revenues exceeded \$2 billion in 1986) has shown an interest in the lawn care industry.

Jerome Faulring, president of Hydro Lawn, Inc., Gaithersburg, MD, said the offer has increased the value of all lawn care companies.

Nobody in the lawn care industry knows more about Waste Management than Wayne Huizenga, who owns controlling interest in Tru Green Corp. of Atlanta, GA, the nation's second largest lawn care company. Huizenga co-founded Waste Management and was instrumental in its growth before retiring in 1983.

Huizenga had nothing but

praise for his former company and potential competitor. "It's all positive for the industry," he said. "What's good for the industry is in turn good for Tru Green."

Huizenga was very optimistic about Waste buying ChemLawn, saying it would give the industry a more professional image, "a new dimension in sophistication."

This, he said, would include new incentive programs, better customer relations, better financial management and more expertise in handling chemicals.

One disadvantage of ChemLawn's being acquired by a larger company, any larger company, would be the loss of the only publicly-held lawn care company.

## The disadvantage

ChemLawn's stockholder reports have provided the industry valuable guidance on marketing and management. Competitors, by owning ChemLawn stock, have been able to read detailed annual reports that give them guidance for managing their own companies.

If ChemLawn is acquired

by a larger company, its profit-and-loss information could be mixed in with the larger company's other enterprises.

## What of franchises?

Owners of ChemLawn franchises are especially happy about what's happening. Most would welcome a new owner of ChemLawn Services Corp.

Franchise owners gave their thoughts on grounds that they not be identified.

Most said they hope to see a new owner who is more responsive to their needs. They claimed ChemLawn has had

unqualified people involved in franchise relations.

Some franchise owners have also resented having to follow some of the controversial decisions ChemLawn has made, such as voluntary sign posting and not using phenoxy herbicides.

A purchase by Waste Management would have been especially interesting, franchise owners noted, since the company does not operate franchises of its own. They speculated it would try to buy back the ChemLawn franchises.

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## Clean Water Act is passed

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—States will have new funding for their groundwater protection programs with passage of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in February. The \$20 billion bill was passed 86-14 over President Reagan's veto, his first legislative defeat from the 100th Congress.

Groundwater protection programs, which include testing for groundwater contamination, the establishment of groundwater purity standards and fines for violators, have been planned by many states for the past two years. But many have been stymied for lack of funding.

One aspect of the CWA reauthorization is direct federal grants to communities of \$2.4 billion annually through fiscal 1988 and \$1.2 billion for fiscal 1989 and 1990.

The Environmental Protection Agency can now impose administrative penalties in civil actions for non-compliance.

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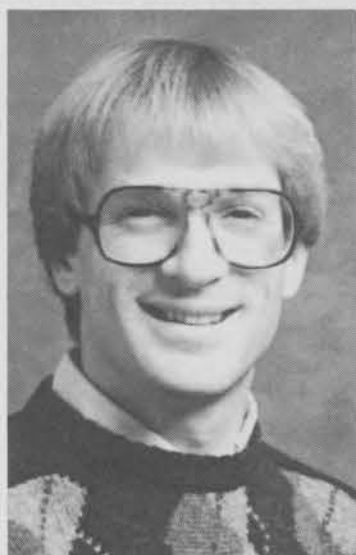
from Page 1

vironmental officials, however, have stressed the fact that no link exists between the disease and Milorganite.

"You can continue to use Milorganite," said Alan Rubin, chief of wastewater solids criteria branch of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water. "There has been no causal link between Milorganite and ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis)." Rubin emphasized that the cause of ALS, a rare disease that kills by slowly destroying nerves that control muscles, is unknown.

Rubin pointed to a medical literature assessment on ALS by three researchers: Dr. Alfred A. Rimm, chief of biostatistics at the Medical College of Wisconsin; Dr. Henry Anderson, chronic disease epidemiologist of the Wisconsin State Division of Health; and Dr. Patricia Murphy, epidemiologist for the EPA's health and environmental research laboratory in Cincinnati.

Rubin said Dr. Murphy and a Dr. Gunther Craun, also with the EPA's environmental research laboratory, are following up on a study by Dr. Benjamin Brooks, director of an ALS research clinic at the



Vogel: 'The tide has been stemmed.' No customers lost.

University of Wisconsin in Madison. Dr. Brooks told the *Milwaukee Sentinel* that the deaths might have been caused by the fertilizer on the football field. He also said the number of ALS deaths in Milwaukee was higher than the state average, and that he is studying their causes.

Dr. Brooks did not claim, however, that there is a causal link.

Rubin said if the EPA epidemiologists find that all ALS cases Dr. Brooks is studying involve Milorganite exposure, the laboratory will request funding for an epidemiology study to determine if a causal link exists.

The sewer district, meanwhile, has authorized a team of doctors to determine if a complete epidemiology study is possible. The district is also cooperating with Dr. Brooks' study.

### Sludge content

Dr. Brooks also intends to examine older samples of Milorganite to see if the heavy metal content has changed over the years. Some studies have linked ALS to heavy metals while others have not, the *Sentinel* reported. Cadmium, chromium and other metals are found in the sludge.

In 1983, the district restricted the amount of cadmium companies could dump in the sewers, said Robert Welch, sales and distribution manager for the district. He said cadmium content fell from 140 to 40 parts per million.

### Stemming the tide

The district received many inquiries when stories about the link appeared in the *Sentinel*, *USA Today*, *Time* magazine and other newspapers. Some public agencies in the Milwaukee area suspended plans to use Milorganite, but Jack Harms, marketing consultant for the sewer district, said few customers have been lost nationwide.

While Dr. Brooks did not claim that there is a causal link established between ALS and Milorganite, he was taken to task by the epidemiologists for creating doubts about the product without a scientific basis.

In a televised interview in Milwaukee, Dr. Rimm said Dr. Brooks was "out of his water"—that as a neurologist, he should stay out of epidemiology. Dr. Rimm also said there was no need for a study of Milorganite since there is no basis for the alleged link.

One television editorialist in Milwaukee accused the *Sentinel* of sensationalism in its handling of the story.

"We feel fortunate that most of our people (customers) are through the professional trades," he said, meaning they understand the unlikelihood of a link to ALS. "We really don't know the extent to which this is a problem at this time, from a wholesale and marketing standpoint."

Spring Valley Turf Products, Inc., supplier of a Milorganite and chemical fertilizer mixture, also received a fair number of calls when the articles first appeared. Bill Vogel, president, said he hasn't lost many customers. "The tide has been stemmed," he said. "It should blow over very quickly."

"I wouldn't be handling the stuff myself if I thought there was any problem," he said. LCI

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How much did the lawn care and landscape management industries grow in 1986? Find out in June.



# ALIENS

from Page 1

iens.

The use of illegal aliens for laborers in the green industries appears to be quite common in a number of regions throughout the United States, particularly the South.

"I don't think the landscape industry could survive without these guys," said a lawn management contractor in Southern California.

"For five bucks an hour they'll do three times the work that an American will do for six or seven bucks an hour," he continued, adding that the entire economy of that area is based upon imported help. "If they get rid of all the illegal aliens it will cost you \$6 to buy a hamburger (at a national fast food chain)."

Not surprisingly, most people contacted by LAWN CARE INDUSTRY were reluctant to publicly discuss the employment of illegal aliens for fear of legal repercussions.

Concerns were expressed by lawn management contractors regarding the economic impact should the trail of illegals be stopped at the border.

Several LCOs reported that the new law would have a limited effect because their workers are most likely to be sales-oriented Americans with a firm command of the English language.

## Rising costs expected

"It's going to be a big problem," said a lawn management contractor in Texas. "It's going to cause our costs to go up."

"I think you're going to see a tremendous turnaround," agreed a colleague in Dallas. Supervisors are "used to having the Mexican laborer and his attitudes. The Americans will demand extras," such as higher pay, hospitalization and worker's compensation, he said.

## Better workers

Without exception, those interviewed said employees from south of the border had better work habits than their American counterparts.

"They like working here in the sun," said a West Coast lawn management contractor. "They want the money and they have a good work ethic," he said. "They're always there on time—they work all day."

"The people most happy and willing to work in that kind of heat are most likely Mexicans," said the owner of a Texas lawn management firm. "They're happy to work and they don't complain."

The company has been recruiting American high school students after realizing that the immigration law was likely to be tightened. "During the last few years we've seen this coming."

Some green industry members see a positive result if the

law is strictly enforced and the practice of paying lower wages eliminated. "I think it can help me, that's for sure," said a business operator who avoids illegals.

"It will create a more level playing field in the industry," a contractor said.

"We'd kind of like all be in the same boat," said another.

"I'll get rid of them if everybody else does," said still another.

## Wait and see

Others are not so worried: "I think most guys are going to have a wait-and-see attitude," a lawn management contractor reported. "We'll just

have to wait and see what the INS will do," agreed a colleague.

"There's a lot of things we don't know," said Primi Garante, an immigration consultant for the Santa Barbara Immigration Center, Inc. The INS still is formulating policy. "It changes every day. They are always trying new things."

Among the things being considered is a special card for alien agricultural workers. It is not known if that exception would apply to "gardeners," Garate said.

Whatever the case, some contractors interviewed said immigration laws don't matter. "There's going to be noth-

ing stopping them," said one. "There's nothing in Mexico and there's no way to stop them from coming. They're just going to make more people go out there and get another form of fake identification."

"They're able to get Social Security cards and driver's licenses through different means than you and I do," said a Texas nursery owner who said he tries to avoid hiring them—sometimes without success: "I didn't know they were illegal aliens until they were working for me. I didn't realize it until they didn't come to work one day and I found out that the neighborhood was raided." LCI

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# APRIL

■ **South Florida & Caribbean Landscape Show Spectacular**, April 10-11, Miami Expo/Center. Contact: Charley Roberts, Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association, Dade County Chapter, 19160 Krome Ave., Miami, FL 33187; (305) 235-2035.

■ **New High Tech Manager/Pesticides and Safety Seminar**, April 29, Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL. Contact: Jean Day, Environmental Management Association, 1019 Highland Ave., Largo, FL, 33540 (813) 586-5710.

■ **New High Tech Manager/Pesticides and Safety Seminar**, April 30, Ramada Inn Airport South, Milwaukee, WI. Contact: Jean Day, Environmental Management Association, 1019 Highland Ave., Largo, FL, 33540; (813) 586-5710.

# MAY

■ **New High Tech Manager/Pesticides and Safety Seminar**, May 19, Ramada Hotel, Minneapolis, MN. Contact: Jean Day, Environmental Management Association, 1019 Highland Ave., Largo, FL, 33540; (813) 586-5710.

■ **New High Tech Manager/Pesticides and Safety Seminar**, May 20, Airport Hilton, Des Moines, IA. Contact: Jean Day, Environmental

## MEETING UPDATES

# OCT.

Management Association, 1019 Highland Ave., Largo, FL, 33540; (813) 586-5710.

# AUG.

■ **ALCA Exterior Landscape Contracting Division Conference (Farwest Show)**, Aug. 27-30, Red Lion Inn, Portland, OR. Contact: Rebecca Crocker, Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA, 22046; (703) 241-4004.

■ **30th Annual National Educational Conferences and Exposition**, Oct. 10-15, Clarion Hotel, St. Louis, MO. Contact: Jean Day, Environmental Management Association, 1019 Highland Ave., Largo, FL, 33540; Phone: (813) 586-5710.

■ **ALCA Interior Plantscape Division Conference (and trade show)**,

Oct. 24-29, Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, VA. Contact: Rebecca Crocker, Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA, 22046; (703) 241-4004.

# NOV.

■ **ALCA Landscape Management Division Conference**, Nov. 7-11, Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, VA. Contact: Rebecca

Crocker, Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA, 22046; (703) 241-4004.

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It is billed as the only ladder that is listed by Underwriters Laboratories.

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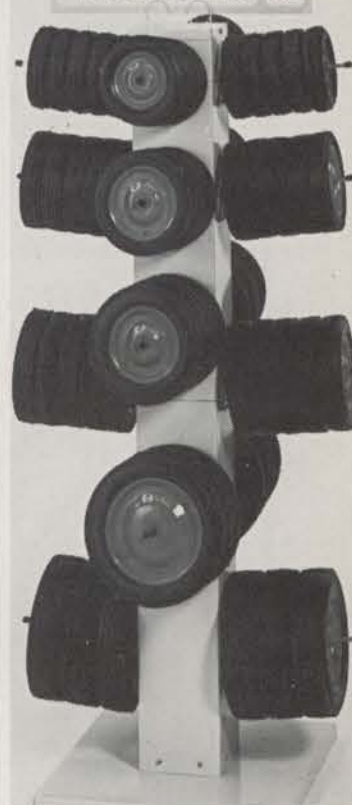
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**Wheel company now rolling out new line**

Faultless Caster Corp., a Babcock International company, Evansville, IN, is expanding its product line with lawn and garden wheels.

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# Don't get plowed under—think snow in summer!

By JAMES E. GUYETTE  
Associate Editor

**BOXBOROUGH, MASS.**—Thinking about piles of snow during the summer can save you a mountain of troubles come the following spring, according to Joseph Hudak, a landscape architect in Westwood, MA.

When snowy climates are involved, any landscape plan should be checked to make sure it includes a place to pile plowed snow, said Hudak. He made his comments during an informal lunchtime discussion

at the Massachusetts Landscape Conference in Boxborough.

Failure to think about the placement of winter snow piles can lead to dead plants and damaged lawns, he said.

In Maine, while older houses often have places set aside for piling snow, newer projects tend to neglect that all-too-important detail, said Rebecca Ohler of Cape Port Landscape in Kennebunkport.

(Kennebunkport is the site of Vice President George Bush's vacation house, and



Hudak: Plan for snow piles.

Ohler tends the yard of "Colinwood," the house pictured in the opening credits of the old gothic soap opera, *Dark Shadows*. "It's tiny," she said of the television "mansion.")

Regular turf can generally withstand winter's onslaught, but more elaborate designs, such as flowerbeds, can come to a fast end under piles of accumulated snow, Hudak said.

Some exceptions in New England, said Hudak, are the yellow-leaved Japanese barberry, which withstands snow; and day lilies, which can survive snow, sand and road salt.

Other things to watch for include borders, such as edging, and walkways. A snowplow can quickly ruin an improperly conceived walkway.

Hudak recommended using bluestone. "It's dead weight," he said. "There's no movement."

The stone should be 1 to 1 1/4 inches thick if there's a cement base, Hudak said. A sand base requires stone that is at least 1 1/2 inches thick, he added.

"It's a good, dependable stone," Hudak said, "but you have to know it." Bluestone tends to get random brown patches of "rust" on its surface.

When using stone, bricks, cement or any other walkway material it is important to remember that the surface will remain flatter with a deeper base under it, particularly in climates where there is a cycle of freezing and thawing, he said. LCI

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## Snow falls, plowing profits rise

**MILWAUKEE**—The winter storms that wreaked havoc on the East Coast have blessed snowplowers with exceptional profits. It has been so busy that even snowthrower engine manufacturers are scrambling to meet the demand.

Snowplowing was slow up until mid-January, when the big storms hit.

"We have experienced a sharp increase in demand from our retailers," said C. H. Yahn, president of Aircap Industries Corp., Tupelo, MS, manufacturer of the Snow Champ line of snowthrowers.

"The weather has given us a series of challenges and opportunities to keep our customers in the Northeast in a position to take care of the unexpected demand."

The storm is also good for next year's demand, Yahn noted. "Heavy demand late in one season always means heavy orders for next season."

A similar observation was made by John Held, manager of product marketing for Simplicity Manufacturing, Inc., Port Washington, WI. "Storms like these move inventory and dealers will be eager to restock," he said. "Late season snows tend to have a positive impact on pre-season consumer sales for next year."

A spokesman for Tecumseh Products Corp., whose engine and transmission group is a major U.S. supplier of snowthrower engines, said Tecumseh can already feel the effect of the storms in increased engine demand from manufacturers.

"This is the worst storm the Northeast has had in a decade, and it hit the major population areas where the impact is greatest," said David O'Connell, group vice president at Tecumseh. LCI



# Uninformed about uniforms: It's a beach!

By JAMES E. GUYETTE  
Associate Editor

A day at the beach: That's how I dealt with working under the blistering sun.

Yep. During beastly hot weather I'd come to work dressed as if I was all set for a day at the beach. The only thing missing was an inflatable tube and beach ball.

The company I worked for didn't have uniforms, and I never gave the matter much thought—my main concern was keeping cool.

Being uninformed about uniforms resulted in me picking up a fine tan. In fact, that was one of the things I really liked about working outside: Getting some exercise and catching some rays.

When the mercury went upward I'd simply doff my outer duds and keep toiling away in a bathing suit. In addition to the suit, I wore shoes, socks, a hat to keep the sun off my head, safety glasses to protect my eyes—and that was about it!

(While the glasses were an annoyance, I valued them highly because it seemed as though I was always feeling bits of dirt and debris bouncing off my face.)

My most functional outfit, though, was one that did not even come up for discussion while I researched the uniform story. When it was just a shade cooler, under 85 degrees, I'd wear bibbies.

Yes, bibbies: Oshkosh B'gosh bib overalls. My No. 1 pair was given to me by Jill Costa; she called them my "Farmer Jim Pants."

Jill knew what she was doing when she bought me those babies. These pants did the job! They were tough enough to hold up under the workload and they were loose enough to allow cooling air to circulate all over my body.

Image! Tell me about image. Did you ever see anyone in a pair of bibbies who didn't look like they were working extra hard?

Then there's the pockets. I like to carry too many things in my pockets to feel right in just a t-shirt, yet a button-down shirt is lacking because it's so hard to keep tucked in if you're moving around. The many pockets in the bibbies assured that I had enough room to tote everything I needed. A small saw and a set of pruners could be stowed away, and the hammer strap on the right side was a superb place to carry an extra trash bag.

The bib part of the bibbies, of course, made it a snap to wrestle with big bunches of branches and other such things.

I don't know where bibbies stand in the scheme of things regarding uniforms and whatnot, but for me they worked the best.

Uniforms, or even just t-shirts, do perform a most important function—they ensure that employees come to work in a clean shirt.

I'm sure you'd agree that there are few things more disgusting than someone who climbs into the truck clad in the same shirt every day—particularly when doing physical labor under the hot,

burning sun. Am I right?

However, some people just don't like to wear uniforms; they simply won't do it.

I met a uniform objector once at Lou Kallie's House of Swing ("Where Jazz Is King") in downtown South Euclid. He was a building inspector for an area community and he liked his job.

Then came an edict that he would have to write tickets instead of giving advice, and that he would henceforth be clad in a spiffy official-looking uniform.

He up and quit his job. Just like that. He wasn't thrilled about writing tickets, but it was the uniform requirement that upset him so. "I'll never wear a uniform again," he said.

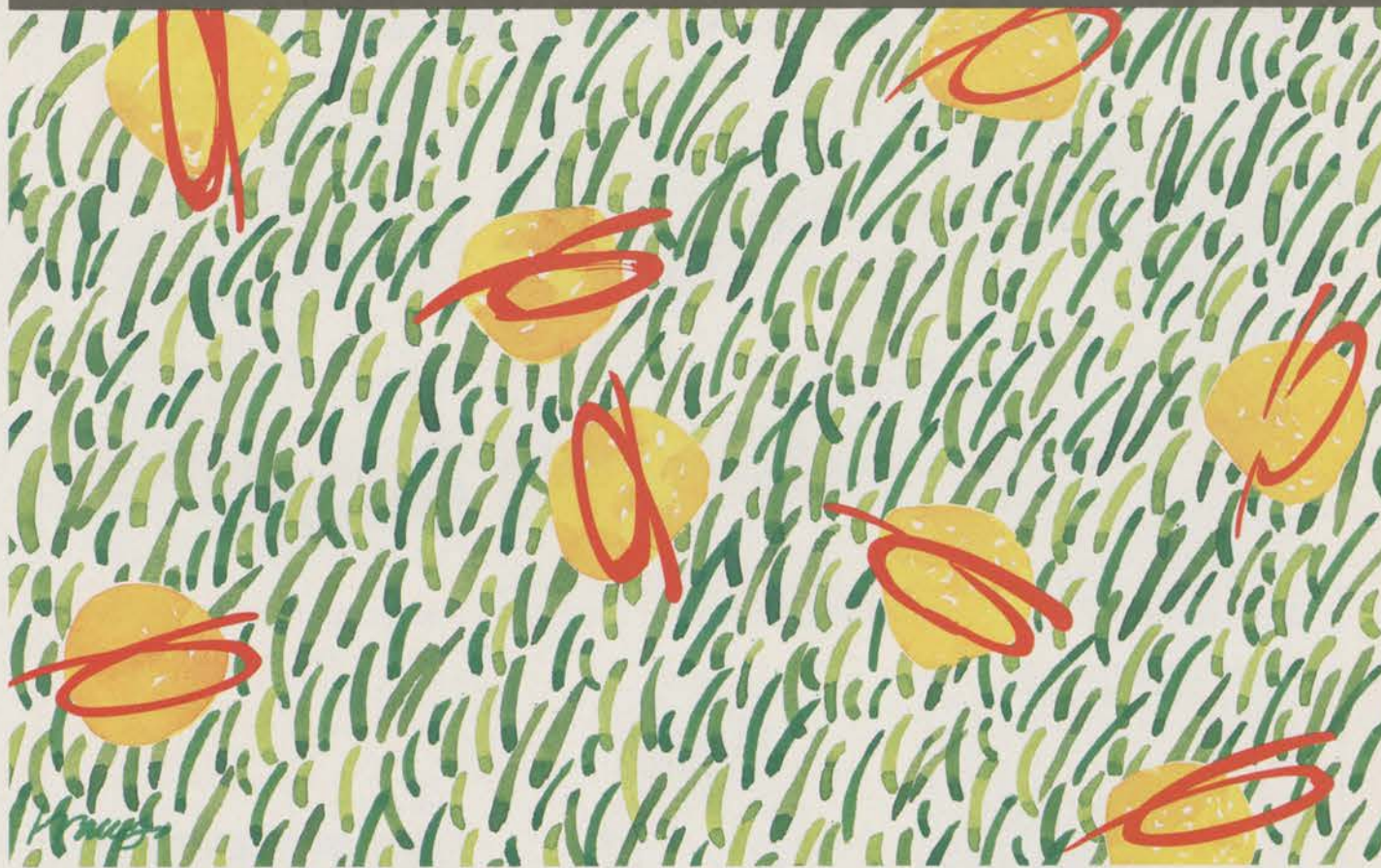
Quit over a stupid uniform? Why?

The fella needed just five words to explain the situation to everyone's satisfaction: "I'm a Vietnam combat veteran." LCI

James E. Guyette



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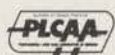
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**WINNERS ONLY:** If you love the lawn care business and are still looking for your personal security and comfort levels, send us your resume. Your experience should be in all phases of lawn care, management, customer sales and service. We are expanding our operations and will offer the right individual a unique once in a lifetime opportunity. When you prove your abilities, we'll guarantee your success. Send your confidential resume to: P.O. Box 5677, Rockville, MD 20855. 4/87

**HELP WANTED:** Working Partner Lawn Maintenance: Looking for an experienced working manager who would like to have his own company, but doesn't have the capital. We are an expanding company operating in Rockland County, New York. Equity toward ownership, salary, and benefits. Reply to: L.G. Corp., 21 Hemlock Rd., Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510. 914-762-5793. 4/87

How much did the lawn care and landscape management industries grow in 1986? Find out in the June annual industry overview.

## HELP WANTED

**LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE FOREMAN:** Firm needs individual able to supervise and motivate own crew. Candidate must know plant materials and standard horticultural practices. Position offers excellent growth potential and salary commensurate with experience. For more information, call American Lawn Care Company, Niles, IL. 312-965-2427. 5/87

**SALES PERSON/MANAGER:** Expanding irrigation/landscape contractor is seeking a qualified individual for a full time highly diversified sales management position. Experience should include design, sales, estimating, scheduling and administration. Massachusetts and New Hampshire territory-very desirable area. Send resume to G.S.G. Corp., P.O. Box 2071, Framingham, MA 01701. 5/87

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES:** ChemLawn is now accepting applications for the positions of Lawn Specialist in our expanding Florida markets. Join the Nation's Leader in Lawn Care. Send resume to LCI Box 181. TF

## HELP WANTED

**LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE FOREMAN:** Expanding landscape firm, in the Boston MA area is looking for responsible foreman to do quality commercial maintenance. Experience should include complete knowledge of turf, bedcare and ornamentals. Year round full time position. Excellent salary and full company benefits. Send resume to G.S.G. Corp., P.O. Box 2071, Framingham, MA 01701. 5/87

**LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN:** Excellent opportunity for a hard working individual to work with an expanding commercial landscape contractor in the Boston, MA area. Must be experienced in all phases of landscape construction. Year round full time position. Good salary and full company benefits. Send resume to G.S.G. Corp., P.O. Box 2071, Framingham, MA 01701. 5/87

**MANAGEMENT CANDIDATES:** Our recent expansion has increased our demand for qualified individuals for marketing and branch management. College degree and/or previous management experience required. Excellent salary benefits and bonus program. If you are aggressive and results-oriented and want to join one of the fastest growing companies in the industry, then contact: Sam Land, Orkin Lawn Care, 550 Interstate North, Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30339 or call 404-955-8015. 6/87

**MANAGEMENT:** Ever-Green Lawns Corporation, a division of the multi-national Hawley Group, Ltd. interested in discussing management opportunities with lawn care professionals looking for a change. Please respond in writing only to Richard D. Niemann, Corporate Recruiting Manager, Ever-Green Lawns Corporation, 1390 Charlestown Industrial Drive, St. Charles, MO 63303. TF

**MANAGEMENT:** Midwestern Lawn Care Company poised for growth looking for experienced branch managers and tree-care professionals. If your career isn't "growing like a weed", we would like to hear from you. Our employees know about this ad. Please write to LCI Box 169. TF

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What new issues are coming to light as the lawn care and landscape management industry grows? Find out in the June annual industry overview.

## WANTED

## LAWN CARE COMPANIES WANTED:

National company seeking expansion desires to purchase lawn care companies. Price negotiable. To be considered, please send information concerning the number of customers and revenue to: LCI Box 154.

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Major consumer service company looking to acquire lawn care service companies in the Mid-Atlantic and East Coast states. Minimum of 3,000 customers. Major advantages available to owners and current employees. Please respond, indicating size and location, in confidence to: Box No. 643, Sparks-Glencoe, MD 21152. 4/87

**LAWN CARE COMPANIES WANTED:** well established, family owned lawn care company seeking expansion by purchasing other companies or customer lists. We will completely buy out, or you can stay and grow with us. All inquiries to be strictly confidential. We are searching primarily in the Northern-Central Jersey - Eastern PA area. If interested, send pertinent information to: LCI Box 180. 5/87

Evergreen Lawns, a division of the Hawley Group Ltd., an international service company doing in excess of a billion dollars in sales, wants to acquire lawn care companies of all sizes. All inquiries strictly confidential. Please contact Steve Hirshumgal, Director of Finance and Acquisitions, Evergreen Lawns Corp., 1390 Charlestown Industrial Drive, St. Charles, MO 63303. 314-946-9700. TF

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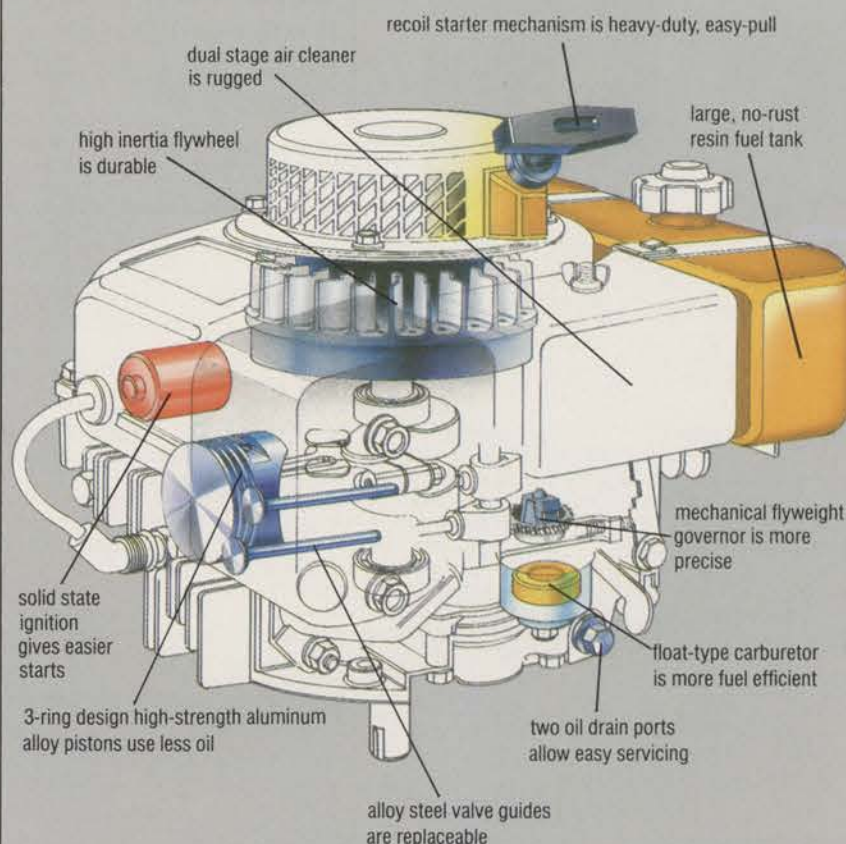
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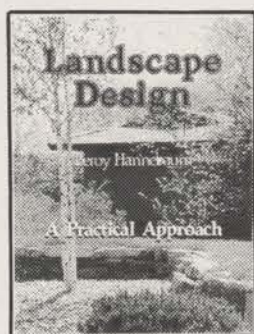
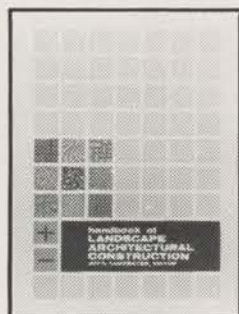
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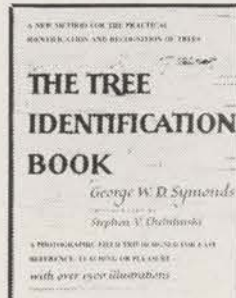
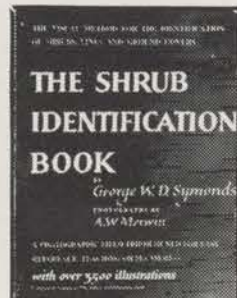
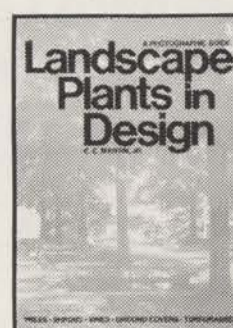
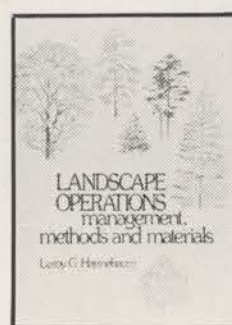
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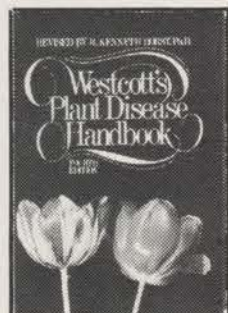
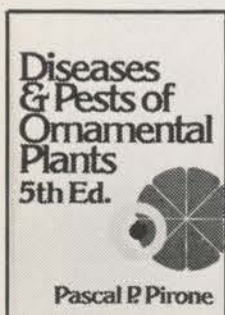
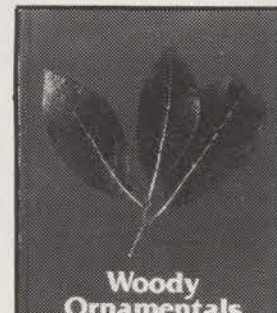
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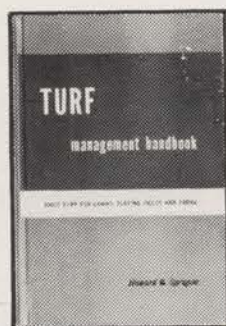
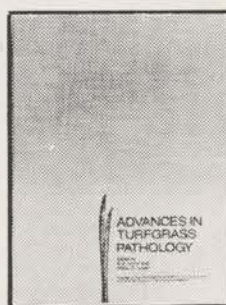
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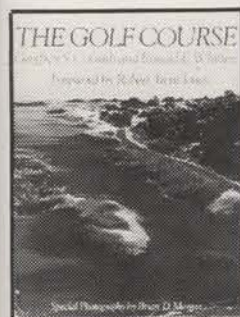
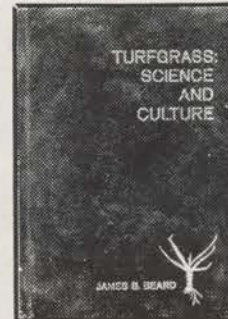
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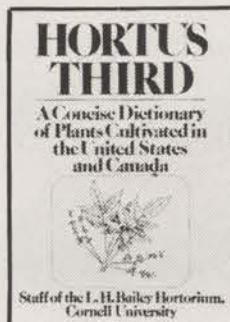


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