

Question:

How did you get started in the lawn care business?

Answer:

Many people choose the lawn care business because of extensive backgrounds and families already in the horticultural-agronomic fields, according to a straw poll conducted by LAWN CARE INDUSTRY this spring.

Approximately 43 percent of the men contacted who run lawn care businesses had parents whose careers were in horticulture or agronomy, including John Haub-

rich of Grounds Care Inc., Loveland, Ohio.

Haubrich's original intent was not to follow in the footsteps of his father, who operated a garden store. So he pursued an economics degree in college. Upon graduation, he took a job in his major field of specialization in Cleveland.

"But I hated it," Haubrich remembers now. "When I was attending college, I had worked for a landscape contractor during the summers. After I decided I didn't like living in Cleveland, I called

back that landscape contractor in Cincinnati and he gave me a job as a foreman.

"In four years, I was vice-president. Last year, I started



Bernard Huening

Grounds Care with a friend and now this new company has been a real challenge."

Bernard Huening of Huening Landscaping in Closter, N.J. grew up in Europe.

"In my family, we have quite a few in this business," Huening relates. "I worked as an apprentice in Germany and Switzerland when I graduated from high school. When I came to the United States, I started from the bottom with one small pickup truck and worked up."

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\$2.00

Volume 7, Number 5 MAY 1983

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving lawn maintenance and chemical lawn care professionals

Annual survey

Million dollar list reaches 33

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Experience pays off for Lawnmark Assoc.

In football, you need quality people at the "skill" positions. And if Lawnmark Associates, one of the country's million dollar lawn care companies, is any indication, a little quality at the skill positions never hurts in the business world, either.

"Quarterback" of the Lawnmark team is Marty Erbaugh, who points to prior experience of its founders as one of the reasons the Peninsula, Ohio-based company has taken just four years to vault into the seven-figure mark in gross sales.

"We had a lot of prior experience, strength in the pivotal positions," Erbaugh said recently, "and the market has been so darned good that we've been able to cover all sorts of financial sins with sales."

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Judging by figures obtained during a spring survey, the lawn care industry is alive and well.

The 42 companies listed on this page gross more than one-quarter of a billion dollars a year in chemical lawn care, a huge portion of the entire market, which is estimated at \$1.5 billion.

Forty-eight questionnaires, which were mailed to the nation's largest lawn care companies, were returned to LAWN CARE INDUSTRY's offices. The 48 respondents alone claimed employment of 4,229 persons year-round and 5,974 during the peak season, and they also claimed to have serviced 1,494,430 chemical lawn care accounts.

ChemLawn largest

By far, the largest response came from ChemLawn, which services 1.1 million lawns. The people at

ChemLawn do \$155 million in business, using 3800 peak-season and 3100 year-round employees at 177 branches.

Davey Lawnscape services 55,000 lawns for \$8.5 million gross business. Two hundred peak-season employees are used, and 150 of them are year-round employees at 20 outlets.

Lawn Medic has 86 outlets which do slightly under 40,000 lawns per year for \$6.7 million gross. Lawn Medic employs 112 year-round and 279-340 during the busy season.

Barefoot Grass Lawn Service uses 19 outlets employing 150 year-rounders and 200 during the peak season. They do more than \$5 million business on more than 40,000 lawns.

Spring-Green also services 40,000 lawns for about \$5 million

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New director

PLCAA picks James Brooks

"One of my functions is to get out to the members and try — from their input — to develop programs that will be of help to everyone," says James R. Brooks of Atlanta. "I'm not going to be a desk jockey."

Brooks was selected March 15 as the new executive director of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America by unanimous vote of its board of directors.

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Riding rotary mowers

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MARILYN MacDONALD,
Production Supervisor

MARIO ROSSETTI,
Graphic Design

JOAN SMITH,
Circulation Supervisor

GAIL KESSLER,
Reader Service Manager

LINDA WINICK,
Promotion Manager

MARKETING/SALES

Midwest Office:

ROBERT EARLEY
(216) 243-8100
7500 Old Oak Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44130

Southern Office:

JIM BROOKS,
National Sales Manager
RON KEMPNER (404) 233-1817
3091 Maple Dr.,
Atlanta, GA 30305

Northwest Office:

BOB MIEROW (206) 363-2864
1333 N.W. Norcross,
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Classified:

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LAWN CARE INDUSTRY (USPS 397250) is published monthly by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publications. Corporate and Editorial offices: 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44130. Advertising Offices: 757 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017; 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601 and 3091 Maple Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30305. Accounting, Advertising Production and Circulation offices: 1 East First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802. Subscription rates: \$16 per year in the United States; \$20 per year in Canada. All other countries: \$45 per year. Single copies (prepaid only): \$2 in the U.S.; elsewhere \$4.50; add \$3.00 for shipping and handling per order. Second class postage paid at Duluth, Minnesota 55806. Copyright © 1983 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Microfilm copies of articles are available through University Microfilm, International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, P.O. Box 6200, Duluth, Minnesota 55806-9900.

As the lawn care industry grows, so does the list of companies which gross more than \$1 million per year. Last year, there were 32 on LAWN CARE INDUSTRY's annual list; this year, the number grows slightly to 33 companies.

And this year, our magazine is treating the issue a little differently. We have selected two typical "Million Dollar Lawn Care Companies" (if there is such an animal) to spotlight: Lawn King and Lawnmark. Maybe the business histories of these highly successful men (Marc Sandler, and Marty Erbaugh respectively) will help those of you who are seeking to expand your businesses in the near future.

Talking with these successful lawn care businessmen was an education in itself. It reinforced the contention that nothing in life comes easy. From Lawn King's legal problems to Lawnmark's sophisticated direct mailing system, each of the above businesses

UPFRONT



had its own obstacles to conquer. We think the stories make good reading, and hope you find them enjoyable.

And on this page, you'll find the first installment of "My Side," this one written by Tom Brune of Atwood Lawn Spray, Inc., Sterling Heights, Mich. "My Side" will be a semi-regular feature on this page,

and will give those of you in the industry the chance to present your side of an issue. The selection of Brune to kick off the column, judging by the final product below, was a good one.

Also included in this edition of LCI, you will find a detailed analysis of new and improved riding rotary mowers on the market this spring and summer. This is more detailed than any other product list ever to appear in this magazine, and we hope it is of help if you are looking for new equipment.

Until next month, then, enjoy this wonderful weather . . . and keep reading.

Jerry Roche

MY SIDE

When Jerry Roche calls your office to tell you that a new column will be appearing in LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, you have more to do than just congratulate him on the good news. I should have known that he really wanted to tell me that I was "the annointed," the one whose literary skills would be tested first. That's okay. His follow-up letter assured me that I could comment on "just about any topic imaginable."

Commenting can be pretty serious business. A person has to have something worthwhile to say about a timely topic. I read a lot of lawn care journals, cover to cover, including the ads. Other lawn care people call my office and I do go to all kinds of meetings so I have a fair idea of what topics are most important to lawn care businessmen today.

There's not much sense for me to comment on all the wonderful in-depth articles, lectures and seminars on plant pathology, etc. The learned scholars and Ph.D.s would send me down in flames. What do I know about identifying hydrocephalic amoeba and annual bluegrass? And they know I don't know anything, so I better leave that alone. Who cares about that, anyway?

Business in general

It would probably be better if I just commented on business in general. Maybe there are some practices that more serious-minded professionals would appreciate knowing about.

Computers are very important now. But even there, I'm getting left behind. It seems to be a problem concerning "state of the



art," or something. The whole computer field is being taken over by super-intelligent whiz-kid sorts who are very impatient with those of us not entirely up on the jargon. There's a seventh-grader at my daughter's school who teaches a computer class in the evening to adults who are trying to find out what it's all about. That's heavy! And this kid knows what he's talking about. I could get in trouble here. Let's go on to another subject.

Success

I worry about being successful in business. It's easy to look at other people and see how much better they are doing. Just check the list of million dollar companies in this issue. If a person is going to feel successful, he ought to look successful.

I was reminded of this a month or so ago as I drove down I-75. A guy went flying by me in his new Cadillac talking on a telephone. Now there's a successful looking man. It so impressed me that I now carry a phone with me in my car

everywhere I go. I found it on the floor of the last phone booth I pulled up to — in the rain, of course.

If you already have a phone, or if the idea just doesn't appeal to you, here's another practice you can employ on your way to the top. A car passed me recently in which the lone occupant was reading the newspaper as he drove along. Now there's a busy executive! Impressive? You bet, but check with your insurance company on this one first.

My list

Space really doesn't allow me to comment on all the items I have on my list here. They're not all on business anyway, and I don't think they are that closely related to lawn care. Here's a couple of items that really need to be commented on and maybe there will be space in a later issue of LCI: (1) doctors who must have graduated at the bottom of their class; (2) bank loan officers who want me to think they are friendly; or (3) how I'd feel if my daughter came home and said she was planning to marry an athlete/coach/sports writer.

Being a world-class observer, I've got a long list of these ideas and would gladly comment on any of them at any time. On the other hand, maybe I shouldn't take things so seriously.

Tom Brune
Atwood Lawn Spray
Sterling Heights, Mich.

PLCAA convention:
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James Brooks (left) sits next to PLCAA president Don Burton (center) while outgoing executive director Glenn Bostrom (background) takes notes at the PLCAA's March meeting.

PLCAA picks James Brooks

from page 1

"I characterize myself as a builder," Brooks says. "My immediate goal is to increase the revenues of the association through membership development and growth of the convention and trade show."

Brooks resigned as national sales manager of LAWN CARE INDUSTRY and WEEDS TREES & TURF magazines to accept the newly-established PLCAA post.

For five years prior to joining Harcourt Brace Jovanovich publications, Brooks was director of membership services and director of marketing and sales for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Brooks says his other goals are: to develop a wider array of membership benefits; to assist the PLCAA in becoming a stronger voice in the turf industry; to enhance public awareness of the industry's professionalism in the pesticide issue; and to "make sure the association gets the most out of its dollar."

Board still in charge

Brooks adds, however, that "the goals have to be the board's and not mine; they are still the policy-makers."

Brooks' appointment was recommended to the PLCAA board by a search committee consisting of Don Burton, Bill Fischer, Marty Erbaugh and Jerry Faulring.

In making the recommendation, Erbaugh said, "Jim's past experience and commitment to the turf industry is a glove-fit-hand situation for this group."

Brooks has opened a temporary, two-person office in Atlanta and is in the process of transferring records from the Glenn Bostrom Management Corp. in Chicago. Bostrom's management contract with the PLCAA was allowed to expire April 30.

The permanent home of the PLCAA is to be determined following its 1985 national convention and trade show. Some board members are suggesting a move to the Washington, D.C. area at that time.

Circle No. 112 on Reader Inquiry Card→

Pesticide buyers need documents

Documentation will be required of uncertified persons wishing to purchase restricted use pesticides from dealers in Colorado and Nebraska, according to a recent governmental policy decision.

A non-certified prospective buyer would have to supply one of two kinds of documentation. In most cases, the certified applicator's certification card would be required, along with a signed statement from a certified

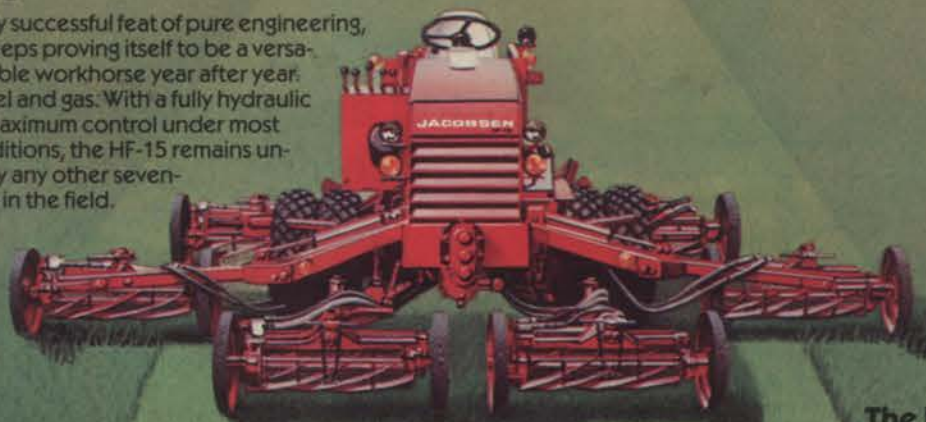
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MONEYWISE

Surviving hard times

Though the national economy has shown recent signs of coming out of the doldrums, it would still be a good idea to follow a set of tried-and-true ways of surviving hard times.

The American Association of Nurserymen offered these hints to its members in a recent newsletter. They also apply to the lawn care industry.

- Watch your inventory and try to anticipate your customers' needs for the coming season.
- Survey overhead costs frequently, making sure so-called fixed costs are truly unavoidable.
- Tighten up even more on your use of energy.
- Study those travel and entertainment expense vouchers. If an activity isn't fully cost-effective, eliminate it.
- Put the pressure on accounts receivable.

INDUSTRY NEWS from page 7

applicator authorizing the uncertified person to pick up the pesticides. Under certain circumstances, all that would be required would be a signed statement from the uncertified person stating that the restricted use pesticide would be used only by a certified applicator. In the latter case, the name of the certified applicator would be mandatory.

The pesticide certification programs in Colorado and Nebraska are run by the federal government.

'Strike Force' for gypsy moths

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has decided to set

up a "Gypsy Moth Strike Force" to halt the spread of the insect, which can cause extensive defoliation.

The strike force will plan an eradication program which will target at least six locations where egg masses have been found. It will be headed by Division of Plant Industry's assistant director, Rex Magee.

In 1981, gypsy moths defoliated an estimated 13 million acres in the eastern states.

International gets two certificates

International Seeds Inc. of Halsey, Ore. has been granted Plant Variety Protection Act certificates for Houndog turf-type tall fescue and Elka turf-type perennial ryegrass.

Houndog, a moderately low growing and leafy variety which was developed by International, is perhaps the darkest green of the newer turf-type tall fescues.

Elka is considered the lowest-growing of the turf-type perennial ryegrasses and is used in low maintenance areas such as orchards, along highways and in golf course roughs.

Good signs of better economy

There is an increasing number of signs to indicate that the economy is moving toward recovery, said a noted agribusiness economist in Atlanta at the annual meeting of The Fertilizer Institute.

Dean McKee, who is director of market economics for Deere & Company of Moline, Ill., pointed to 1983 as a year of recovery.

"However," he stipulated, "the recovery will be weaker and more fragile than previous recoveries of the post-World War II era."

Stauffer forms sales department

A new department for the sales and marketing of specialty chemicals has been formed by the Agricultural Chemical Division of Stauffer Chemical Company.

The new structure divides Stauffer's domestic market into four regions, each with a representative who will be involved in the marketing of specialty chemicals produced by Stauffer for control of weeds, insects and diseases in home lawns and gardens and in commercial turf, trees and ornamentals.

Stauffer manufactures eight specialty products.

Correction

There was an error in the February issue of LAWN CARE INDUSTRY in the article written by B. J. Johnson.

In Table 4 which accompanied the story "Care must be taken in weed control," the misprint was in the last column (stand as percentage of untreated check) where the value for Ronstar should have been 100, and not 10.

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MARKETING IDEA FILE

Direct mail hints

Many of the most successful lawn care businessmen use direct mail as a means to effective marketing. Direct mail can work for you, too, if you care to follow a few easy tips:

- Tailor your message to individuals in specific customer categories.
- Set up a quality list, color coding different customer categories and updating twice a year.
- Design your mailing so it fits your budget, making the choice between a simple letter; a slick, custom-printed color brochure — or anything in between.
- Use an attractive, first-class envelope with

the customer's name (not "occupant") and your firm's name, logo and return address on the front.

- Don't be wordy.
- End your message in a style to make the customer take action.
- The best results can be obtained by mailing information on the same promotion to the same target group up to three times with an interval of not more than five weeks between mailings.

As with any selling venture, the amount of time you spend on the project will go a long way toward determining its success.

When you decide to issue a direct mail promotion, take your time, plan things out and do it right the first time.

DATES

Turf-Seed/Pure-Seed Testing Turf Field Day, June 16, Hubbard, OR. Contact: Turf-Seed, Inc., 77 W. G St., Hubbard, OR. (503) 981-9571.

Lawn Institute Annual Meeting, June 26-July 3, San Francisco, CA. Contact: Lawn Institute, County Line Road, P.O. Box 108, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578. (615) 277-3722.

Garden Industry of America Conference and Trade Show, Sept. 8-10, David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: Paul A. Anderson, Box 1092, Minneapolis, MN 55440. (612) 374-5200.

Southern California Turfgrass/Landscape Equipment and Materials Educational Exposition, Oct. 5-6, Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, CA. Contact: Ed McNeill, 1000 Concha St., Altadena, CA 90110-9977. (213) 798-1715.

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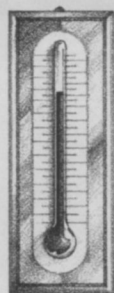
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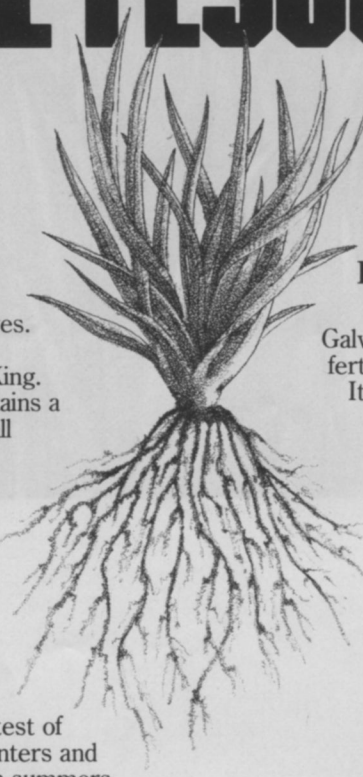


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Galway requires only limited amounts of water and fertilizer to produce an attractive, dark green turf. It grows slower, which means less mowing. And its improved fine-leaved texture improves density and uniformity.



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Circle No. 119 on Reader Inquiry Card

from page 1

Lloyd
Kuhn

"I started mowing lawns when I was 11," Weaver reminisces.

- Measure a course 163-1/3 feet long on field conditions similar to those where the sprayer will be used. Fill the sprayer with clean water. Spray the course, maintaining a constant nozzle pressure and travel speed, catching the discharge from one nozzle. Note pressure, throttle and gear setting, then use the same settings for spraying. Measure discharge contained in the procedure with a standard measuring cup. Multiply the number of cups by 200, then divide by nozzle spacing in inches to obtain your application rate in gallons per acre.

HA HA HA

YUK YUK YUK.

SNICKER SNICKER

HEE HEE.

HO HO HO HO HO

COST CUTTINGS

Barter: yours for mine

Lloyd Kuhn of Tulsa Lawn Care, Tulsa, Okla., has a copying machine, a telephone answering machine, and some expensive office furniture. He didn't lay out as much as a penny for any of it.

How did he do it? Barter.

"You don't have to have the cash up front," Kuhn says of the barter system, which has worked exceedingly well for him. Tulsa Lawn Care also employs an accountant and professional printer through the system.

"For instance, we needed a copying machine, so we found someone who was willing to trade the machine for lawn care service," Kuhn relates.

"We're trading, say, \$3,000 worth of lawn care services for the machine, and our actual cost may be only \$2,000. Also, we get to use the machine right away, but it may take us two years to provide enough lawn care service."

There are organized barter systems spread throughout the country. Their members can trade their services for the products or services of any of the other members.

Kuhn says that the barter system to which he belongs allows its members to build up points which can be used for any of a number of services or products. He adds that the barter system is even better suited to sole proprietorships because the owner can use the service to obtain staples.

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fective control of mole crickets of any product presently registered, but such use is limited to states which have issued Special Local Need registrations. Check with your state extension office.

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Circle No. 115 on Reader Inquiry Card

Lawn care pros enjoy their work

from page 12

"After I graduated from high school, I went to mechanics school, but it didn't work out. Then I worked for B. F. Goodrich, but that wasn't working out either."

"While I was with Goodrich, ChemLawn was right across the street, and it kind of lured a bunch of us — seven or eight of us — over there. Looking at ChemLawn, I couldn't wait to get a job back outside."

Also in that group which was lured from the tire company was John Cruse, who now owns Easy Lawn of Piqua, Ohio.

Weaver, like Cruse, eventually left ChemLawn to build his own business.



Gary Weaver

"People ask if I ever regret leaving ChemLawn," Weaver continues. "If I were still there, I'd be making a load of money and probably be some kind of vice-president."

"But I guess I just like being independent."

And if the lawn care industry has any one major advantage over other fields of specialization like economics, business administration or even mechanics, it is independence. That and the chance to get outside for six or seven months of the year, to appreciate the fresh air and to see the fruits of your labor seem to be the biggest attractions of the lawn care industry.

Letters

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY accepts unsolicited letters from readers for use on their editorial page (page four). Letters should be kept short, precise and must bear a signature and address or telephone number for verification purposes.

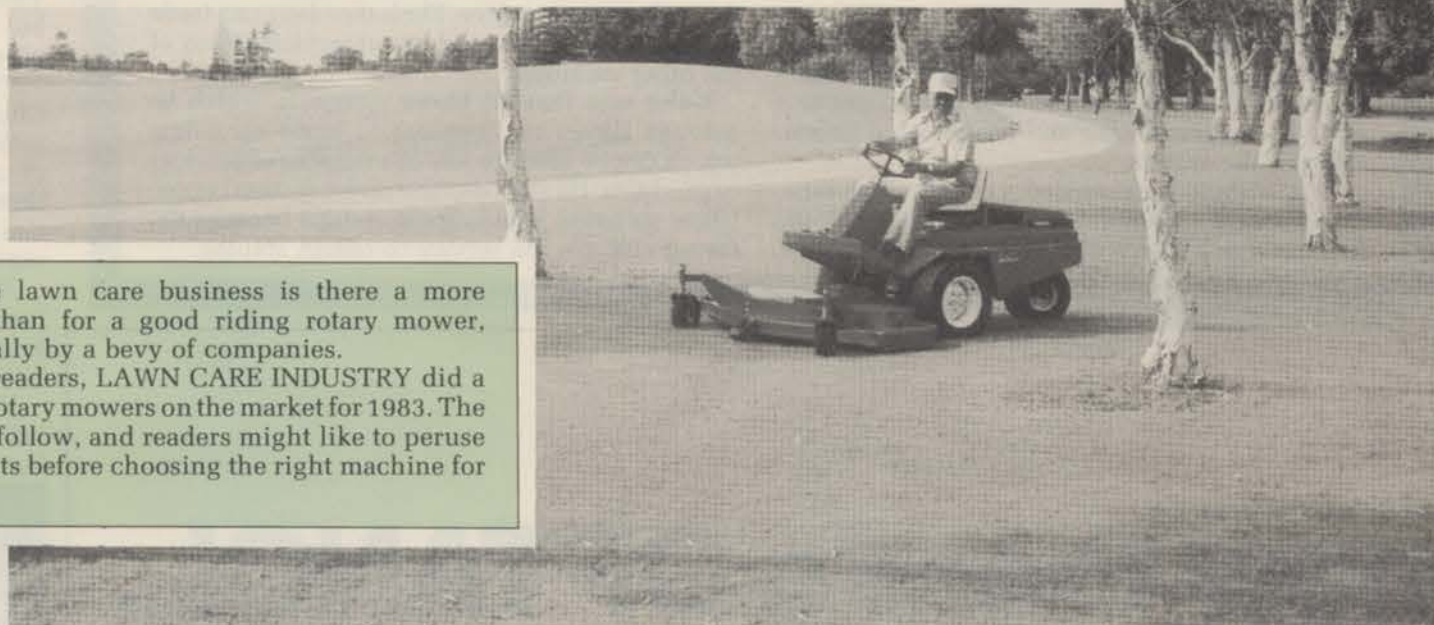
If you have a comment you would like to make public, send your letter to:

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INDUSTRY
7500 Old Oak Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio
44130

The magazine reserves the right to edit letters for length and grammar.

Riding rotary mowers:

A survey of improvements, additions



Nowhere else in the lawn care business is there a more competitive market than for a good riding rotary mower, manufactured nationally by a bevy of companies.

As a service to its readers, LAWN CARE INDUSTRY did a survey of new riding rotary mowers on the market for 1983. The results of this survey follow, and readers might like to peruse the list of new products before choosing the right machine for the right job.

Cushman

Powered by an OMC 18-hp gas engine (two-cylinder diesel optional), the Cushman Front Line is a rugged, responsive addition to the riding rotary mower market.

Three overlapping blades attached to a three-wheel tractor unit give you a choice of 60-inch or 72-inch mower decks, each of which is built of 12-gauge reinforced carbon steel. The Front Line also has an eight-position height adjustment and optional anti-scalp rollers.

John Deere

John Deere has replaced its popular 317 and 400 tractors with new models 318 (18-hp Onan engine) and 420 (20-hp Onan).

On both models, the drivetrain has been beefed up, a return-to-neutral braking system and hydro-static power steering have been added, and the brakes have been strengthened. Both models are also built around a new one-piece welded steel C-channel frame that runs the full length of the tractor. The new mower mounting system makes it easier to install a mid-mounted rotary.

The 420 offers some features not available on the 318: a two-power differential axle and a differential lock.

The mower attachment is a 60-inch, three-point hitch-mounted groomer.

Excel

Excel has introduced a front-mounted, 14-foot, rotary gang mower attachment called the Range Wing for its Hustler Model 305 D grounds maintenance tractor.

The Range Wing attachment is the only front-mounted, 14-foot, fine-cut rotary gang deck available which has been designed for use on a fuel-efficient 32-hp diesel tractor. The Range Wing and tractor package costs approximately one-half of competitive units.

Seven 24-inch blades make up the cutting width. Each deck can be hydraulically raised or lowered, and the side decks can be adjusted separately.

A single-wing version of the Range Wing, which cuts a 10-foot swath, is available for the Hustler 295 or 305 D.

Gilson

Gilson's 1983 line of yard and garden tractors features innovative engineering changes and attractive new styling with major emphasis on operator comfort and extended durability.

Gilson's tractors have 11 hp, 16 hp and 18 hp Briggs and Stratton I.C. (industrial-commercial) engines. The 11 hp model is designed for a 38- or 42-inch mower deck.

Both the 11 and 16 hp models feature electric keylock start, extra-wide turf tires and Peerless heavy duty five-speed transaxle. Two 18 hp models are available, one with a four-speed Peerless cast iron transaxle and the other with hydrostatic drive that can attain speeds up to six miles per hour.

Dixon

Dixon has added three new products, including the ZTR 425, Dixon's first rear-discharge Zero Turning Radius mower. The new 11-hp, 42-inch-cut 425 allows the operator to trim from either side of the deck with no wasted time or motion.

The upgraded standard model ZTR 426 also has the features of the 425 with a heavy duty transaxle.

The top-of-the-line 424 features standard equipment, plus an adjustable seat with cushioned back and arm rests; a handy utility box; and a two-gallon gas tank.

Grasshopper

Dual rear wheels are a 1983 option on the 16- and 18-hp Grasshoppers, which have been developed for weight distribution beneath a new and larger capacity grasscatcher.

Caster-type and mounted at either end of a common arm that pivots at their attachment point, the wheels also provide greater flotation and a smoother ride.

Howard Price

The new Turf Blazer 727 Diesel from Howard Price gives a 72-inch cutting swath while the new Hydro-Power 180 gives a 15-foot cut.

The diesel is a Yanmar three-cylinder water-cooled unit which delivers 27½ hp. The blade spindle on the deck is one of the heaviest in the industry. Conveniently located hydrostatic control pedal enables the operator to vary his ground speed independent of engine rpm.

The Hydro-Power 180 is capable of mowing up to 11 acres per hour with individual decks allowing for maximum flotation. Wing units can be raised individually as needed. The Hydro-Power 180 is powered by a four-cylinder 78 hp Perkins engine.

Jacobsen

In addition to the popular Turfcats II line of mowers was introduced by Jacobsen at the International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show in Atlanta last February.

Though designed to appeal to new customers facing particularly tight budget constraints, the new Turfcats II GA 180 incorporates many features found in the other Turfcats II vehicles: hydrostatic drive, two-speed transaxle with limited slip differential, single treadle for forward and reverse and a foot-operated hydraulic implement lift.

The GA 180 is powered by an 18 hp Onan gas engine that is twin-cylinder and air-cooled.

Jacobsen also redesigned the GA 200 with a specially ducted engine and the ability to handle a variety of cutter decks, a 50-inch side discharge deck, a 60-inch side discharge deck, a 60-inch rear discharge deck and a 50-inch flail mower.

F. D. Kees

Greater rust protection through a special urethane paint is now standard for all F. D. Kees riding rotary mowers, which come in 32-, 36- and 48-inch models.

Standard features for the models include an 11-hp Briggs & Stratton or Honda synchro-balanced engine, an Ultra-High Lift Blade and baffled frame design. Also standard are individual drum-type brakes, extra large front caster wheels and V-flanged front protectors.

Kubota

Four Kubota models are being hailed as "a new generation" of small water-cooled, two- or three-cylinder compact diesel engine tractors with mid-mount mowers.

The 44-inch rigid mower deck available (RC44-G) is designed to allow better grass flow and discharge through a right-hand oriented outlet. The RC44-G is for Kubota tractor models G3200, G4200, G4200H and G5200H, which range from 10 hp to 14 hp.

The entire assembly weighs as little as 830 pounds with either gear or hydrostatic transmission available.

Mitsubishi

Eight compact and mid-size tractors with mowing attachments are available from Mitsubishi, ranging in size from the 15-hp Beaver to the 38-hp Stallion.

Seven of the models are available with water-cooled engines. In addition, dual range transmissions with from 8 to 12 speeds are available, and all models come in either two-wheel or four-wheel drive with a choice of ag or turf tires.

A wide variety of front, mid and rear mounted attachments, available through Mitsubishi dealers, are compatible with most models.

MTD

MTD has introduced what it calls its TR-500 series, a generation of rear-engine mowers with a streamlined wedge shape. Four models are available from a five hp, single-speed machine with a 26-inch cut to an electric-start, 10 hp, five-speed with a 30-inch cut.

All models are equipped with MTD's new transaxle which combines transmission and differential in one unit. All TR-500 series mowers have comfortable no-straddle driving positions for clear visibility and a steering column that is angled back 25 degrees for more comfort.

A convenient side-mounted lever engages and disengages the cutting blade.

Smithco

The Smithco Performer, a hydrostatic front-mounted mower, comes with the choice of two engines: the Briggs & Stratton 18 hp twin-cylinder air-cooled engine or the Kohler 23 hp twin-cylinder cast iron engine for maximum power.

For more efficient use of power, the Performer has an Eaton Model 11 hydrostatic unit combined with a two-speed Peerless transaxle (Model 250).

An exclusive feature only available on the Performer is the adjustable operating foot pedal that provides smooth starts and stops.

Mower deck sizes of 52, 62 and 72 inches are available.

Snapper

A lawn tractor with 33- and 41-inch cutting systems called the LT 11000 has been introduced by Snapper Power Equipment.

This machine has an 11-hp horizontal shaft engine, friction disc drive, a 33-inch Hi-Vac cutting system and a tilt steering wheel. Other standard equipment includes an electric clutch, a cutting height range from one to five inches and a dual range transmission that provides 12 forward and two reverse speeds.

Plenty of options are available for the 33-inch system. Where more cutting is to be done and bagging is not needed, the 41-inch system is also available.

Toro

A three-cylinder, four-cycle, water-cooled Mitsubishi engine has been selected for Toro's Groundsmaster 72 riding rotary mower while the Groundsmaster 72 Diesel has a four-cylinder, four-cycle water-cooled Continental engine.

Toro has also added Groundsmaster 52 and 62 grass collecting systems to its line of equipment.

The Groundsmaster 62 is a new commercial turf maintenance unit combining a new rotary cutting deck with a newly-powered prime mower. The deck is 62 inches wide with three rotary blades mounted at the front of the vehicle. The engine is a twin-cylinder four-cycle air-cooled Onan.

Also new for 1983 is a floating deck for the Groundsmaster 52 and other optional equipment.

Wheel Horse

New for 1983 from Wheel Horse are the C-195 tractor and a front mount mower carrier.

The tractor has a 19 hp twin-cylinder Kohler engine, hydrostatic transmission and uni-drive all-gear transaxle. Attachments include a 60-inch side discharge mower and a lawn sweeper.

The front mount mower carrier is designed to fit most Wheel Horse C-series tractors. Full-floating 42- and 48-inch mowers attach to the front mount carrier, which offers on-end mower positioning.

RIDING ROTARY MOWERS from page 15

Yard-Man

Two versatile new lawn tractors have been introduced by Yard-Man. Model 13699 comes with a 40-inch tri-blade rear-discharge deck that eliminates "windrow effect" and the Gemini is a twin-chute large capacity clipping-leaf collection system.

Each features an 11 hp engine. The dual adjust cutting height system is carried in both the frame and deck with an index lever with a "memory" that permits the operator to pre-select a cutting height and return to it immediately.

Each has full-floating cutting decks with five forward and one reverse speed.

No. 1 problem

Moles: Is there a

When you talk about caring for lawns — eliminating weeds, diseases, insects; assuring a beautiful deep green color — there's hardly anything the well-versed lawn care businessmen can't handle.

Except moles.

Those pesky rodents have more than one way of tearing up lawns, and they're so difficult to eliminate that many lawn care businessmen wouldn't touch them with a 10-foot pole, even if they had the chance.

"We do not do moles," states

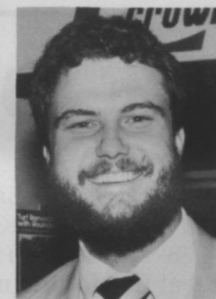
Duane Saxton of Liqui-Lawn Corp., Lewiston, Idaho. "Manpower-wise, it's a killer. Trapping takes too much time, and you have to bait and go back and find the tunnels, too."

Adds Vince Flecker of Shur-Spray Lawn Care in Indianapolis: "I bet I get a call a week about moles when the busy season gets started. If I could come up with an answer for them, I'd be a millionaire."

After numerous conversations with experts, LAWN CARE INDUSTRY found that there is just one sure-fire answer for ridding a lawn of the little critters, the same answer mentioned by Saxton: trapping.

"The mole problem seems to be getting increasingly more severe each year," says Dr. Robert Corrigan, extension specialist at Purdue University, the one man in the entire country who has done the most research on moles.

"Trapping is the only effective, consistent answer. But it's difficult and tricky; the key is knowing where to place the traps."



Ted Hood

"I honestly don't know how they (two rodenticides) got registered for moles."

When confronted with a mole problem, most professionals in the lawn care business will attack the animal's feeding source, grub infestations, with Oftanol. But that procedure may not do the trick because moles also feed on earthworms. And even if it works, it's usually only temporary because the moles will eventually return — after they're done tearing up a neighbor's lawn.

Ted Hood of Crown Chemical in St. Louis notes the existence of some rodenticides which are registered for moles, Gopha-Rid (produced by Bell Laboratories) in particular.

"There's a couple rodenticides registered for moles, but I honestly don't know how they got registered," Hood notes. "They're zinc phosphides. But you still have to eliminate all other foods in the affected area for them to be effective."

A check with Bell Labs affirms Hood's contention.

"As far as the Environmental Protection Agency is concerned, it

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bonafide solution?

is not necessary to prove efficacy on field rodenticides," says Randy Davis, who is a Bell national sales representative. "All we had to do was provide a use pattern to get the registration for moles. In California, field testing has been done with Gopha-Rid on gophers and 100 percent control was achieved, but the product's effectiveness on moles is marginal.

"If the mole eats the chemical, it'll die. But I cannot guarantee it'll eat it."

Corrigan agrees.

"There has been no research to show whether rodenticides work. Rarely will a mole be attracted to

ence, it pays off. As a matter of fact, it's almost like taking candy from a baby."

Dr. Corrigan suggests that interested lawn care businessmen contact local extension agents or wildlife conservation agents, who can mail out a leaflet. All else failing, the people at Purdue University would also be glad to provide information.

Sums up Hood: "The only effective way of getting rid of moles remains trapping, and that's a pain in the rear."



Dr. Robert Corrigan



"Spraying is a hit-and-miss type option. Trapping is the only consistent, effective answer ... it's almost like taking candy from a baby."

anything other than live food sources. Preliminary research shows that baits are not effective at all," Corrigan says.

"And this business of spraying lawns to reduce the grub population: there's never been any research to prove it also reduces the mole population. Even when the grubs and earthworms have been eliminated, there's no indication that the moles won't return later. Spraying is a hit-and-miss-type option."

Are moles that much of a problem in the lawn care business? In some areas, yes. As a matter of fact, one Midwestern location had 526 mole or grub service calls out of a total of 3,292 service calls — 16 percent.

'Nothing works'

"We've tried everything, but nothing works," observes Thomas Mauer of Mountain View Lawn Care, Holyoke, Mass. "We check for grubs, but other than that there's nothing we can do. I've asked around and haven't been able to get any answers from anybody, either."

Dr. Corrigan sticks to the idea of trapping.

"You have to identify the main runways and then set the trap properly," he notes. "Usually, with a little persistence and pati-

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Larry Birum fills need for landscape maintenance

Northern Washington is among the most lush and beautiful areas in the country. The mild climate and the approximately 35 inches of rainfall received annually combine to create an environment as green as any on this planet. It is also, perhaps not surprisingly, one of the fastest growing areas in terms of population, as well.

Ironically, the lush vegetation

that attracts many people to the area often becomes a major problem as they struggle to maintain the lawns around their homes and businesses.

One man who has analyzed the situation and made it work to his advantage is Larry Birum, president and founder of The Shaw Company, a landscape maintenance firm based in Everett,

Washington.

"There is a tremendous need for landscaping and landscape maintenance in this area," says Birum of the land bordered by Seattle to the south and Bellingham to the north. "The area is growing so quickly, and every city and municipality in Washington now requires a landscaping plan to accompany all new developments

from apartment complexes to malls."

By limiting his area of service strictly to maintenance of already landscaped areas, Birum, a former real estate man, has found a profitable niche for his business and watched it grow continually over the last 10 years. "We take over right where the landscaper left off," explains Birum, who has found his work for commercial clients such as banks and a local power company particularly rewarding.

Birum's first client was the U.S. government for whom he maintained the landscape of repossessed FHA homes. "It was during a recession in the aerospace industry," he recalls, noting that Boeing employs a large portion of the area's residents. "The government was repossessing hundreds of homes and needed to maintain them. At one point, we were responsible for 600 homes in the greater Seattle area."

Sixty clients

Today, Birum and his staff of 15 to 18 employees serve approximately 60 clients. And, while he treats each one individually according to their specific needs, he insists on a year-round maintenance contract. "We service our clients on a yearly schedule and provide them with virtually all of their maintenance needs," he comments. "Our standard maintenance program is based on one to four monthly visits that include everything from general clean-up of refuse and pruning to fertilization and weed control."

In many cases, Birum also provides irrigation. "As wet as it is here, we do get dry months in the summer," he explains. "Our grasses are dependent on very high humidity, so even a brief dry period can have a browning effect."

Lack of moisture is, however, not one of Birum's primary concerns. In fact, the moisture itself represents his major problem. "We can't even do a good job of cutting the grass in this wet weather," he laments. "We usually have to wait until well past noon for the wind to blow the mist off and the sun to shine through and dry out the grass."

Contradictions?

In another apparent contradiction, the very moisture that prevents Birum's crews from mowing is the cause of his having to mow so frequently. "We mow a standard lawn at least every seven days, and try to maintain a height of one inch," he states. In order to maintain a lawn at such a height, he knows it must be in good condition to withstand the stress of constant cutting.

"We fertilize our grasses every four weeks, and trees twice a year," he notes. Larry uses Agro-Fertilizer special lawn mix or tree and shrub mix accordingly, applying the lawn granules mechanically with a cyclone spreader, and by hand around trees and bushes.

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Circle No. 117 on Reader Inquiry Card

MIGHTY. SMALL.

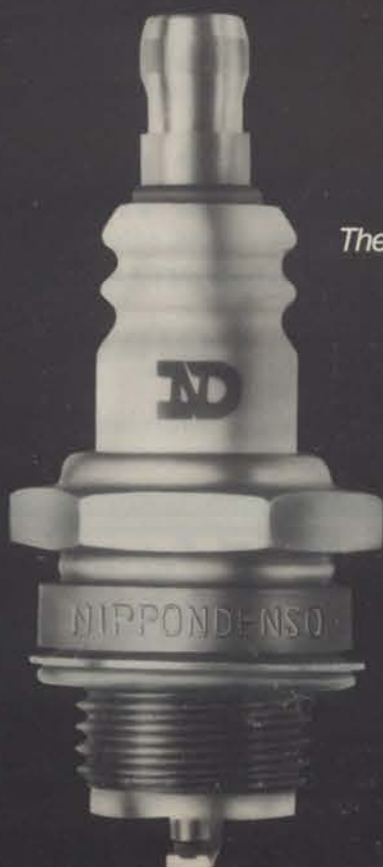
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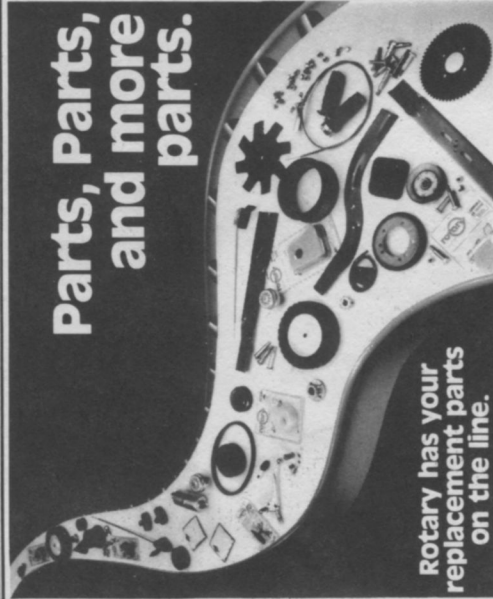


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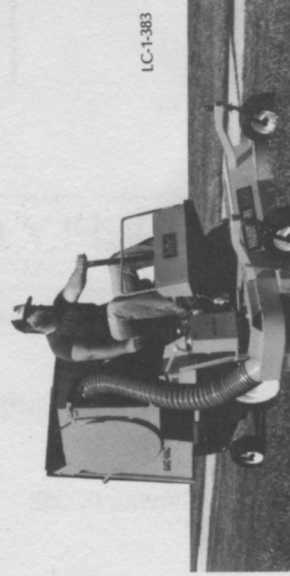


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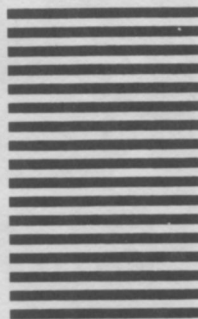
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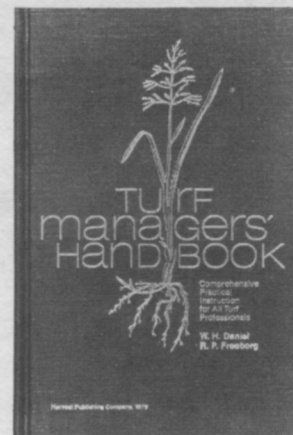
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Where experience pays off

from page 1

"This industry is classic free enterprise. People who are aggressive in the business sense—that is, profit-motivated—and use that as their basis for decision-making can be successful."

Erbaugh and six other former members of Davey Tree Service in nearby Kent, Ohio, formed Lawnmark during the fall and winter of 1978 when they open offices in the Akron-Canton area and in Rochester, N.Y. and Milwaukee, Wisc. Four of the six are still with Lawnmark: Fred Fassett, Ed Coia, John Prusa and Mark Laube.

Erbaugh, long an advocate of direct mail, cites Landmark's mailing system as one of the company's secrets to success.

"Our mailing lists — our direct mail advertising — are the most sophisticated in the business," Erbaugh says.

Since their first year, the Lawnmark associates have opened additional branch offices in Roanoke, Va., Buffalo, N.Y. and

Syracuse, N.Y. In the process, they increased gross sales from \$350,000 in 1979 to \$1.8 million in 1982.

"We've spent four years getting the business up and on its feet," Erbaugh said. "Now, I'm predicting an annual growth rate of 30 percent for the next three years, though I'll go no further than that."

"If I compound 30 percent on my million-eight, I'm happy."

Erbaugh is also one of the founding fathers of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, and as a past president is still one of the most-recognized men in the industry.

Fassett is now branch manager at Roanoke. Prusa handles the New York regional operation while Laube is No. 1 man in the Akron-Cleveland office. Coia is the financial consultant.

Lawnmark offers a four-application granular fertilizer program, along with a two-application "feed and weed" program. Core aerating and overseeding are also offered. In addition, the company operates an "Arbor-Gro" division for tree and shrub care.

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In turn, we'll send you award credit checks which you can use to "purchase" the merchandise of your choice. The more credits you earn, the more valuable your choices become. And this year's catalog contains over 100 valuable items for your work or pleasure.

There's another change for this year. You can only enroll in the program through a participating distributor. If your distributor is not listed here as a participant you may enroll and purchase your products through any listed distributor.

So contact a participating distributor for your free catalog of over 100 award items, enrollment form, rules and award claim forms. The sooner you enroll in the "DURSBAN Delivers The Goods" program the sooner you start earning credits.

DURSBAN DELIVERS THE GOODS

1983



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Circle No. 108 on Reader Inquiry Card

Loving Lawn Care

Machine solves tough problems

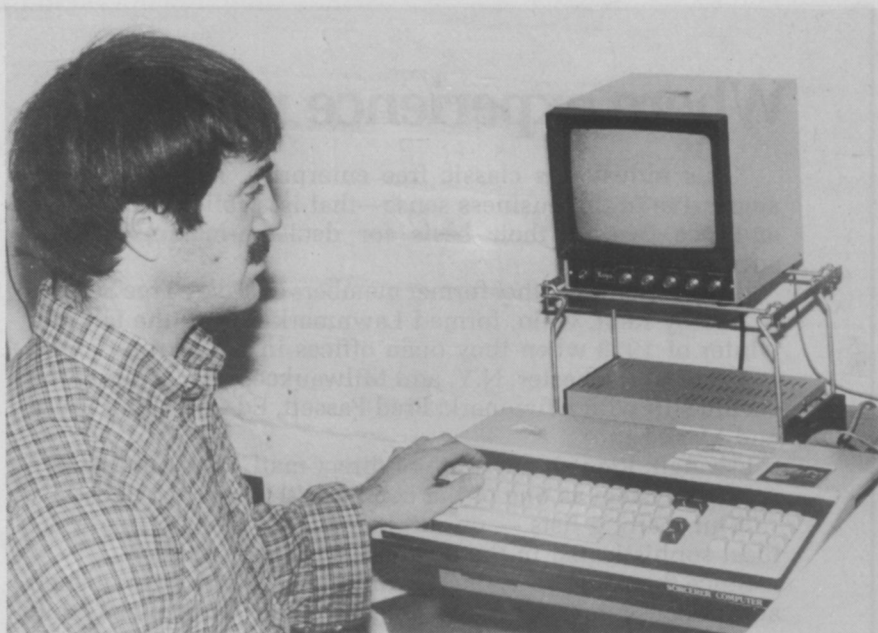
"The funny thing I found out about this business is how complicated it can get," says Don Bassman, owner of Loving Lawn Care in Seattle, Wash. "What with dealing with equipment, employees and customers, a seemingly small operation ends up demanding an awful lot of management."

Bassman has found an ideal way to cope with his situation: a per-

sonal computer programmed specifically for his lawn care business.

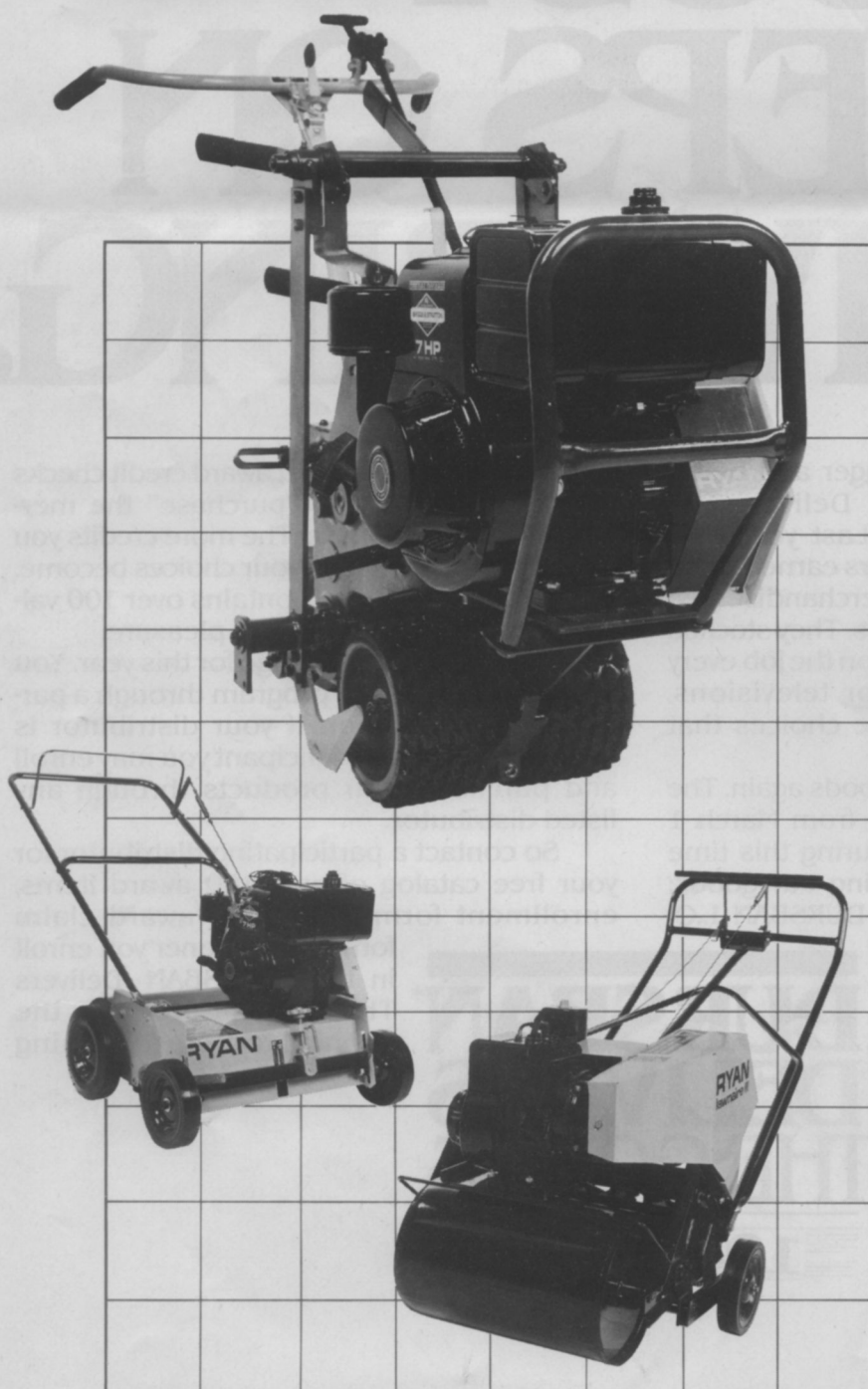
In order to understand in more detail what Bassman's computer does for him, and how he evolved its specific program, it is helpful to go back to the beginning of his entry into the lawn care business.

"I came to Seattle three years ago and started mowing lawns for a



Don Bassman demonstrates his computer

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friend," Bassman recalls. "Except for mowing a few lawns as a kid, this was my introduction to lawn care. I was impressed by the fact that someone could bill people for \$16 to \$20 an hour for a skill he didn't have to be particularly qualified in. At least, this was my perspective at the time. I was also surprised that my friend couldn't make any money."

Bassman's friend was in debt and wanted out. "I took over his debts and paid them off, which was the trade-off for my receiving the business."

"My primary assumption that an inexperienced person can go out and make money was wrong. I had to learn the hard way and found it takes a surprising amount of time and training to teach an employee to mow a lawn both quickly and efficiently."

Quick changes

There were some management changes that Bassman was able to enact right away. The former owner was paying too much for overhead, including \$500 a month for rent.

"I moved to this space for \$70, but pay only \$45; \$25 is rebated for my cutting the grass," says Bassman. This space consists of three small 175 sq. ft. garages, one for office and the other two for equipment.

Bassman says the former owner was hampered by faulty equipment which was always breaking down on the job. "Also, we had five jalopy trucks, only two of which were working at any one time. I immediately sold three."

"Other problems included unorganized scheduling, late starts, a lot of part time help which increased wear and tear on the equipment and added to the confusion, all of which added up to low quality, undependable work."

"I took over 150 accounts that were canceling like crazy," Bassman recalls. Good management, aided by the computer, has turned that situation around. Bassman now has 300 solid accounts.

Scheduling now is absolute, the lawn care is professional, the equipment is new and the debts all paid off. "We grossed \$80,000 last year, and now this year are in the

position to actually start making money," Bassman says.

After struggling through the first year, Bassman says, "I tried to figure out logically in my mind how the business should be managed, and how to best make improvements." He made a tentative start with a computer, but, at the start of the second season, found he had to sell the computer to get enough money to start the business again.

During the second year, he says, "I kept learning, organizing myself, and developing systems by hand, making out little forms, different ways I could make scheduling and other operations more efficient." This turned out to be an important time, for, as he explains, "No computer is able to figure out your actual methods of

doing business, which have to be personal. . . I look at my computer as an extension of myself—not of my personality, but rather a tool to help me do what I want to do."

Over the second winter he

Bassman spent the winter writing the programs and keying in all the accounts in the proper format. "Fortunately, this time around I didn't have to sell it," he says of his \$1,100 computer.

'I look at my computer as an extension of myself.'

thoroughly thought out just how he wanted to manage his business, which, in turn, enabled him to visualize how to set up his system. When he finally struck onto his method, it all came together, in a rather sophisticated way.

"Right away, at the start of February, I was able to put it in motion. I still didn't know whether it would be practical or not. I just assumed I would be in a position so that, if I wanted to grow, I could do so in an easier way. I felt it

would be better to start early rather than wait until things got out of hand."

The key document the computer prints out every day is the work sheet. This includes the customer's name, account number, address, and route of every lawn to be cut that day.

"The computer routes the jobs so that the waste of drive time and gas is minimized," Bassman says. "We've divided the city so that no one will ever have to drive more than a mile from one end of the route to the other."

The mowing cycle is every 10 days. At the end of the day the employee circles the jobs he's done which Bassman feeds back into the computer, which will

to page 28

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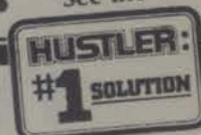
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Lawn King survives bankruptcy courts

"There have been, for years, rumors of our imminent demise. And there are times I wonder how we managed to survive it all."

Not what you'd expect from the owner of a million-dollar lawn care business? Not at all — but Marc Sandler of Lawn King in Fairfield, N.J. says it with a smile.

In March, 1978, after rebounding from three years of court battles that had financially depleted the business, Lawn King emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy and began rebuilding a

kingdom that had once numbered 170 franchises and had been bigger than even ChemLawn.

"We were exonerated on all counts of antitrust," Sandler now says. "We just kept fighting, and that I have to credit to my father, Joseph, who started the business in 1970. He decided he hadn't done anything wrong and just didn't knuckle under."

The elder Sandler was forced from active participation in the business last April when he injured his back in an auto accident.

When Lawn King emerged from Chapter 11 status, franchises were offered an equitable method of terminating the relationship with the home office, but Lawn King maintains approximately 35 franchises that reach from Long Island, N.Y. to Montgomery County, Md. With 19 trucks and a peak full-time employment list of 19, Lawn King grossed more than two million dollars in 1982.

When asked to name the secrets of Lawn King's success, Sandler immediately noted the quality of



Marc Sandler outside Lawn King

the program.

"We've always encouraged our franchisees to offer the maximum in terms of quality, but not in price," he responded. "We're an excellent value since we've eliminated the cost of a sales call to the point where we can offer the best deal in the business."

"The basic concept of the business is valid, and we've adapted with the times, recognizing the changing of the industry."

Sandler says his next big decision — which will be reached this year — will be whether to plan Lawn King's growth through its retail operation or through franchising, at which it was successful 10 years ago.

Will Lawn King's future be as turbulent as its past? Marc Sandler doesn't know, but he's ready for it.

"It was a hell of a roller coaster ride," he concludes, the smile still on his face. "We've taken our share of the punches and rolled right with them. But I'm the type of gambler that enjoys the ride more than winning or losing."

ILCA

Seminar held in Wood Dale

The Illinois Landscape Contractors Association had its winter seminar at the Elmhurst Country Club in Wood Dale, Ill.

The first three days were devoted to speeches on landscape design. The fourth day, Feb. 3, featured an array of technical mini-seminars. The last day was used for a session on marketing.

Attendance at the seminar was strong, according to an ILCA press release.

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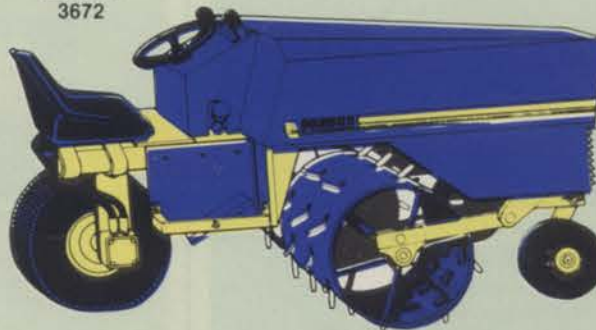
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DEDOES INDUSTRIES INCORPORATED

Annual listing of nation's largest lawn care companies

from page 1

gross. Seventy-five year-rounders are employed at 33 franchises with that number growing to 200 during the peak season.

Hydro-Lawn, a seven-outlet chain, uses 11 year-round employees and 96 peak-season. They service 23,000 accounts for \$4.6 million gross.

More than 20,000 accounts are serviced by R. W. Collins Inc. for \$3.2 million in business. The 15 outlets employ 125 year-round and 140 peak season.

Super Lawns Inc. does approximately 6,500 lawns with gross receipts of \$1.9 million. Thirty-five are employed during the peak season at 16 franchises with 10 continuing year-round.

Lawnmark, with five branches, employs 14 year-rounders and 52 during the peak season. Lawnmark services 10,800 accounts for \$1.75 million in business.

With just one outlet, Spray-a-Lawn of Youngstown does more than \$1.6 million in business on 12,246 lawns. Spray-a-Lawn of Youngstown employs 37 workers year-round and 46 during the peak season. Meanwhile, Spray-a-Lawn of Pittsburgh has about the same numbers; just under \$1.6 million: 12,525; 33 and 46 out of two offices.

More biggies

With 18 franchises, Nitro-Green Professional Lawn and Tree Care needs 19 year-round employees and 40 during the peak season. They service 15,000 accounts with gross receipts of \$1.5 million.

Shur-Lawn, a two-outlet chain, has a minimum of 29 and maximum of 48 employees doing \$1.4 million in business on 8,300 lawns.

Greenlon, Inc. does more than \$1.2 million on the same number of lawns as Shur-Lawn. Greenlon uses 45 minimum and 100 maximum employees.

Lawn Groomer services 7,500 lawns for gross receipts of \$1.2 million with 29 year-round employees and 35 during the peak season. Lawn Groomer has five branches.

Keystone Lawn Spray does more than \$1 million on more than 10,000 lawns with two offices, eight year-round employees and 42 during the busy season.

Village Green Ltd. does about \$1 million gross with 5,200 lawns, nine year-round employees, a maximum of 13 employees and two offices.

\$1,000,000 and over

ChemLawn Corp.
Columbus, OH

Ever-Green Lawns Corp.
St. Louis, MO

Tru-Green Corp.
East Lansing, MI

Davey Lawnscape
Kent, OH

Orkin
Atlanta, GA

Lawn Medic
Bergen, NY

Barefoot Grass Lawn Service
Worthington, OH

Spring-Green Lawn Care Corp.
Naperville, IL

Hydro Lawn, Inc.
Gaithersburg, MD

Leisure Lawn, Inc.
Dayton, OH

R. W. Collins, Inc.
Satellite Beach, FL

Turf Doctor
Framingham, MA

Liqui-Green Lawn Care Corp.
Peoria, IL

Excelawn, Inc.
Louisville, KY

Lawn King, Inc.
Fairfield, NJ

Super Lawns, Inc.
Rockville, MD

Lawnmark Associates
Peninsula, OH

Lawn Beautiful
Wheeling, IL

Spray-a-Lawn
Youngstown, OH

Nitro-Green Pro Lawn Care
Bismarck, ND

Perma-Green
Boise, ID

Shur-Lawn Co.
Omaha, NE

Greenlon, Inc.
Cincinnati, OH

Lawn Groomer
Normal, IL

Village Green Ltd.
West Chicago, IL

Keystone Lawn Spray
Wayne, PA

Green-Lawn, Inc.
Louisville, KY

Lawn-a-Mat Chemical & Equipment
Mineola, NY

Perf-a-Lawn Corp.
New Carlisle, OH

Royal Lawns, Inc.
Pine Brook, NJ

Truly Nolen Exterminating
Hollywood, FL

Old Fox Lawn Care
East Providence, RI

L&M Lawncare
Cleveland, OH

\$500,000 to \$1,000,000

Spray-a-Lawn
Orville, OH

Fox Valley Pro Lawn Care
Appleton, WI

Green Care Lawn Service
Birmingham, AL

Lawnlife
Salt Lake City, UT

ProGrass, Inc.
Hubbard, OR

Jay-Lan, Inc.
Sioux City, IA

All-American Turf Beauty
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J. C. Erlich Co.
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Circle No. 107 on Reader Inquiry Card

Computer key to success of Loving Care

from page 25

again program the job 10 days hence. The computer indicates whether a particular job is behind schedule. Also, in case of excessive rain or dryness, which would change the lawns' needs, Bassman can make quick adjustments "so that lawns will always be cut when they need to be, but only then."

Under the date is the amount charged, which, in turn, indicates the size of the job and how much time it should take. The computer also prints out on this same form special services, such as fertilizing, as they become due.

This single sheet also generates all of the payroll calculations, plus customer bills. The computer automatically sends out past-due notices, and adds up the monthly gross. It prints a total of all that's been received as well as projecting future business.

"I know just what my costs and income will be at any particular time," says Bassman. "It's an excellent tool for maintaining proper cash flow."

How can other lawn care professionals utilize a home computer for themselves?

Possibilities

Bassman says there are three basic possibilities. The first is purchasing standard software designed for all small businesses. The problem here is that it's difficult to make general programs like these work for the specific needs of a lawn care business. Another possibility is hiring an outside computer consultant. But the problem here is that they're usually in the price range that can be afforded by only a large company.

The third possibility is to do as Bassman did, teach himself to design his own programs to meet his own needs. This involved a lot of hard work, as well as trial and error. Bassman did have some programming experience before coming into the lawn care business, but says he believes even someone with no experience can, with commitment, come up with something as valuable to him as Bassman's computer is to him.

Bassman also says, "I'm open to consult with any readers of *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY* who wish to talk to me about my computer."

You may reach Bassman by writing him at P.O. Box 12074, Seattle, WA 98112, or by calling (206) 322-5114.

—Mike Major

Mike Major is a freelance writer who has been a past contributor to *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY*, among other business publications. He works out of his base in Yelm, Washington.

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Overhead shouldn't be over your head

Question: Can the owner of a lawn care business fail when business is good?

Answer: Emphatically, yes: when he doesn't understand the importance of watching and controlling overhead costs. In order to do this he must know — and know what to do about — the responses to queries like these:

1) *Exactly what is overhead?* This usually includes all business expenses as the cost of a new lawn spray unit or mowing tractor which is more efficient than a

similar machine he is using now. Other typical overhead costs are building rent and maintenance, insurance, utilities (as the phone) and outside professional aid (as an accountant). Some expenses are fixed and relatively uncontrollable (as the rent); others can be manipulated to a varying degree, as cutting down drastically on employees during the winter time watershed months, and using the mails instead of long distance phone calls.

2) *Why must most overhead*

costs be watched? Because it's easy for expenses to get out of line, especially in times of prosperity when an unconscious spendthrift management frequently develops. It's argued that "we can afford it because our business is growing."

A case in point concerns the owner of one enterprise who was doing very well because, as he put it later, "The lawn care industry was the big new service on the block," and everybody seemed to want it. "Then," he recalls, "I insisted on only high salaried college educated workers." But

when the recession began to take big bites out of his lawn care business profits, he had to cut down on this overhead cost (and fortunately discovered that practical experience can often be a better employee qualification than education if you want to hire only top flight people).

Many lawn care business owners who have to cut down begin to panic, and when many small expenses (which seem insignificant when considered separately) are added together, the total is gigantic. But because it's hard to economize now, painful measures are often taken thoughtlessly — and the end result is often tragic: a valuable worker (college or non-

Sometimes, good services are cut without cutting prices.

college trained) can be terminated or his salary cut to the point where he has to quit. Needed insurance can be dropped. Plans for the urgent purchase of important equipment, as snow plowing machinery which will keep the business operating in the winter time months when lawns obviously won't need maintenance — may be cancelled.

Sometimes the good services which good customers have the right to expect are cut without cutting prices. Sometimes they are even raised, and cheaper fertilizer and other chemicals are used which can't possibly do a "best quality" job. All of this can inevitably lead to a vicious cycle: old customers drop away in droves, which keeps prices high, and the lack of new business makes it impossible to get them back down again.

3) *How can overhead costs be watched?* The best way is to set up and use a suitably long-term overhead accounting control system which will reveal and prevent the recurrence of any wasteful, hazardous and sometimes desperate expense-cutting methods.

One way to create it is to start at once by recording expenses as they occur. By the end of the year you will have a detailed report, classified by month, which will include everything pertinent to the period, as the purchase of herbicides, the cost of a trip to a distant city to attend an important industry conference, and the repair of an old spray unit. One method requires a loose leaf notebook, with each page devoted to a particular expense. It should have 14 columns, with the first used for the year, the next 12 for the individual months, and the final column, at the far right, for totaling the figures of the 12 months.

Such a record — which is easy to use by reading across any particular line — is invaluable for many different expense-cutting purposes because you can review last



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If you buy 'on time,' always figure in all interest and carrying charges

year's costs (and those of the years before that) before incurring the same expenses again. You can also consider different and possibly more practical ideas. For instance, if the herbicide you purchased in 1980, '81 and '82 has constantly inched upward in price, is there another brand or type which does the job as well but will cost the business less? Or, if the 1982 industry conference was important, would you have saved money in the long run by going yourself instead of sending a key man? And should you do this in 1983? Did it really pay off to repair that old spray unit, which will need to be repaired again very shortly, or should you sell it now and use whatever proceeds you'll get toward the purchase of a new and better model?

Such a record is also invaluable when it's time to prepare business income taxes and set up financial statements as the P&L and the balance sheet.

Some owners file all statements and bills by expense, then by date. Then all papers concerning expenses of the same type are placed in a large envelope with holes punched on one side so that they can be "filed" in the loose leaf expense book right behind each specific expense. Now back-up information is right at hand for comparing past bills with present estimates.

4) Are there other ways to cut overhead costs? One is to always seriously consider the purchase of new types of lawn maintenance equipment (even if an old machine doesn't need repair) if there are proven time and worksaver features, as the latest model professional turf system which will spray lawns and trees from the same unit, permit the spraying of different solutions from the same unit, and allow the suspension of granular material.

Many successful lawn maintenance people — even when they're perfectly satisfied with what they own — check new equipment routinely because they feel that the cost of its purchase is recouped quickly: Fewer employees are usually needed to do the same jobs, and the work quality is generally much higher. Now overhead goes down, old customers are far more satisfied, and there's usually an increase of new accounts.

But it's also important — overhead-wise — to acquire needed items by the most financially advantageous method possible. So if you buy "on time" always figure in all interest and carrying charges for late payments, since these can be high. However, if they are, don't let this block the purchase of a needed

item if it will more than pay off because you'll be able to use what you need at once, instead of waiting — as you will, if you want to accumulate the full purchase price before you buy.

Another way to curb overhead expenses is to question those which are usually unthinkingly accepted.

When the owner of one lawn maintenance company learned, for example, by reviewing his over-

head costs what it was actually costing him to retain a full time bookkeeper, he didn't replace her when she retired. Instead, he arranged for her to come in once a week and check his company's books which he decided to keep himself. At the end of six months he found, to his surprise, that he didn't even need her to do this for him — and saved a big chunk of overhead costs.

You can also follow through when expenses seem to be out of line — even concerning bills you've already paid.

Another story concerns a lawn care man who decided to purchase the chemicals his business needed in bulk quantities because this would reduce warehouse space and improve industry management.

Although this new purchasing method did do these things for his business, he found that the actual price of the chemicals had gone up instead of down. His first thought was to carelessly blame the rising figures on inflation, and do nothing further. But he gave the matter a second thought and checked with the supplying chemical firm. He eventually learned, in this way, that there was collusion between his own employee who handled his own company's purchasing and two of the people who worked for the chemical firm. These three men were earning their so-called "fringe benefits" via a simple overcharge and kickback arrangement. You can be sure that this was corrected quickly.

—Bess Ritter May

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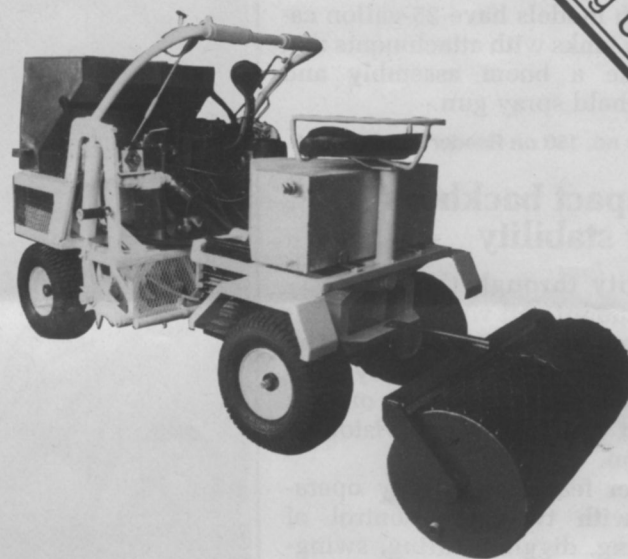
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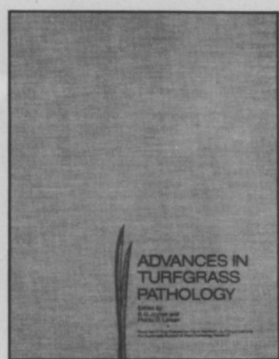
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LCI 53

Power sprayers proven versatile

The new Dobbins CS-25 and CS-25S electric power sprayers have proven to be highly versatile and



mobile. The sprayers draw power from the 12-volt battery of a garden tractor or pickup truck. The CS-25 is a trailer model for towing behind a garden tractor, while the CS-25S is on a skid for easy transfer to a pickup truck or other mounting.

Both models have 25-gallon capacity tanks with attachments that include a boom assembly and hand-held spray gun.

Circle no. 150 on Reader Inquiry Card

Compact backhoes offer stability

Stability through their "Saf-T-Lok" mount and wide stance cantilevered stabilizers is one of the special features offered by new compact backhoes now on the market from Woods, Division of Hesston.

Other features are easy operation with two-lever control of reaching, digging, lifting, swinging and dumping; and self-contained independent hydraulics.

Two-bar parallel linkage gives the backhoes 162-degree bucket



curl for maximum break-out and full bite, keeps material in the bucket during lift and swing, and makes the hoes more compact for transport and storage.

The two models are No. 650, which reaches seven feet, 10 inches and digs six feet, six inches below grade; and No. 750, which reaches nine feet, four inches and digs seven feet, six inches below grade. The former is designed for tractors rated 18-35 hp, the latter for tractors from 20 to 40 hp. Bucket sizes of 10, 12, 16 and 24 inches are available for both.

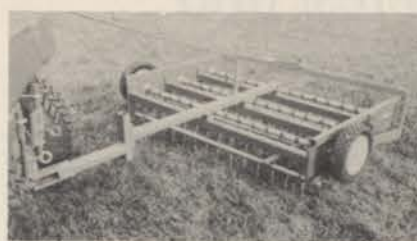
Circle no. 151 on Reader Inquiry Card

PRODUCTS

Tine Rake goes deep into surface

Tine Rake, a new product developed by the Tine Rake Company, features a patented design which is based on the hand rake, for improved raking efficiency. The tines face in the direction of travel. As the device moves forward, spring tension is created on the tines, which controls the raking depth. This tension also allows Tine Rake to effectively dethatch, dig out imbedded mulch and aerate the surface on each pass.

Available in both front- and



rear-mount models, Tine Rake attaches quickly and easily to any riding mower or tractor of eight or more hp. Raking speed is limited only by the density of the turf.

Tine Rake models are available in widths of from 24 inches to 52 inches.

Circle no. 152 on Reader Inquiry Card

Sprinkler monitor helps save water

"Water Sentry" can cut water cost by 50 percent, according to Wally Cox, president of Universal Irrigation Technologies, which markets the computer.

The product uses new state-of-the-art solid state technology that measures the actual moisture content of the soil and begins the watering cycle only when needed. The unit can be installed on most existing residential, commercial and industrial systems.

Circle no. 153 on Reader Inquiry Card



How many turf in this

Here's a clue. D-z-n® Diazinon® controls every insect you see here, from the root-eating white grub to the juice-sucking chinch bug. In fact, D-z-n Diazinon has the biggest label of any turf

insecticide. And that makes it the perfect choice for broad spectrum control in both commercial and residential turf.

Need another clue? D-z-n controls damaging worms including

Hole Mole added to boring devices



General Equipment Company has added the M101 Hole Mole to its line of vertical and horizontal earth boring equipment.

The unit is intended for instal-

ling underground services up to 3½ inches diameter under driveways, sidewalks, lawns and other obstructions.

It is ideal for sprinkler system installation work, and can be utilized with any power source capable of delivering 15 gpm and 1500 psi.

Also offered from General Equipment are compaction type boring moles and return reamers, computer designed for optimum boring accuracy and efficiency.

Circle no. 154 on Reader Inquiry Card

Soil test brochure

The National Limestone Institute has developed and is distributing a new brochure entitled "Check Your Field — Soil Test Now."

Designed to be used at any time of the year, the brochure emphasizes the importance of conducting soil testing to ensure balanced soil fertility conditions and stresses the use of aglime to build the foundation for productive soils and maximum fertilizer efficiency.

Circle no. 155 on Reader Inquiry Card

Flail mowers added to existing line

Vemco Corporation of America has added two new 22-inch flail mowers to its line of rear-mount, front-mount, tow-behind and self-propelled commercial flail mowers.

Model SP 22 is self-propelled, Model HP 22 hand-propelled.

Centrifugal force holds free-swinging lightweight flail blades



in cutting position. Blades cut grass and vegetation cleanly, but fold back harmlessly when striking a solid object. Clippings are mulched and deposited evenly across the entire width of the swath.

The design enables Vemco mowers to cut fine lawns or rough, trashy areas, dethatch for soil renovation, mulch grass and leaves and operate in wet or dry conditions. It also decreases, and usually eliminates, damage to the mower.

Circle no. 156 on Reader Inquiry Card

Quick way to kill unwanted growths

The Quickdraw Division of Caudill Seed Company is marketing three new ways to effectively kill unwanted growths in and around the yard.

The positive touch liquid applying systems are named Quickdraw, Quickdraw Jr. and Quicktouch. They are touch-type



applicators with patented features that permit immediate use when needed, storage of all unused costly chemicals and lightweight durable construction.

Quickdraw uses the latest systemic herbicides in the safest, most efficient manner, eliminating drift, saving time being highly adaptable to various situations. In addition, the Quickdraw surface applies approximately three times as much mix as will any rope surface.

Circle no. 157 on Reader Inquiry Card

insects are hiding picture?

cutworms, sod webworms and armyworms. Plus it takes care of nuisance pests like ants, fleas and chiggers.

We've mentioned 8 species on the label but that's not even half.

Keep counting. And when you place your next insecticide order, ask your supplier for the biggest label in the business—D-z-n Diazinon.

PS: You'll find the answer below.

CIBA-GEIGY

Answer: D-z-n Diazinon controls all twenty-three insects seen here.

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NEWSMAKERS



Dr. Harry Niemczyk of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster has been honored as the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation's 1982 "Man of the Year." The announcement and award presentation was made at the most recent OTF banquet.

Niemczyk was the first person to identify soil insect resistance to certain insecticides and the first to identify the *Ataenius* beetle as a turfgrass insect and to determine control measures.

Niemczyk received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Michigan State University. He is a professor of turfgrass entomology at the OARDC and has been a member of the faculty at Ohio State University since 1964.

The doctor is a member of the advisory board of WEEDS, TREES & TURF magazine, a member of the Entomological Society of America, the American Society of Agronomy, the International Turfgrass Society and the OTF.

Louis Johnson, former president of Johnson Manufacturing Company of Pendleton, N.C., has been named the vice president/sales for Agrotec, Inc., Salisbury, Md. Agrotec recently bought the manufacturing plant and equipment assets of Johnson Manufacturing, according to Agrotec president Roger Cohill. Both the sprayers and liquid fertilizer applicators of Agrotec and the Johnson brand-name group equipment will be manufactured at the Pendleton facility.

Kenneth Griffith has been added to the staff of Green Care Lawn Service of Birmingham, according to president Ronnie Zwiebel. Griffith has his bachelor's degree from Auburn University, and did his master's work at the University of Arkansas on turf fertility and irrigation.

Also for Green Care, Alan Channell is opening a tree and shrub service in Tuscaloosa, Ala. and Quint Langstaff will be offering a Green Care lawn service in Florence, Ala.

BFC Chemicals has announced the election of a new director and the appointment of a new company secretary. George W. Pfautz, vice-president of finance/administration, is the new director. Kenneth D. Morris, the company's general counsel, has been named as secretary of the board.

The Fertilizer Institute Board of Directors has elected Gary D. Myers as president of the Institute. Myers had served as Institute executive vice-president for several years prior to accepting the position of president of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives in August, 1982. Also elected by TFI was Jonathan P. Rogers, vice-president and general manager of the phosphorus division of Mobil Chemical Company of Richmond, Va., as chairman of the board.

Sam Seeever, a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan and the University of Nebraska College of Law, has been named director of agronomic services for Harris Laboratories, according to president Ron Harris.



Sam Seeever

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Seeever joined the firm in 1981 as national sales manager. He will continue to handle sales and marketing duties, and will add responsibility for management of the technical aspects of soil, plant, water, fertilizer and miscellaneous agricultural testing.

Owner/manager Alex Garza of the Cross-B Company, San Antonio, Texas, received an award from Weather-matic recently for Distributor of the Year. Weather-

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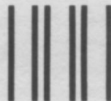
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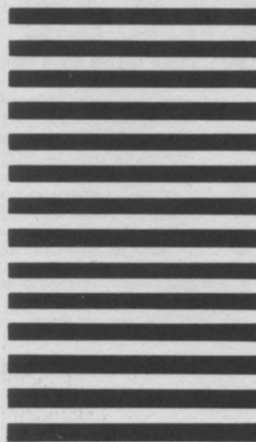
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General Manager position open for chemical lawn and shrub division of established landscaping company in the sunbelt area. Tremendous opportunity for an aggressive individual having experience with a national or regional lawn care company. We are looking for a **BUSINESSMAN** — the very BEST!! Knowledge of turf grass, ornamental plants, and marketing needed. The right person will enjoy excellent salary, benefits, and opportunity for equity participation with unlimited earnings potential. Send complete resume including education, experience, and salary history. All replies will be kept confidential. Write LCI Box 85. 5/83

MISCELLANEOUS

KELWAY® SST., new professional **SALINITY TESTER** using microchip technology, retails under \$90.00. Eliminates soluble salts problems by telling when to leach or fertilize. Available from distributors. Brochure from **KEL INSTRUMENTS CO., INC.,** P.O. Box 1869, Clifton, N.J. 07015, (201)-471-3954. 5/83

KELWAY® SOIL ACIDITY TESTER, used by **PROFESSIONALS** nationwide. Direct reading, portable, serviceable. Model HB-2 reads moisture, too. Available from distributors. Brochure from **KEL INSTRUMENTS CO., INC.,** P.O. Box 1869, Clifton, N.J. 07015, (201)-471-3954. 12/83

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Bye-Bye

New Rubigan™ spells curtains for And then some.

Rubigan™ turf fungicide serves notice. Because, after extensive testing, Rubigan has proven to be remarkably effective in evicting unwanted fungi that give any golf course an unfair handicap.

Broad spectrum control.

Dollar spot (even fungicide resistant strains), large brown patch, fusarium blight, stripe smut and pink or gray snow mold—these tenants might as well start thinking about a forwarding address. And if others are lurking in the neighborhood, Rubigan is compatible with most contact or systemic fungicides commonly used on turf.

Preventive and curative action.

Rubigan provides you with the flexibility to manage a disease prevention program and, at slightly higher rates,

provides curative action on dollar spot and large brown patch. More to the point, Rubigan acts as an enforcer that prevents turf diseases from making themselves feel at home on tees, greens and fairways.

Unlikely development of resistance.

Rubigan has a mode of action involving three or more sites of inhibition (a multi-site inhibitor). Years of successful use outside of the U.S., as well as trial usage in the U.S., have shown that susceptible fungi commonly found in turf have not been able to develop resistance to Rubigan.

Longer-lasting control.

Rubigan is a very active, concen-

trated product. Long lasting control allows for longer intervals between spraying. You can reduce the number of application trips and save on fuel and labor costs. What's more, lower use rates mean less storage and lower handling costs.

Rapid leaf penetration.

Rubigan is a foliar-applied, locally systemic fungicide. It's absorbed almost immediately into leaf tissue and isn't susceptible to washoff by rainfall or irrigation once the spray has dried. While the spray is drying, the active ingredient sets up shop inside the plant where it can't be washed out. Disease protection begins immediately after application.

Excellent turfgrass safety.

No adverse effects or discoloration



Before and after views are shown on two properties on which Larry Birum's company worked. Left, Birum's initial job was scheduled to involve the use of Roundup to remove existing vegetation. The area in the right photo looked much like that on the left before Birum's crew cleared away the existing vegetation and applied bark mulch and planted ornamentals.

Rubigan™ EPA Experimental Use Permit No. 1471-EUP-50.



Fungi.

five major turf diseases.

occurs when Rubigan is used at recommended rates. Your university turfgrass research personnel will tell you that Rubigan is as beneficial to your turf as it is destructive for five major turf diseases. For more information on cost-efficient Rubigan, contact your distributor or write: Elanco Products Company, 740 S. Alabama St., Dept. E-455, Indianapolis, Indiana 46285.

Precautions: Applications of RUBIGAN to turfgrass areas containing *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass) may result in the gradual reduction of this species from the turfgrass area. Cumulative dosages of 5 pounds of RUBIGAN 50W per acre or 2 ounces per 1,000 sq. ft. are usually necessary for this response to occur. Turfgrass areas containing *Poa annua* which cannot tolerate its reduction should not be treated with RUBIGAN.

Rubigan. It's spreading.

For best results, always read and follow the label directions.



"All this moisture promotes healthy growth of our desired grass and plants," he continues, "but it also generates a tremendous amount of undesirable vegetation." The undesirable vegetation Birum is referring to includes practically every weed species indigenous to North America. But, he singles out dandelions, chickweed, and Canada thistle as his worst problems. "We've certainly got a very wide variety of weed problems," he observes, "but I have had good success controlling them with two primary chemicals: 2,4-D and Roundup."

Birum uses 2,4-D for spot treatments in solutions ranging from 1 to 1½ ozs. in a three gallon sprayer with water, depending on the density of the infestation. "Since 2,4-D is applied directly to a lawn area, we feel any higher concentration would likely burn the lawn itself," he explains.

While Larry finds the 2,4-D effective for controlling dandelions and Canada thistle on his lawns, he relies on Roundup for virtually all his other weed problems. "It can be used anywhere to control weeds without worrying about leaching into sensitive areas," he claims. "With all the rain and moisture we get, leaching is a very serious problem."

Saves 'thousands'

Before he began using Roundup, Birum relied primarily on hand weeding to clean up these sensitive areas. "I used to hire around four or five people every summer to do nothing but hand weed," he recalls. "I estimate that I have reduced hand weeding by almost 90 percent and saved thousands of dollars a year in labor."

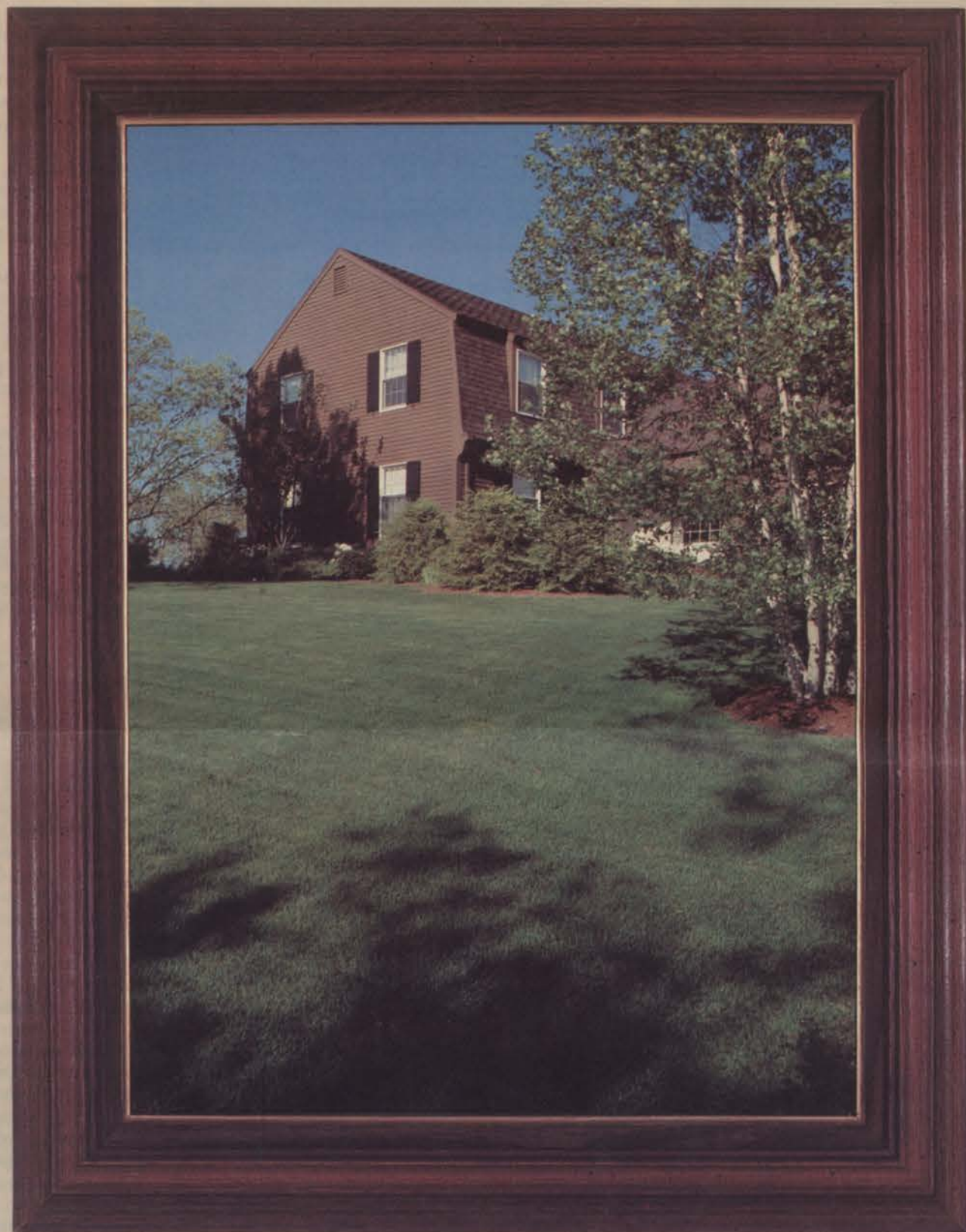
Birum has also found the product effective in his renovation operations. "I see complete renovation as a last resort," he says. "I always prefer to seed into an existing lawn unless it is just too weed-infested or worn out to work with." Birum begins his renovation procedure with a broadcast application of Roundup at a rate of one gallon per acre from a 150-gallon fiberglass tank skid-mounted on a one ton flatbed truck. He waits at least seven days after application to allow the chemical to translocate completely, and comes back with a thatching machine to prepare the lawn for seeding.

Birum has gone to hydroseeding primarily in the drier summer months, but is utilizing the technique on more of a year-round basis as he finds the equipment more economical than hand applications.

Larry Birum's willingness to experiment with new products and techniques, along with his diligent pursuit of perfection, seems to ensure the continual success of The Shaw Company. As he puts it, "Everything seems to grow well around here, why should we be any different?"

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Nitroform[®] paints a pretty picture



Nitroform[®] provides a consistent 38% nitrogen that's released by soil bacteria slowly and predictably — just when it is most needed to make turf and ornamentals green and healthy. And Nitroform continues this slow, steady release to sustain growth for over six months (even during periods of sparse rainfall).

You'll find Nitroform nonburning, nonstreaking, nonleaching. It's easy mixing and clean handling, too. This versatile nitrogen source is available in Blue Chip[®] for dry applications, Powder Blue[™] for liquid use, and it can be mixed and applied with insecticides and fungicides.

When you're buying a complete fertilizer be sure to check the label to see that it contains Nitroform, the most efficient source of Water Insoluble Nitrogen.

Nitroform can do beautiful things for your business.

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