

JANUARY 2023

Lawnandlandscape.com

Lawn & Landscape®

Leading business media for landscape

MORE THAN AN ACRONYM

APHIX grew its revenue by more than 80% to \$18 million after a rebrand and refocus on the way the team operates.

PAGE 16



A vibrant, fantastical scene set in a lush green landscape. In the foreground, a man wearing a brown jacket and a tan cap is driving a yellow riding lawn mower, leaning back with his arms raised in a gesture of joy or triumph. The lawn mower has a small logo on its side. In the background, a two-story house with a dark roof and white trim sits on a hill. The garden is filled with elaborate topiary art, including large dinosaurs and other animals made of green foliage. Several small garden gnomes are scattered throughout the scene, some watering plants with hoses. In the sky, two flying lawnmowers with propellers and wings are visible. The overall atmosphere is one of whimsy and the pursuit of a dream.

Keep living the
small business dream.

Protect your small business from reality with over 30+ customizable coverage options and personalized discounts. Get a quote in as little as 6 minutes at [ProgressiveCommercial.com](https://www.ProgressiveCommercial.com)

PROGRESSIVE
COMMERCIAL

CONTENTS

JANUARY 2023

Lawn & Landscape

A GIE Media publication
Volume 44, Number 1



Cover photo: Jennifer Chang

FEATURES

16 | More than an acronym

APHIX grew its revenue by more than 80% to \$18 million after a rebrand and refocus on the way the team operates.

26 | Pros + cons of propane

For many landscaping crews, it's about balancing the benefits of reduced emissions and fuel cost with the potential risk of lost productivity.

32 | Reverse resistance

In recent years, herbicide resistance among *Poa annua* populations in turfgrass systems has increased.

36 | Trucking along

Contractors are still equipping trucks and refreshing fleets despite supply chain shortages.

44 | Ways for wellness

There are eight dimensions to wellness and easy steps will improve each one.

46 | Ring in the new year

Start off 2023 the right way with new products that can help with various industry services.

Lawnline Marketing Insights,
PAGE 25

48 Classifieds / 49 Ad Index

DEPARTMENTS

4 **Editor's Insight:** The name game

6 **Huston:** Ventilate your business

8 **Wilson:** A playbook for the human side of leadership

10 **Harvesters:** Follow up and follow through

12 **Women in Landscaping:** Hope Smith

50 **Raise the bar:** New Year Challenge: clear the clutter and maximize time



Brian Horn
Editor, Lawn & Landscape

“It’s typical for landscaping companies to be named after the founder or be a pun on some industry-related term, but some have a different history.”

The name game

I’ve always enjoyed researching how bands thought of their names. From Led Zeppelin to The Weeknd, (yes the third E is supposed to be missing) there’s usually a good, simple story behind the origin. The same can be said for how companies get their names. It’s typical for landscaping companies to be named after the founder or be a pun on some industry-related term, but some have a different history.

It stands to reason that if you are going to rename your landscaping company, the words “landscaping,” “lawn care” or something to describe what you do should be in the name.

That’s not the case with our cover story this month, APHIX. The company grew 82% after the name change. Of course, there are many reasons for the growth, but the new name and rebrand gave the company a more professional feel compared to what owner, Allen Sweeney, originally picked when he started the company in high school.

Not everyone can make an acronym out of their company’s core values, but that’s just what APHIX did — Accountability, Professionalism, Honesty, Integrity, Excellence became APHIX. It can be risky when you name a landscaping company and don’t have some indication in the name that your main service involves servicing landscapes. But for APHIX, it’s clearly been working.

Sweeney says they didn’t want anything landscaping-related in the name because they manage a lot of outdoor services and didn’t want to be isolated to mowing or landscaping. It’s a fair point. Why pigeon-hole yourself into inaccurate perceptions from customers? APHIX is 100% commercial, so I wonder if that would matter for a residential company.

My point here is if you are naming or renaming your company, put everything on the table. And remember, it can be scary to make a name change, especially if things are going well. But maybe a brand refresh is what you need to get to the next level. — *Brian Horn*

Lawn & Landscape

Leading business media for landscape contractors.

5811 Canal Rd., Valley View, OH, 44125

Phone: 800-456-0707 Editorial Fax: 216-651-0830 Subscriptions & Classifieds: 800-456-0707

gie
media
incorporated

EDITORIAL

BRIAN HORN EDITOR bhorn@gie.net
JIMMY MILLER ASSOCIATE EDITOR jmiller@gie.net
KIM LUX ASSISTANT EDITOR klux@gie.net
JIM HUSTON J.R. HUSTON ENTERPRISES jhuston@giemedia.com
BRUCE WILSON & COMPANY bwilson@giemedia.com
THE HARVEST GROUP harvest@giemedia.com
JUSTIN WHITE jwhite@giemedia.com
KRISTEN HAMPSHIRE CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

CREATIVE

STEPHANIE ANTAL ART DIRECTOR santal@gie.net

ADVERTISING/PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

KAITLIN SELLERS ksellers@gie.net

SALES

DAVID SZY PUBLISHER dszy@gie.net
ANDREW HATFIELD ACCOUNT MANAGER/CLASSIFIEDS ACCOUNT MANAGER ahfield@gie.net
BRIAN MAY ACCOUNT MANAGER bmay@gie.net
DANNY WALSH ACCOUNT MANAGER dwalsh@gie.net
RUSSELL WARNER NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER rwarner@gie.net

CORPORATE

RICHARD FOSTER CHAIRMAN
CHRIS FOSTER PRESIDENT AND CEO
DAN MORELAND PUBLISHER EMERITUS
JAMES R. KEEFE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
CHRISTINA WARNER AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
MARIA MILLER DIRECTOR, CONFERENCES AND EVENTS
KELLY ANTAL CONTROLLER
IRENE SWEENEY MARKETING DIRECTOR
MICHELLE WISNIEWSKI PRODUCTION MANAGER

LAWN & LANDSCAPE MARKET INSIGHT COUNCIL: BILL ARMAN, The Harvest Group, Trabuco Canyon, Calif.; MAURICE DOWELL, Dowco Enterprises, St. Louis, Mo.; BOB GROVER, Pacific Landscape Management, Hillsboro, Ore.; JIM HUSTON, J.R. Huston Enterprises, Englewood, Colo.; MOLLY JOHN, M.J. Design Associates, Plain City, Ohio; ED LAFLAMME, The Harvest Group, Wilton Center, Conn.; TAYLOR MILLIKEN, Milosi, Nashville, Tenn.; JERRY SCHILL, Schill Grounds Management, North Ridgeville, Ohio; ZECH STRAUSSER, Strauser Nature's Helpers, Allentown, Pa.; JOHN TAYLOR, TIS Services, Houston, Texas; BRUCE WILSON, Bruce Wilson & Company, Scottsdale, Ariz.

LAWN & LANDSCAPE (ISSN 1046-154X) is published monthly. Copyright 2022 GIE Media, Inc. 5811 Canal Rd. Valley View, OH, 44125. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted by any means without written permission from the publisher. Single copy rate: \$5.00 One year subscription rates: \$30 in the United States, \$35 in Canada and \$98 in other foreign countries. One year foreign airmail rate: \$218. Two year subscription rate: \$42. Subscriptions and classified advertising should be addressed to the Valley View office. Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster send changes to LAWN & LANDSCAPE, 5811 Canal Rd, Valley View, OH, 44125. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement #40612608. Canada Returns to be sent to The Mail Group, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2.

Today's forecast: perfect conditions for growing your business.



Commercial Mowers

Fleet discounts

Maximize potential

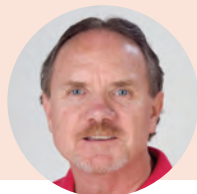


Thick, wet grass. Uneven terrain. No problem with our full commercial lineup and comprehensive fleet program with special discounts to keep you productive. The Z700, SZ Stand-On and W Series. Built to mow it all. And build your business.

Together we do more.®

KubotaUSA.com

© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2023. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer. For the complete disclaimer, go to KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers and see the posted disclaimer.



VENTILATE YOUR BUSINESS

→ **MY TRAVELS HAVE TAKEN ME TO SOME** very interesting places throughout the United States and the world. I like nothing better than the camaraderie of sharing a pint in an English pub, a liter in a German hofbrauhaus, or a bourbon anywhere in the U.S. Add a fine cigar to any of these and you have a winning combination.

Good friend and client, Hans Ellis, president of Blue Ribbon Landscape Maintenance introduced me to such a place in Nampa, Idaho. The V-Cut (cigar bar) Lounge was started by Tim and Jennifer Wangler in early 2020 just in time for the COVID-19 pandemic. Premium cigars, top shelf bourbon, scotch, wine and, most importantly, excellent ventilation. It all makes for an ambiance cocktail of friendship, fellowship and lively philosophical discussion that's unrivaled. It's where leaders of commerce, government, education and society meet to discuss the important (and not-so-important) topics of the day. While the ventilation system clears out most of the smoke, the discussions hopefully clear out some of the intellectual fog of the day — the fog *du jour*, if you will.

Just under one year ago after a long day of travel, I frequented the V-Cut Lounge by myself. Cigar and bourbon in hand, I sat beside a couple who were enjoying the same. Gabe Dean and his wife, Michelle, and I started chatting. I found out that they were good friends with Hans and his wife, Marcie. Our chat led to the inevitable question, "And what do you do?" Gabe told me that he had recently purchased his father's business, Daystar Excavation, Inc. (DEI). He ran the operation while Michelle handled all of the bookkeeping. Then it was my turn. I explained that I help entrepreneurs format and understand the numbers in their businesses. This takes the form of budgeting, accurately pricing products and services, calculating labor and equipment rates, setting daily revenue goals, benchmarking the entire business, and so forth. Gabe exclaimed that this was exactly what he had been thinking about — how to accurately price his excavation services. I went on to share examples of what I did for other entrepreneurs and encouraged the Deans to talk with Hans about what I had done for him.

HOW IT WORKED FOR DAYSTAR EXCAVATION. Gabe and Michelle decided to hire me for a day, have me go through all of their numbers, and help them accurately calculate the rates for their services. We started with a budget for 2022 from which we obtained their general and administrative (G&A) overhead recovery, field crew labor burden, revenue goals and billable field-labor man-hours. We then went on to calculate the cost per hour (CPH) for most of their trucks and excavation equipment to include excavators, front-end loaders, scrapers, and so forth.

Once we calculated these foundational figures, we then turned to pricing specific services. First was a three-man ranch crew with

a Volvo 210 excavator, a CAT 615 scraper, a John Deere 850 K-dozer and a RAM 2500 crew truck with a trailer. The crew averaged 45 man-hours per man per week. All in, this crew had to bill in the vicinity of \$3,000 per crew-day. We then went on to calculate detailed rates for:

- The CAT 615 scraper with an operator
- The Kubota KX-080 excavator with an operator
- The Volvo 140 excavator with an operator
- Mobilization rates for all pieces of equipment
- And more...

DID IT WORK? Daystar Excavation currently employs roughly eight field operators and bills out about 20,000 man-hours annually. As a result of our day of reviewing DEI's financials and pricing, the average price increase per man-hour was in the vicinity of \$10 to \$20 per hour. Since DEI was already making money, the increase was all net profit. Imagine, that's roughly \$200,000 in extra net profit for every \$10 increase (20,000 MHrs x \$10). Plus clients gave him little to no pushback on the increase.

Like most construction and service entrepreneurs, Gabe's area of expertise is in the field running crews, getting the work done on time and on budget. The financial side of the business was a bit hazy to him. Now the smoke is clearing because Gabe and Michelle understand the numbers of Daystar Excavation better than before.

They're also in better control of the future of their business, their lives and the lives of their employees. That's something to which we can all lift a glass. There's no room for smoke, except at the V-Cut Lounge. **L&L**



WHEN THE FINANCIAL SIDE

of your business is hazy, clear the smoke by working to understand your numbers.



Steer your Business in the Right Direction.



Ready to handle more business? Nothing goes to work like the T3100. Start with the largest capacity applicator that can fit through a 36" gate. It handles hills like no other, gets operators up and running faster, and boosts productivity. More yards covered, less sleepless nights, higher profitability. Grow your business. Go with Turfco. **CALL (800) 679-8201 OR VISIT TURFCO.COM**



WORKS HARDER. WORKS SMARTER. WORKS LIKE A TURFCO.



WORDS OF WILSON
WITH ROBERT CLINKENBEARD
MANAGING PARTNER,
BRUCE WILSON & COMPANY
BWILSON@GIEMEDIA.COM

WORDS OF WILSON features a rotating panel of consultants from Bruce Wilson & Company, a landscape consulting firm.

A PLAYBOOK FOR THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

→ **WHEN I PLAYED RUGBY**, being named team captain was a great honor. It meant I had the respect and trust of the team, could lead it to victory and perform under pressure.

Rugby's notoriously rough but the lessons I learned from the pitch offer important insight for leaders. Great team captains, like great CEOs, embody a leadership style that focuses on their players — their needs, their performance and their ability to win together. It's one of the best examples I know of human-centered leadership — a style of leading and coaching by empowering others to bring their best game.

In my conversations with CEOs and leaders around the county, most assume they're doing a pretty good job. But when the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) results come in, not all employees agree. When faced with this disconnect, how do leaders close the gap?

Inspirational leadership is much harder than it sounds. But whether you're coaching a team or building a business, your ability to connect with every person you work with, in the way that works best for them, will strengthen your ability to shift from thinking about *what* your employees do, to *why* they are driven to do it.

If managing people is the toughest part of your job, consider changing your approach. Here are eight ways to develop the skills and mindset to become a wiser, more compassionate leader of humans:

1. Address basic needs. Care as much about your employees' needs for autonomy, excellence and purpose as you do about the purpose and excellence of your business. Build a workplace and work culture that offers a win-win proposition, where the success of your growth strategy is proportionate to your investment in improving your employees' work experience.

2. Make everyone feel heard. Listen to what employees really want and make sure they feel heard and respected. Repair the trust of employees who are disengaged or feel undervalued, and show appreciation for employees who give their best.

3. Invite ideas. Not all ideas have tangible value, but in today's innovation-economy, your team's ability to generate ideas and rethink obstacles will directly impact sales and improve customer experience — and give you a team invested in and accountable to results.

4. Model trust. If you want your employees to bring their best selves to work, they need to feel safe. Modeling humility and vulnerability, and choosing transparency over control, will create an environment of trust, where growing from mistakes and moving forward is more important than being right.

5. Prioritize alignment. Expecting everyone in your organization to be in agreement is unrealistic. Instead, strive to find alignment and

compromise on key points so everyone feels they have a role in implementing your vision.

6. Celebrate individuality. The individuality and diversity of your team is a plus. When employees are respected and acknowledged for their uniqueness, and your workplace is relentlessly inclusive, it creates a stronger sense of belonging and reinforces what it means to pull together as one.

7. Value and purpose matters. People are motivated when they feel valued in their work and can have a positive impact. Strive to incorporate context and empathy around work performance, and help employees realize they can and do make a difference.

8. Don't forget to have fun. Fun is the shortest distance between productivity and positivity between colleagues, and essential to team spirit — that feeling of camaraderie, mutual trust and pride that inspires everyone to come together as one. If company team-building events have been on the back-burner, it's time to bring them back.

With quiet quitting and employee disengagement trending topics, leaving old leadership approaches behind could be more than a strategic imperative. Becoming more human-centric could re-energize your company for years to come. **L&L**

↓
**YOUR EMPLOYEES
WILL NOT
CONSTANTLY AGREE.**

It's important to find alignment on several key points so everyone feels they have a role.



AsphaltEdge[™] is a line of flexible, L-shaped aluminum asphalt restraints. One of the biggest drawbacks of asphalt compared to concrete and brick is an inconsistent edge. With Permaloc AsphaltEdge, you get a strong, uniform 90-degree edge. It installs quickly and easily, making your work stand out and providing a “finished look” - an excellent compliment to any asphalt installation.

- Engineered to extend the life of asphalt pavement by helping to prevent broken edges, providing uniform thickness throughout the pavement surface, and providing a finished, maintainable look along the asphalt border.
- Permaloc's patented AsphaltEdge is the only product specifically designed to be installed and perform as an integral restraint system for asphalt.
- AsphaltEdge is designed for asphalt over aggregate, asphalt overlay, and asphalt over concrete, including residential, commercial and industrial applications.





CREAM OF THE CROP

WITH ED LAFLAMME, LIC
HARVEST GROUP CO-FOUNDER

HARVEST@GIEMEDIA.COM

CREAM OF THE CROP features a rotating panel from the Harvest Group, a landscape business consulting company.

FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

→ AFTER CONSULTING WITH several hundred companies over the past 20 years, I've noticed one common denominator among the truly successful businesses. The owners and managers follow up and follow through on virtually everything. Let me explain what I mean: When I say follow up, I mean check in with a person to see how they're doing. But that's not always enough. Successful managers also follow through, which means making sure the task was completed. When tasks are completed on time by everyone in a company, tremendous progress is made.

I don't believe successful owners, including managers, follow up consciously. Instead, it comes naturally. It's part of who they are. They follow up on a myriad of details every day from proposals sent, new sales made, new people hired, customer complaints, equipment needed, promises made, requests from employees and dozens of directives to the people that report to them. If you're an owner or manager, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

I've noticed that some of these leaders have incredible memories while others have techniques to help them. In other words, they write everything down. Either way, they do it and the company thrives because their people know they will be held accountable.

SIMPLE ACTIONS. Let me give you a few examples: You're talking to a customer or employee and promise to get back to them before the end of the week on a question they had, and you do as promised. Or, someone does a favor for you and instead of just a "thanks," you follow up with a handwritten thank-you card.

These actions build trust which results in building strong relationships. People with a reputation of getting things done is a rarity in today's world and they are truly valued.

Here's a different follow-up situation. A new employee starts work and neither the person that hired them or their manager ever follows up to find out how they're doing. They're just expecting them to, "do their job." How does that person feel? Think about it, how would you feel? Instead, the person they report to should follow up after the first day and then after every week for the first few months to make sure all is well. Just a brief meeting will do. This way, if there are any problems or questions, they can be resolved. This demonstrates to the employee that the company cares and the probability of the person staying significantly increases.

Another perfect example is in the sales process. When a prospect calls the office, an appointment needs to be made as soon as possible. Before going to the appointment, someone should follow up to confirm. After the appointment, the salesperson should follow up by email or text and confirm next steps.

If the company is awarded their job, a follow-up thanking the customer and then informing them when the work will start should

be made. If there is significant time before that happens, further contact should be made assuring the customer their job is on schedule.

Once the job is started, if it's going to take more than a few days, it's always good to communicate with the customer as to how things are going. Then, at the end of the job, make sure the customer is totally happy. One sales designer I worked with made a note in his calendar to visit the property after one year. The clients were delighted to see them and their concern for their landscape. This almost always led to more work and tons of referrals.

DON'T OVERDO IT. When I say follow up and follow through, I don't mean micromanaging. That's poison in a company! Micromanaging means to have excessive control or attention to details, especially small details. This type of manager guides every single step of the way, not letting anyone decide anything without consulting them. As a result, these companies find it close to impossible to grow because their staff never stays. The micromanaging boss drives everyone crazy.

So, landscape leaders, here's the bottom line: Follow up and follow through on every aspect of your work. It's best to write down the myriad of details and not trust your memory.

Are you doing that now? What do you need to follow up or follow through on right now, both professionally and personally? Lastly, teach the people that report to you to do the same. This will lead to a company that holds everyone accountable and as a result, things will get done. This process will lead to a truly great company. **L&L**

FOLLOWING UP WITH A CLIENT OR STAFF MEMBER

is a simple and effective way to build a relationship with someone. It shows genuine concern and contributes to the company's overall success.

**PERFECTION
DOESN'T
HAPPEN
OVERNIGHT.
SOMETIMES,
IT TAKES
YEARS.**



From the shock-absorbent platform to the adjustable tower, every single inch of this mower was intentionally designed for perfection. The new Grasshopper Stand-On Mower. **EVERY. DETAIL. MATTERED.**



©2023 The Grasshopper Company



Hope Smith

Ultimate Experience Manager,
Plants Creative

ACCORDING TO A STUDY PUBLISHED BY LINKEDIN

in 2018, women are 16% less likely than men to apply for positions they viewed on the website, and overall, women apply to 20% fewer jobs than men. There is a lot of speculation on why this may be true, and I won't pretend to know the answer. But what I take away from those statistics, is this: don't create barriers that would keep women from applying to your open positions!

So how do you do that? Here are a few things we do at Plants Creative:

1. Recruit and interview candidates outside the green industry. While there are many amazing women already in the industry and you should absolutely look to bring those brilliant women on your team, recruiting outside of the industry increases your pool of candidates tenfold.

Making the decision to recruit outside the industry may seem like a leap of faith but the pay off can be huge. Some of Plants Creative's most stellar team members have come from a variety of industries, including the restaurant industry, insurance, and in one case, neurobiology. I came to Plants Creative from an almost decade-long career working at an outdoor retailer.

Hope Smith is an active member of the National Association of Landscape Professionals Women in Landscape Network (powered by Bayer) which provides a forum for industry professionals to support each other's professional growth. The Network is free to all industry professionals.

WOMEN IN LANDSCAPING is a column brought to you in partnership with the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

2. Be thoughtful about what you list as a job "requirement." Are there requirements in your job description that can be trained or do candidates need to have the knowledge as soon as they walk in the door? Can your job description focus on objectives rather than specific industry experience? There are positions that require certain knowledge and experience. There is no getting around that. But knowing the difference between your company's needs and wants might be the thing that helps you find that diamond in the rough.

At Plants Creative, when we interview candidates from outside the green industry, our goal is to find people who have a proven track record of learning new things quickly and aren't afraid to ask questions.

3. Have a stellar training and onboarding program in place. Your company's ability to do the first two items on this list is predicated on having a thorough training and onboarding program in place. This is an integral part of bringing on any new team member, but especially bringing someone on who is new to the industry.

Be sure to mention your training and onboarding program in your job postings. This way candidates who might not have as much experience feel comfortable applying.

4. Offer flexible scheduling. This is a great recruiting tool and something Plants Creative is looking at doing for our spring season next year. Flexible schedules allow anyone not looking to work 40-plus hours per week (students, parents, etc.) the option to join your team. There are roles where this won't be a plausible option, but there are many, including production crews, where it can work well.

5. Be competitive in your salary and benefit offerings and share them in your job postings. That same LinkedIn study found that 68% of women (and 58% of men, it should be noted) said that salary and benefits were the most important information in a job description. So why not be transparent and upfront about what you can offer someone from the get-go?

Offering salary information up front means that candidates know what to expect from the start and it means that candidates looking for more than you can provide, don't waste your time and their time by even applying for the role. If you have some flexibility in your salary offering, you can include that info in the posting as well.

And don't forget: your company culture is a part of the benefits you offer so include that in your job description too. **L&L**

ISUZU N-SERIES LOW CAB FORWARD

12,000 lb or 14,500 lb GVWR
350 HP 6.6 Liter Gas or 215 HP 5.2 Liter Diesel Engine
GM Automatic Transmission

17,950 lb or 19,500 lb GVWR
297 HP 6.0 Liter Gas or 215 HP 5.2 Liter Diesel Engine
Allison or Aisin Automatic Transmission



19' Landscape w/Removable Dovetail



12' Dump w/Removable Dovetail



19' Irrigation w/Pipe & Fitting Boxes



19' Deluxe Landscape



12' Landscape Dump



18' Enclosed Landscape



To-do list, completed.

SPECIALTY HERBICIDE

Dimension®

Crew®

Defendor®



™ ® Trademarks of Corteva Agriscience and its affiliated companies. Crew® is not registered for sale, distribution or use in New York. State restrictions on the sale and use of Crew, Defendor® and Dimension® apply. Contact your state pesticide regulatory agency to determine if a product is registered for sale or use in your state. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions. © 2022 Corteva. CT38-000-026 (08/22) BR CAT02TURF051

A full-page photograph of a hiker with a backpack walking up a grassy hill. An orange tent is pitched on the right side of the hill. The text "Bucket list, in progress." is overlaid in the center.

Bucket list, in progress.

You could spend more time at work. But now you won't have to. With proven, effective herbicides, insecticides and fungicides from Corteva Agriscience Turf & Ornamental, you won't be reapplying. You'll get more done in less time – and you'll have service and support the moment you need it. So you can make time for other things. Find more time at corteva.us/lawn.

*More
than an*

ACRONYM

APHIX grew its revenue by more than 80% to \$18 million after a rebrand and refocus on the way the team operates.

Story by Jimmy Miller | Photography by Jennifer Chang

Allen Sweeney,
President and CEO



It was time to get to business. After shooting sporting clays and eating a quail dinner at the nearby vineyard, company executives decided they no longer wanted to work at Al's Complete Lawn Care.

That's not to say they wanted to leave the company. Everyone, including President and CEO Allen Sweeney, realized it was time to rebrand. This process began in 2019 at the executive's retreat, which blended a strenuous agenda with some fun.

Several months later, the team announced to the whole company they'd now be working at APHIX (pronounced Ay-Fix). Sweeney says there's no regrets now at APHIX, which is titled after each of the company's core values. He was once the company's namesake, but as the team strategized at its retreat, they wanted to come up with a brand that seemed less like it was named by a kid in high school.

"While it had carried us to where we were, it just wasn't a name that we felt carried weight in the market," Sweeney says. "To be able to market the company to not just customers but future employees was important."

The rebrand proved to be a critical first step in the new-look APHIX (Accountability, Professionalism, Honesty, Integrity, Excellence). From a revamped customer list to a restructuring of the corporate office, Sweeney says the last few years have almost felt like a relaunch. It worked: APHIX reported an 82% jump in its overall revenue after the change, earning nearly \$18 million in revenue.

ABOVE: From a branding overhaul, establishing ideal clients, tweaking the sales process and setting up a new headquarters, a combination of changes attributed to APHIX achieving impressive growth.



Sweeney says everyone was on board with the name change — from crew members to customers.

**“IT’S ALSO
HAVING THE
RIGHT
CUSTOMER
AT THE RIGHT
PRICE THAT
EXPECTS THE
RIGHT QUALITY.
WE’RE NOT THE
LANDSCAPE
COMPANY FOR
EVERYBODY.”**

— ERNIE HELESKI,
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER,
APHIX

The plan is to keep growing as APHIX partnered with Caltius Equity Partners, a private equity firm focused on lower middle-market companies, at the end of 2022. Revenue should be around \$21 million in 2022.

Though Sweeney first named the company back when he was mowing lawns as a high schooler in 2003, he says there’s little nostalgia attached to that name. That moniker had focused on just one person; this one highlighted all the people within the company.

“It became a question of, how do we represent the team that is achieving success?” Sweeney says.

NEW LOOK, SAME OLD ‘A.’ Ernie Heleski remembers throwing ideas up on a whiteboard to see what would stick. Heleski, the team’s chief financial officer, says Sweeney gathered about a dozen people for those initial branding conversations following the team’s retreat.

The branding process proved a little tricky. For one, Heleski says they struggled

to find anything original. While academic Christopher Booker says stories only follow one of seven basic plots, the same was seemingly true about finding a company name — everyone had already snapped up the ideal titles.

“The good ones, the inspirational words of a growing company — a lot of those were taken,” Heleski says.

Additionally, there were concerns about what customers would think of the rebrand. Folks in the Louisville and Lexington areas had grown to associate the team’s classic “A” with the work of Al’s Complete Lawn Care. Plus, Al’s Complete Lawn Care was easy to say. Would they be able to pronounce and remember anything the team came up with next?

“We needed to keep that white truck with the green wrap and the ‘A’ across the hood,” Heleski says.

On a trip back home to Michigan with his wife one weekend, Heleski racked his brain for new brand ideas. Then, it came to him: an acronym representing the team’s core values that were already in place. Since ac-



Allen Sweeney (left) and Ernie Heleski,
Chief Financial Officer, APHIX



countability was one of those values, they could still start the brand name with an A. As for which combination of letters made the most sense, it ultimately came down to APHIX and the less-digestible AXIPH.

Once Sweeney and the team opted for APHIX, they announced it to the team. Heleski says at this point, it was an announcement, not a discussion, joking that “when someone names their newborn baby, that’s their name. That’s the way it is.”

But the feedback was all positive, especially from customers. Some even said “it’s about time,” Heleski says. It’s been huge in the way of aligning the employees toward the team’s mission, he adds.

“Allen Sweeney is a very driven owner; (the company) would’ve grown if the name hadn’t changed, but the name change definitely pushed it to a higher level,” Heleski says. “The account managers and the business developers really embraced the new name and I think there was a sense of pride just behind the company and the name, the core values.”

FINDING A FIT. The changes at APHIX go beyond the title. Sweeney says that in 2020, the team began cutting clients that were no longer the right fit. If the company was going to evolve from the high-school-kid-name, so would the clientele.

APHIX does fully commercial work, but they wanted to put a higher emphasis on renewals and enhancement sales. Also, if there were clients that represented a big risk like snow accounts, Sweeney says they reconsidered those contracts.

Heleski adds that they moved away from clients who were just bidding for the best price rather than the best quality. If the bidding process became a fight over every penny each year, APHIX moved on.

“It’s also having the right customer at the right price that expects the right quality,” Heleski says. “We’re not the landscape company for everybody. We’re selling to customers that really expect a higher level of quality.”

“WHILE IT HAD CARRIED US TO WHERE WE WERE, IT JUST WASN’T A NAME THAT WE FELT CARRIED WEIGHT IN THE MARKET. TO BE ABLE TO MARKET THE COMPANY TO NOT JUST CUSTOMERS BUT FUTURE EMPLOYEES WAS IMPORTANT.”

— ALLEN SWEENEY, PRESIDENT AND CEO, APHIX



Heleski says showing the team's account managers reporting data helped prove what customers fit APHIX best. The core focus remained on commercial grounds maintenance, even during COVID-19, where they were always an essential service. "You can't have everybody's commercial buildings with grass 18 inches tall," Heleski says. "It still needed maintained."

And he's found residential accounts required more handholding than those in commercial offices. Home-



Flexible.
Powerful.
Profitable.

Software that's flexible enough to design on any platform, powerful enough for any job, and created so that your profits are as beautiful as your proposals.

This is PRO Landscape.

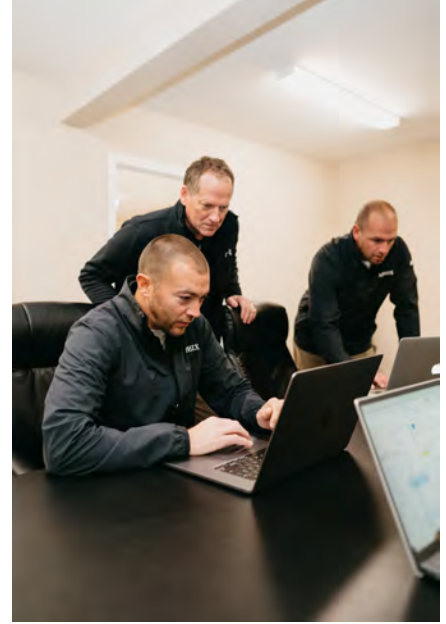
prolandscape.com | 800-231-8574 | sales@prolandscape.com

PRO Landscape

owners need more personal touches and are more apt to calling and saying things like, "You left the gate open, and my dogs got out." But at the corporate level, people are just reporting to the building to do their work and make money.

"The focus is on overall image that they want to portray," Heleski says.

They also refined their sales process, putting more emphasis on cross-selling with current clients. Sweeney also tweaked the sales incentives program, making commissions based on gross margins rather than gross revenues. This means pay is also tied to accounts receivable, so account managers are



"I was totally blown away by the service. ... I'll definitely be back for another rig."

MARCUS BELOTE - TURF EXPERTS | APEX, NC

THE GRAHAM DIFFERENCE? OUR WOW FACTOR.



- ▶ Smart design for your business
- ▶ Service you won't find anywhere else
- ▶ Relationships built on a team that champions your success

**Talk to us about your next rig.
We're ready to wow you.**

(770) 942-1617 | GrahamSE.com

© 2022 Graham Spray Equipment

**A
P
H
I
X**

Accountability:
For every service seen or unseen

Professionalism:
With every interaction

Honesty:
Always

Integrity:
Without compromise

Excellence:
Delivered

more inclined to tighten that up and ensure payments come in on time.

There's no cap on those sales, Sweeney says, meaning the best employees can keep selling away so long as they're landing the right accounts. And since it's tied to the margins, it fixes an age-old problem of account managers selling unrealistic jobs that can't actually be performed.

"There's no ceiling, so a star performer can be a star performer," Sweeney says.

MOVING UP AND OUT. Giving his team the authority to make their own decisions went beyond the account managers.

Sweeney says one of the biggest moves they made that benefitted the team was moving the corporate office into its own building in Frankfort, Kentucky. There are now three Kentucky offices including Lexington and Louisville.

Before the move, Sweeney and other executives sat in the Lexington branch building, which he believes made it inherently



LEFT: Candice Dean (left) and Alisha Goodlett have helped see the change in culture that Heleski (bottom) was a part of.

more difficult for the branch manager there to not feel like he was being monitored constantly over his shoulder.

“Ultimately, you want that branch manager to own that P&L,” Sweeney says. “For us, it’s an entrepreneur mindset.”

Additionally, moving out benefitted the executives, too. It freed them up to build

processes and systems that each branch could replicate moving forward to create consistency. Sweeney felt the executives were too hands on in the day-to-day operations but now they could focus on the bigger picture.

That became especially important when APHIX landed its second acquisition this



BOSS[®]

TALK IS CHEAP

UNDERPERFORMING SOFTWARE ISN'T

REQUEST A
CONSULTATION



Contact Us

(636)242-5574

BOSS SOFTWARE WALKS THE WALK AND TALKS THE TALK.

ROCKVAC

It's Not Just For Rocks!



**SAVE TIME! SAVE MONEY! SAVE YOUR BACK!
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS!**

The RockVac is a cost effective solution for landscaping and construction projects that saves both time and manpower. The self-powered machine will vacuum rocks, wood chips and shavings, sand, gravel, leaves, compost, mud, sludge, glass and debris. Fill a wheelbarrow in less than 3 minutes!



Christianson
Pneumatic Conveying Equipment

20421 - 15th Street SE
Blomkest, MN 56216
800-328-8896
www.rockvac.com
sales@christianson.com

summer, the first being a company in Louisville in 2016. The months-long negotiations process finally culminated with APHIX acquiring a Chattanooga-based company, bringing APHIX to four total offices. Sweeney hopes this won't be the last acquisition: He's focused on finding fully commercial companies with likeminded cultures.

"We want to come in and partner with companies," Sweeney says. "We're very much about the people and the team."

Sweeney says the changes have made APHIX a preferred employer in the market, which he's heard from people they've hired over the last year. Heleski adds that the company, which is faith-based, has built a strong team culture and that's a great recruiting chip. APHIX still deals with the same labor pinch as anyone else, but it's become easier to navigate.

"I think it's become part of the culture that everybody understands who we're doing this work for," Heleski says. "We encourage our production managers and foremen to continue to share that culture with other crew members." **L&L**

The author is associate editor of Lawn & Landscape.



POWER UP YOUR SOIL

MAXIMIZE YOUR FERTILIZER EFFICIENCY

You get the PESTS, we'll get the REST.

MOVING FERTILITY FORWARD

High Performance Plant Nutrients
Fertilizers • Specialty Products
Soil Amendments

Greene County Fertilizer Company

Greenecountyfert.com

BUY/SHIP DIRECT

Our bio-based fertilizers & specialty fertility products are blended to feed plants, improve soil fertility and build topsoil.

Cross Conveyor

- COMPACT DESIGN
- ECONOMIC VERSATILITY
- ENGINEERED IN INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

- Mulch
- Sand
- Stone
- Topsoil
- Compost

SmartGate

Press to load...shovel the savings

Dump Trailer

Rear Discharge

www.SmartGateConveyors.com



Lawnline Marketing Insights

SMS Delivers Simplicity, Efficiency, & Revenue

Your customers want simplicity and speed. As a business owner, you want more revenue and more efficiency. SMS, or text messaging, is technology that any lawn care or landscaping company can utilize to meet their customers' demands, become more efficient, and increase revenue - all at the same time. Some of the most popular ways to implement SMS into your business include communications, upsell marketing, automated lead responses, and feedback/review building, to name a few. Let's look a little deeper at these most impactful uses.

1. Communications

Using SMS tools online, you can deliver messages directly to the phones of your leads and customers through desktop computers. This enables you to receive quick replies, handle multiple conversations at once, receive photos and videos, have a log of communications, and more. This method of communication also makes it simple for your customers and is the most preferred method of contact for many.

2. Upsell Marketing

SMS is the most effective method of upselling and maximizing your customers' Life-time Value (LTV). In fact, using SMS to upsell your customers will generate 235% more quote requests compared to email upselling, according to Lawnline Marketing's data.

An example of an effective upselling campaign would be marketing fertilization and weed control services to your lawn maintenance accounts. SMS messages are always read by the recipient. When combined with automation tools, your customers can simply click a link or respond "Yes" for a quote.

At Lawnline Marketing, we see an average of 13% of your recipients will request a quote when using SMS to upsell. These quotes will also have a very high closing rate. It is recommended to send personalized messages to segments of your customer list once per month.

3. Automated Lead Responses

Tons of leads are generated through your website forms, social media, and more. When these Internet-based leads come in, a prompt response is critical. With SMS technology, you can automatically send a response to request additional qualifying information, photos, or even schedule a site visit.

Newer technology takes it a step further and enables you to automatically generate a call to your office staff, read off the lead details, and press a button to call the lead. Talk about an instant response!

4. Feedback/Review Building

Online SMS tools offer the solution when it comes to feedback and online reviews. You can automatically send a text message to your customers shortly after service to ask about their experience. Using rating systems enables automation to deliver an online review link to happy customers or ask for more detailed feedback if something was unsatisfactory.

Besides avoiding bad reviews, SMS can generate consistent good reviews. This turns into a stronger reputation, higher closing rates, and more new leads by improving your search engine optimization (SEO).

Getting Started With SMS

It's best to hire a professional to implement SMS into your business. Digital marketing agencies and automation companies are best suited as they have the tools to implement custom workflows, automations, and connect multiple systems such as your CRM. If you would like to self-implement SMS, there are numerous online tools and guides you can use as resources.

Tony Ricketts is a lawn care and landscaping marketing expert. He has worked as a marketing professional since 2007 and exclusively for lawn and landscape companies since 2016. Tony is the Founder & CEO of Lawnline Marketing and regularly speaks at industry events educating the green industry on SEO, content creation, paid advertising, social media, automation, and more.

PROS + CONS OF PROPANE

For many landscaping crews, it's about balancing the benefits of reduced emissions and fuel cost with the potential risk of lost productivity.

By Gregg Wartgow

N

othing gets landscape companies thinking about alternative fuels like high gas prices. Converting a mower fleet from gas to propane isn't a simple flip of the switch though. While the fuel cost savings and other benefits of propane can yield a strong return, the investment in systems and training requires some careful planning.

For some landscape companies, propane has helped support a broader plan of being more environmentally friendly.

"Our biggest motivator is green technology, so the clean-burning aspect of propane is a driving factor for us," says Dan Bitler, fleet manager at Sebert Landscaping in Bartlett, Ill. "There is also a big cost advantage. In mid-September, we were paying around \$1.50 a gallon for our liquid propane." At the same time, gasoline was nearly \$4 per gallon in the Bartlett area.

Bitler has been with Sebert Landscaping for six years, although the company first began using propane mowers a decade ago.

Now more than 80% of Sebert's mower fleet is powered by propane. "That number is growing as we replace old gas-powered machines with propane mowers," Bitler adds.

Unscheduled engine maintenance has been another factor in Sebert Landscaping's decision to lean more heavily into propane. While routine preventive maintenance has generally stayed the same, there has been a reduction in engine component failures.





Landscape companies will need well-defined processes regarding the safe handling of propane.



“Since propane burns so much cleaner, we’ve seen a noticeable difference in carbon deposits,” Bitler says.

POTENTIAL DOWNSIDES TO WATCH FOR. Over in the Cleveland area, Schill Grounds Management has actually seen more engine-related issues since switching to propane.

“These engines run a lot hotter even though they’re burning the cleaner fuel,” says Jim Schill, vice president of Schill Grounds Management in North Ridgeville, Ohio. “We’ve ended up seeing more engine wear and tear. It really surprised me, but I blew more propane engines than I ever did with gasoline.”

Schill Grounds Management first started using propane mowers nine years ago. Like Sebert Landscaping, the motivating factor was to become more environmentally friendly. That definitely panned out, as did the secondary objective of reducing fuel costs. What Schill didn’t anticipate was a sporadic loss in productivity, something that has prompted the company to begin migrating back to gasoline.

“Our propane mowers ran into starting issues when it was colder out,” Schill says. “We also noticed a decrease in power, especially on hills and slopes, which resulted in reduced blade speed. Then our guys had to mow too slowly and sometimes had to double-cut. When you can’t go full production with your mowers in commercial maintenance, that’s a problem. It all comes down to hours and dollars.”

In the Chicago area, Bitler says Sebert Landscaping crews have also noticed some power loss, mainly in the early season when temperatures are cooler and fast-growing grass is thicker and wetter. But the impact on manhours and cut quality has been negligible. And once crews get over that early season hump, it is typically smooth sailing.

Down in Texas, Scott Tintera says the advantages of using propane have far outweighed the downsides. Tintera is the lead technician at Clean Scapes based in Austin. He has been with the company for 13 years. “Clean Scapes was using propane before I even got here,” Tintera says. Today the company powers its forklifts with liquid propane, while a fleet of 100 zero-turn mowers runs on vapor propane.

Liquid propane tanks (cylinders) require a vaporizer on the mower. Clean Scapes ran mowers with this configuration for roughly six years. It worked OK, but Tintera says the need for a vaporizer seemed like an unnecessary step. Now the company uses vapor propane cylinders that eliminate the need for a vaporizer.

Even though Clean Scapes’ on-mower propane configuration has been simplified, Tintera says it is still important to ensure that each mower

is set up properly before placing it into production.

"Anybody can slap a propane conversion kit on a mower," Tintera says. "But you don't just do that. There are testing gauges and sniffers to help tune your mower appropriately. It's actually called

stoichiometric ratio, which is the ratio at which fuel burns with air. That ratio is 14.7:1. If you're tuning the mower correctly to that ratio, any power loss will be so slight that you probably won't even notice it. On the other hand, if you just slap a kit on and go, you'll probably be looking at

"ANYBODY CAN SLAP A PROPANE CONVERSION KIT ON A MOWER. BUT YOU DON'T JUST DO THAT. THERE ARE TESTING GAUGES AND SNIFFERS TO HELP TUNE YOUR MOWER APPROPRIATELY."

— SCOTT TINTERA, LEAD TECHNICIAN,
CLEAN SCAPES

30% power loss." The lesson for landscape companies? Make sure you are working with a reputable dealer that understands and believes in propane. And if you're going to rely on in-house technicians, acknowledge the fact that they are going to need some propane-specific training.

Speaking of training, landscape companies will also need well-defined processes regarding the storage, refilling and overall safe handling of propane.

GET A HANDLE ON PROPANE HANDLING.

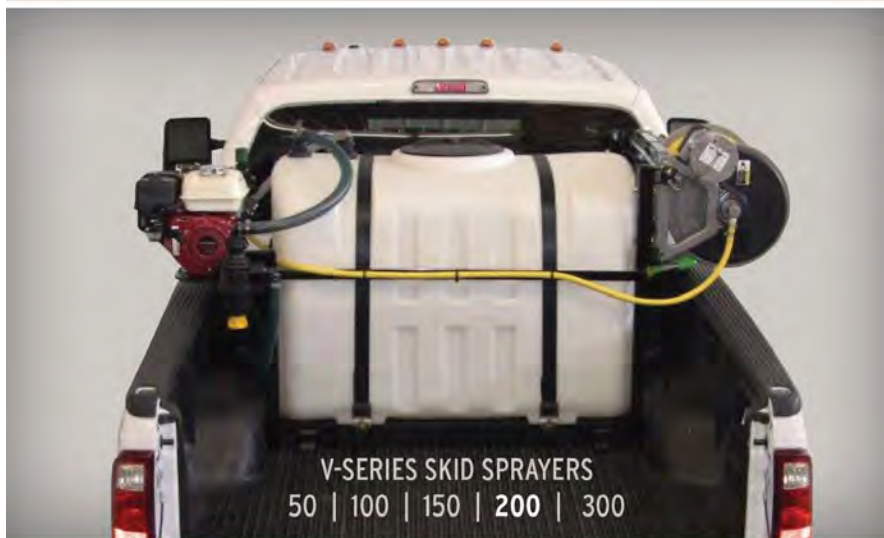
Several Sebert Landscaping branches have invested in their own on-site propane fueling infrastructure. A handful of employees at each branch are trained and authorized to refuel the propane cylinders from a large storage tank. This helps limit the amount of training necessary while establishing better control, safety and accountability.

"There is a cost to getting your on-site fueling system set up," Bitler says. "But with proper training and procedures, you can save money over time because you don't have the cost of paying a propane supplier to constantly come and fill up your tanks."

Bitler says it's important for employees to understand that, unlike with gasoline, the objective isn't to fill the tank as full as possible. With liquid propane, you only want the cylinder filled to 70-80%. "The cylinder needs to be vented out and not overfilled so the mower doesn't end up sucking in liquid," Bitler says. "The mower needs to be fueled by the propane vapor only. This is why it helps to limit the people authorized to handle the refilling."

Some landscape companies prefer to have their propane supplier handle the

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE IDEAL SPRAY SYSTEM FOR YOUR BUSINESS



We offer innovative custom spraying equipment
solutions tailored to your needs.



GREGSON-CLARK Spraying Equipment

A Division of Rhett M. Clark, Inc.

800-706-9530

sales@gregsonclark.com | gregsonclark.com



refilling. This is especially true for smaller fleets with less than 10 mowers. One option is a cylinder exchange program where the supplier stops by your facility on a predetermined basis to pick up your empties and drop off properly filled cylinders. Another option is to have the propane supplier refill your cylinders at your facility. The latter has worked best for Clean Scapes.

"Between our branches in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, we go through at least 1,000 gallons of propane a week," Tintera says. Given that volume, the supplier is more than willing to visit each branch daily to refill Clean Scapes' cylinders.

"I know all of our drivers personally and that makes it easier," Tintera says. "Building a good relationship with your propane supplier is really important. If there ever is a problem, like a valve breaking off on a cylinder, you need to have someone you can call."

Even with a great supplier who takes care of the refilling, employees still need

training on how to safely work with the propane cylinders.

Clean Scapes employees go through a program on how to safely change out propane cylinders in the field. Generally speaking, Tintera says a 33-pound cylinder will provide for a full day (roughly five hours) of blade time. But in those instances where a cylinder needs to be changed out, Tintera says the process is relatively easy.

"A hose on the mower screws into the fitting on the cylinder," Tintera says. "Then it's just a matter of using the two straps to secure the cylinder in the saddle mounted on the mower."

Leak detection is another area that requires some training.

"Propane has an odorant added to it that our employees are trained to smell for," Tintera says. "If they smell it, they are also trained on how to search for a potential leak, which is basically using soapy water (to look for bubbles). And just for an added

safety measure, each mower has a Class B fire extinguisher strapped to it."

Leaks happen very rarely if at all, Tintera says. In fact, one of the overlooked benefits of using propane relates to waste. "With pre-filled propane cylinders, we have zero spillage in the field," Tintera says. "We don't have employees dripping gas on the ground and we don't see gas leaking out of cans while riding around on our box trucks."

Zero spillage can add up to some serious money over the course of a season, especially for a large fleet the size of Clean Scapes'. The safety level is also a lot higher. When coupled with the primary benefits of reduced emissions and fuel cost, there are several reasons why a landscape company would consider using propane. With good planning to address any potential productivity issues, the pros could very well outweigh the cons. **L&L**

The author is a freelance writer based in Wisconsin.

A man in a blue shirt and jeans is operating a green Billy Goat FLUCH 24" walk-behind mower on a lawn. The mower has a black engine and a green body with "FLUCH" and "24\"/>

When productivity matters, choose Billy Goat®

Take the chore out of the chore with Billy Goat!

Call 800-776-7690 or visit billygoat.com

The new era of landscaping

SAVE THE

AUGUST 9-11, 2023

**PARIS LAS VEGAS HOTEL & CASINO
LAS VEGAS, NV**

Featuring 37,000+ square feet of exhibit space, 2.5 days of focused education, pre-show workshops, and extraordinary networking and partnership-building opportunities, this is your chance to learn about and embrace the technology and processes moving the industry forward.

Lawn & Landscape technology
conference

Visit LLTechconference.com to sign up for conference alerts.

    #LLTC23



DATE





Figure 1 - *Poa annua*, commonly referred to as annual bluegrass.

reverse RESISTANCE

In recent years, herbicide resistance among *Poa annua* populations in turfgrass systems has increased.

By Becky Bowling, David Ervin
and Jay McCurdy

Among the most challenging annual weeds for many professionals to control is *Poa annua* or annual bluegrass. Although sometimes grown as a desired species, *Poa annua* is frequently classified as one of the most common and troublesome weeds in managed turfgrass systems due to its adaptability, invasive biology and propensity toward herbicide resistance. *Poa annua* competes with desired species, disrupts aesthetics and functionality, and may increase maintenance costs.

Herbicide resistance is generally defined as the inherited ability of a plant to survive an herbicide application that would typically kill a normal population of the same species. Resistant plants are selected through repeated use of herbicides with

the same site of action. As these surviving plants reproduce, resistance within a population increases.

In recent years, herbicide resistance among *Poa annua* populations in turfgrass systems has increased, creating new challenges for lawn care operators and other turfgrass professionals.

ABOUT RESIST POA. In fall of 2018, an interdisciplinary team of scientists spanning 14 academic institutions came together to address the herbicide resistance epidemic in *Poa annua* in managed turfgrass systems.

This project was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture-National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) as a Specialty Crops Research Initiative. Over the past four years, the project

has accomplished many of its objectives to advance knowledge around the nature, extent and management of herbicide resistance in this troublesome weed.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED LAWN WEED MANAGEMENT: INSIGHTS FROM U.S. LAWN CARE OPERATORS. As part of the *ResistPoa* effort, a series of five virtual focus groups was conducted in 2021 to gather perspectives from LCOs across the United States.

These focus groups sought to identify common themes as it relates to weed management concerns, best practices, opportunities for the advancement of integrated weed management and the more effective management of *Poa annua*, in particular.

This article features highlights from the study. The complete study, published in *Outlooks on Pest Management* (volume 33, number 3), can be accessed for free on the *ResistPoa* website by searching available literature under resources: bit.ly/1lresistpoa.

CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY STUDY PARTICIPANTS. Participants in the five LCO focus groups were asked to express concerns around lawn weed management and herbicide resistance.

Several themes from this discussion include:

- Many participants suspect that herbicide resistance is a challenge in lawns and landscapes they manage, particularly for troublesome grassy weeds.
- *Poa annua*, in particular, is uniquely challenging due to growing herbicide resistance issues.
- There is a perception that governmental pesticide regulations make it challenging to manage turfgrass weeds properly.
- This is compounded by a feeling that there are too few herbicide options available to manage weeds in turfgrass lawns.
- Many participants indicated that opportunities for information sharing between operators are too limited in the lawn and landscape industry.
- Some participants also felt that opportunities for misinformation among the public may generate unfounded concerns about fertilizer and pesticide use, leading to fear among clientele that can impact the ability to implement best practices.

BEST PRACTICES IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many LCOs indicated that the most effective weed control programs involve both chemical and non-chemical measures. The degree to which an operator relies on non-chemical measures appears to be influenced by the extent of regulations in their region as well as client preferences.

Among non-chemical measures, cultural control practices that improve the competitiveness and health of turfgrass stands were most valued by study participants. Examples provided by participants included appropriate mowing or irrigation practices. As the old adage goes, *"The best defense against weeds is (still) a healthy, dense stand of turfgrass."*

This can present a unique challenge to LCOs, as perhaps more so than some other turfgrass managers, they often have limited influence over key management practices such as mowing or irrigation that can significantly influence turfgrass health and pest proliferation.

Therefore, many participants emphasized that communication with homeowners and clientele is key to encouraging cultural practices that will not undermine the efforts of the operator.

In addition, it will be essential for practitioners to develop and implement integrated weed management strategies that reflect their local geographies to ensure programs are appropriate and well-suited to unique climates, soil types and lawn species.

IMPLICATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES GOING FORWARD. The study reinforces that herbicide resistance is perceived by many professionals as a growing problem in professionally managed lawns and landscapes. This supports that LCOs and similar professionals will be increasingly challenged to be proactive and purposeful in their approach to weed management.

Further, the study highlights opportunities to strengthen existing communication networks and coordinated management among landscape professionals and other key players, including additional contractors (mowers, irrigation specialists) and clientele.



Left: Figure 3 - *Poa annua* growing in managed turfgrass. **Below: Figure 2** - *P. annua* treated with pronamide four weeks prior. These are herbicide-resistant plants among susceptible plants.



FIGURE 2 PHOTO: SCOTT MCELROY / FIGURE 3 PHOTO: DR. SHAWN ASKEW, VIRGINIA TECH

Your success brightens our day... and night.



At Cascade Lighting, your success is our top priority and it's been that way since we set up shop over 20 years ago.

We'll partner with you to provide expert advice on the best lighting solution to fit your project and budget. Our team also offers design and technical support at no additional cost. And to ensure the job gets done on time, our warehouse stocks a huge inventory of products ready for same day shipment.

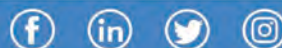
Call us today at 800.758.6359
or visit cascadelighting.com

CASCADE
LIGHTING, INC.

Providing over 40 lines of outdoor and
landscape lighting products including:

FXLuminaire. KICHLER
PHILIPS HADCO WAC LANDSCAPE LIGHTING HINKLEY LANDSCAPE LIGHTING UNIQUE LIGHTING SYSTEMS

111618



This may require the landscape industry to consider new organizational schemes for information sharing that facilitate improved interactions between stakeholders including trade organizations, suppliers, universities and policy makers.

While future research is needed to identify more successful strategies for mitigating herbicide resistance, LCOs and other green industry professionals can consider the following action items:

- Develop regionally appropriate integrated weed management strategies that include both chemical and non-chemical control measures.
- Ensure that herbicides are used at the appropriate rates and timings. Inappropriate use of herbicide products, including applying at reduced rates, can increase the likelihood of resistance challenges in the future. Always read and follow label directions.
- Rotate and/or combine herbicide sites of action to prevent herbicide resistance

from developing at the sites you manage.

• For those management decisions you are not responsible for, consider strategies for communicating best practices to homeowners and other clientele when it may improve turfgrass health and competitiveness and promote the success of your pest management program:

– Share extension and other science-based resources.

– Develop one-page flyers or short videos that promote best practices

• Similarly, consider how to communicate science-based information to clientele that support the management decisions that you/your company make related to fertilizer and pesticide applications.

• Look for opportunities to strengthen relationships and communication both with fellow operators and with experts that can help you stay up-to-date on trends and scientific advancements related to weed management and related topics.



Resist Poa

USDA-SCRI ANNUAL
BLUEGRASS COLLECTIVE

RESIST POA COUNCIL

Along with Bowling, Ervin and McCurdy, the members of the Resist Poa Council are Mitchell Dixon, Aaron J. Patton, Matthew T. Elmore, Travis W. Gannon, John E. Kaminski, Alec R. Kowalewski, J. Scott McElroy, J. Bryan Unruh, and Muthukumar V. Bagavathiannan.

– Participants in this study found university scientists and extension professionals to be the most trusted information source, but industry trade groups and chemical suppliers were also highlighted as valuable sources of knowledge.

Readers can learn more about the project and find helpful resources by visiting resistpoa.org. L&L



GrassRoots
TURFFRANCHISE.com

Join Our Family, Secure Your Future!



WITH GRASSROOTS, YOU ARE IN THE LAWN CARE BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF BUT NOT BY YOURSELF! ALLOW OUR TEAM TO BE THE ROOTS TO YOUR SUCCESS!



✓ Residual Income

✓ Ongoing Training & Support

✓ Customer Call Center

✓ Corporate Sales Center

✓ Industry Innovation Leader

✓ In-House Marketing Team



For More Information call our founder, Josh

770-215-2338

WWW.GRASSROOTSTURFFRANCHISE.COM



Remove the risk from your mix

**Take charge with broadleaf weed
and sedge control in one solution.**

Celsius® XTRA eliminates the need for tank-mixing by combining our trusted broadleaf weed control with the added control of sedges. One simple, broad-spectrum postemergence herbicide eliminates tank-mixing, additional product measuring, and other unnecessary hassles that can harm lawns and your operation. Celsius XTRA offers excellent turf safety on all major warm-season species including St. Augustinegrass and provides just the right mix of more control, less risk and greater peace of mind.

Start spraying with confidence at us.envu.com/celsiusxtra



ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW PESTICIDE LABEL DIRECTIONS. Environmental Science U.S. Inc., 5000 CentreGreen Way, Suite 400, Cary, NC 27513. For additional product information, call toll-free 1-800-331-2867. www.envu.com. Not all products are registered in all states. Envu and the Envu logo are trademarks and Celsius® is a registered trademark owned by Environmental Science U.S. Inc. or one of its affiliates. ©2022 Environmental Science U.S. Inc. | ES-0922-T&O-0188-A-1

Contractors are still equipping trucks and refreshing fleets despite supply chain shortages.

By Jimmy Miller



TRUCKING ALO



ING

BY A RULE OF THUMB, IT USUALLY TAKES BRIAN PAIGE SIX TO EIGHT YEARS TO REPLACE A TRUCK.

Paige Landscape Company, which is based in Walpole, Massachusetts, has been in business for 12 years. He's never seen a wait on trucks like the one that exists now.

"We just received three new vehicles back in June that we ordered last year (in November 2021)," Paige says. "The plan was to recycle three of those older vehicles and replace them with the three new ones. However, the new ones came in late."

Consider Paige one of the lucky ones: Charles Thomas with Arlington Green Mowers in Jacksonville saved up money months ago to buy five new electric trucks. They had bought zero — Thomas couldn't find any that were available.



With formulations designed for specific agronomic concerns, PerformancePack™ specialty products offer you the tools you need for healthy, vibrant, beautiful turf no matter the season, no matter the conditions.



Learn more at TH.Simplot.com
and follow [@SimplotTurf](https://twitter.com/SimplotTurf) on Twitter.

© 2022 J. R. Simplot Company. All rights reserved.
The foregoing trademarks are owned by the J.R. Simplot Company.
Read and follow label directions. Confirm registration before use.

EQUIPMENT FOCUS



Contractors have dealt with rising costs on trucks and their parts since COVID-19.

“When it came to supply chain issues, it became really incredibly difficult,” Thomas says. “In some places, I can’t get parts period. I’ve had to scale back dramatically. Plenty of work, I could have plenty of customers, I just can’t meet the demand.”

Supply chain issues might be driving this headache, but landscapers still need to adapt to ensure they’ve got the right trucks to handle this season’s workload. With no signs of supply chain issues improving dramatically overnight and with fuel charges still fluctuating in some areas, what landscapers do next is critical to their success.

“It certainly seems like it’s industry-wide. I’ve got plenty of calls from potential customers whose companies can no longer service them. Some just stop coming by entirely,” Thomas says. “When gas prices rose, I expected smaller outfits to go down the tubes unfortunately. It left more work for me.”

ACCEPTING THE NEW REALITY. For Stefan Shoemaker at Shoemaker Brothers Landscape, it’s not just whole trucks that are hard to find — it’s everything from the tires to the smaller parts for repairs. And even if he can find it, it’s going to come at a much higher price.

“You wouldn’t believe how hard it is to find the brand we like anymore,” Shoemaker says. “We’re less than a year out from our next purchase, and I’m just accepting that it’s going to be more expensive more than what it was two years ago.”

Thomas says he’s struggled to find even quality used vehicles or equipment on the open market. To deal with those costs, he’s had to raise prices on clients — but that’s a risky proposition in a market with lots of lowball competition.

“The prices were ridiculous. The markup on stuff — y’all have lost your mind,” he says. “You want sticker price for something that’s 10 years old.”



To make the price worth it, contractors ensure they've got the right trucks for their jobs. Shoemaker says the trucks he's purchased have been progressively larger than the last: He started with a ¾-ton truck before buying his latest one-ton truck. Now, he's looking for one that's slightly larger to buy in 2023.

WEIGHING THE ADD-ONS. Shoemaker says they've got a dump trailer they can attach to their trucks, but ideally, he'd love to be able to take all that weight on one truck rather than putting it on a trailer. Sure, trailers might carry equipment like their mowers, a compact tractor backhoe or their skid-steers, but bulk materials like mulch, topsoil, gravel, pavers and plants should go on the truck, Shoemaker says.

Meanwhile, Thomas has identified the electric vehicles he wants to buy — it's just a matter of getting them. When he entered the green industry, he says he started with strictly gas-powered equipment "like anybody else did." But once he tried some electric mowers, he left impressed with it. Now he thinks it could be a huge cost saver.

"It wasn't necessarily a cost factor at the time, but it became one when I realized just the savings that I had when I realized no

gas, no spark plugs, no oil," Thomas says. "I won't ever go back to gas for anything ever again. The electric truck is the cream on top of everything because then I can use that battery to charge my equipment when I need it."

Paige says his team doesn't "go crazy"

with customization — they just want an extended cab for their landscaping trucks. The trucks already come with lots of bonus features that aren't necessary but somewhat appreciated, like a remote starter for their diesel truck. He says his guys were laughing that the trucks had backup cameras.

REDUCE PESTICIDE COST BY 50% OR MORE



ECO-505 INJECTION SYSTEM

- Spot spray pesticide while blanket applying fertilizer
- Increase efficiency/reduce callbacks
- Pays for itself in less than one season
- Easily installed on your existing sprayer



GREGSON-CLARK Spraying Equipment

A Division of Rhett M. Clark, Inc.

800-706-9530

sales@gregsonclark.com | gregsonclark.com

It's not that they're not nice add-ons; it's that they're unnecessary features, he says.

"These trucks come with so many bells and whistles already now," he says. "They're nice, but for all the stuff they put in their base truck... some of it is just overkill to be honest with you."

Shoemaker agrees: His team likes the

backup cameras because it's nice for pulling trailers and pushing snow, plus his brother's truck has a dump bed on it that's proven handy. But they can live without some of the upgrades like OnStar radio or unnecessary comfort features. He says there's a difference between a work vehicle and a personal one.

"I'VE GOT
PLENTY OF CALLS
FROM POTENTIAL
CUSTOMERS WHOSE
COMPANIES CAN NO
LONGER SERVICE
THEM. SOME JUST
STOP COMING BY
ENTIRELY."

— CHARLES THOMAS, OWNER,
ARLINGTON GREEN MOWERS

"Comfort is important but we're trying to run a business," Shoemaker says, "so we're trying to keep costs down."

One vital consideration for those work vehicles: how to protect them from theft or damage. That's in part why Paige has added GPS tracking to his trucks. He admits it took him a while to find the program that reliably works — he'd watch a truck pull into the lot and then look down at his GPS tracker, which indicated it was still 10 miles away.

"We had a different GPS program we used in the past, but we decided to give it another go with a different program," Paige says. "We like that our program integrates with some of our other equipment, too."

FINDING A NEW TRUCK. For Thomas, it's not a matter of if but when he'll buy a new truck.

"Honestly, I'm desperately looking to replace them," he says. "I'd buy two or three today if I could get them."

**RESULTS
YOU CAN
SEE**

You go the extra mile to provide the professional services and results your clients expect. SePRO is dedicated to providing you with effective, dependable solutions with results you can see.

Edgeless Concentrate
Turf Growth Regulator

Cutless QuickStop
Landscape Growth Regulator

Cutless 0.33G
Landscape Growth Regulator

SePRO

317-580-8282 | SEPRO.COM

Always read and follow label directions. Cutless, Cutless QuickStop and Edgeless are trademarks of SePRO Corporation. • Copyright ©2023 SePRO Corporation.

Calculate your Savings

THE POWER OF WE®



WILBUR-ELLIS
AGRIBUSINESS



ONE MOVE. ENDLESS BENEFITS.

Lawn & Landscape • Golf • Greenhouse & Nursery

When it comes to maintaining your business, we know perfection doesn't happen overnight. It's a long game, played strategically for seasons. Spend more time crafting something you're proud of, and we'll take care of the rest. With our wide range of products and industry expertise, Wilbur-Ellis provides custom service to every market so we can grow a better, more beautiful planet together.

Find your next move with The Power of We® at WilburEllisAgribusiness.com/Pro-Markets/

For information only. Not a label. Prior to use, always read and follow product label directions.
WILBUR-ELLIS logo and The Power of We are registered trademarks of Wilbur-Ellis Company LLC.



Finding the right truck all comes down to price and the necessary features contractors might want included. For some, backup cameras are nice additions when towing trailers with equipment.



His vehicles are due for some repairs, and he can see some wear and tear on some of his trucks. He recently talked to another landscaper he saw out in the field about the high prices on trucks and other equipment. One way to save some money, Thomas says, might be to avoid doing a truck or trailer wrap. Thomas usually puts the company logo and graphics on his trucks, but even those cost three times what they did before, he says.

That landscaper he talked to about the truck wrap didn't do any designs on his new truck.

"I still want it to look decent, but ultimately, I need it to work," Thomas says. "It doesn't have to look fancy. It just needs to do a good job of it." **L&L**

The author is associate editor with Lawn & Landscape Magazine.

The Easy way to help expand your landscaping business



Our Landscaper Series of jet agitation hydroseeding equipment offers a full range of small hydroseeders with industry-leading performance



To learn more about Easy Lawn visit Easylawn.com

Software Republic

Easy-to-use landscape and irrigation design software.

Trusted by thousands of green industry professional contractors, consultant and architects in over 30 countries.

Use code
L&L2023 for
15% off your
subscription!



www.SoftwareRepublic.com

Email: sales@raincad.com



Phone: 936-372-9884

FERTILIZING SEEDLINGS IS GOOD.

FERTILIZING WITH WEED CONTROL



AT THE SAME TIME IS BETTER.

ProScape®

Do more in less time with ProScape Starter Fertilizer with Mesotrione. Apply both fertilizer and weed control that is effective when establishing new turf. Your grass gets off to a great start, freeing up time for other jobs and customers. For more information, visit LebanonTurf.com or call **1-800-233-0628**



WAYS FOR WELLNESS

There are eight dimensions to wellness and easy steps will improve each one.

By Kim Lux

H

aving a career in the green industry means many demands on an employee, both physically and mentally. But improving one's overall wellness can be beneficial and allow them to flourish within the industry.

That was the message from Laure Butcher, assistant director of personal training at Auburn University, during her presentation "An Introduction to Wellness for Landscapers" at SiteOne's annual Women in Green Industry event in October in San Antonio, Texas. This was also the 25th anniversary of WIGI and the first time the event's taken place in person since 2019.

Butcher says the simplest definition of wellness is the optimal state of health for individuals and groups. She went on to define health as being sound in body, mind and spirit. So, to achieve wellness, Butcher says there are eight dimensions people should focus on: physical, emotional, financial, intellectual, occupational, environmental, spiritual and social.

Butcher shared several practices contractors can do to achieve wellness in each dimension in their own personal life and organizationally as a business.

PHYSICAL: Butcher says the physical dimension starts with regular exercise and healthy eating. But an understanding and appreciation for the behaviors that impact physical health is also needed — along with routine checkups. Companies looking to improve (or prioritize) employees' physical health should provide them access to fitness facilities, nourishing food while working and access to quiet areas.

INTELLECTUAL: According to Butcher, one achieves intellectual wellness by being a life-long learner and open minded, along with participating in regular personal and educational development. To promote intellectual wellness within a company, Butcher says only hold meetings with substance. "Don't meet just to meet," she told attendees. Providing opportunities for personal development is ideal, along with allowing leave for attending those opportunities.

SPIRITUAL: "Remove yourself from the mindset that spiritual means religious,"

“
REMOVE
YOURSELF
FROM THE
MINDSET THAT
SPIRITUAL
MEANS
RELIGIOUS.”

LAURE BUTCHER, ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR OF PERSONAL TRAINING,
AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Butcher says. “Spiritual does not always equate to religion.” Butcher adds that being spiritually healthy means having a sense of purpose, practicing mindfulness and having a congruency between your values and your actions. Companies looking to boost spiritual wellness should allow and respect differing opinions along with providing mindfulness and resilience training.

EMOTIONAL: When it comes to emotional wellness, Butcher says it’s about acknowledging and sharing one’s feelings, plus how someone copes with challenges and conflict resolution. She adds that easy ways for businesses to help employees with their emotional health include organizing peer support groups, formal mentoring programs and employee assistance programs.

SOCIAL: Butcher says prioritizing social wellness is about establishing and maintaining positive relationships, having a

sense of connection with your support system and being able to relate to others. Social wellness in the workplace can look like conflict resolution and communication training, and a healthy work culture that includes organized social events. But Butcher says that companies should never make these events mandatory. “Some people won’t want to do these things and you have to respect that,” she says.

OCCUPATIONAL: If someone’s trying to evaluate their occupational wellness, Butcher suggests asking yourself these questions: Why do you do what you do? Do you gain fulfillment through work? Do you have a desire to contribute to it? Companies can help employees with this dimension of wellness by giving regular feedback.

“Feedback should also be from the bottom up and not always the top down,” she notes. Butcher says it’s also important for there to be a “no-blame” culture, flexible

rostering and regular annual leave within an organization.

ENVIRONMENTAL: Butcher says this dimension is about having a positive impact on the environment. Organizations and individuals should recognize their impact on Earth, Butcher says. Also, community involvement can improve one’s environmental wellness.

FINANCIAL: To achieve financial wellness, Butcher says someone needs to understand various financial circumstances and seek professional advice if needed. Preparedness and budgeting go hand-in-hand with this as well, she adds. Companies can improve employees’ financial wellness by providing fair/equitable pay and access to financial planning, budget training and similar tools. **L&L**

The author is assistant editor with Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Were You Featured In This Issue?

Reprints enable you to reuse your article and simply place it into the hands of your target audience. Having been featured in a well-respected publication adds the credibility of a third-party endorsement to your message.

Give yourself a competitive advantage with reprints. Contact us for more information regarding reprints and additional applications designed to meet your challenging market needs.



Use Reprints As:

- Sales Aids
- Educational Programs
- Recruitment Tools
- Employee Training
- Managed ePrints
- Sales Presentations
- Trade Show Handouts
- Conference Materials
- Media Kit Supplements
- Direct Mail Campaigns

**Call 800-456-0707 or
email reprints@gie.net**

8 MINUTE
CyberSystem



TAKE CHARGE.

End your reliance on gas forever at kress.com

Kress

©2023 Kress Power Systems Ltd.

RING IN THE NEW YEAR

Start off 2023 the right way with new products that can help with various industry services.

EARTH & TURF PRODUCTS DROP SPREADERS

The pitch: The new line of products will spread dry, fine materials with 15 precise settings.

- These spreaders are designed in 3-, 4-, and 5-foot models to accommodate those looking to spread dry lime, seed and fertilizer.
- It provides a more affordable quality option with a simpler build, leaving the box lid and second agitator as options, and also changing to 14 gauge painted steel box and removing the main auger clutch.
- They will have a thick axle to handle their full box capacities of lime and other heavy materials. The spreaders also include 23-inch x 12-inch tires.



For more info: earthandturf.com

TORO'S ELECTRIC ULTRA BUGGY

The pitch: The electric Ultra Buggy's can haul up to 2,500 pounds of material, making it ready to handle even the most challenging material handling applications.

- The electric Ultra Buggy is powered by Toro's proprietary HyperCell battery system. HyperCell is optimized to deliver up to an eight-hour continuous runtime.
- When it needs charging, the on-board charger conveniently plugs into a standard 120v wall outlet and fully charges the machine in up to eight hours.
- Featuring a compact design, zero-turn-radius steering and a narrow width of 31.5 inches, the new electric Ultra Buggy can fit through a 3-ft door with a crash bar.



For more info: toro.com/en

GRASSHOPPER'S SO26

The pitch: The 4.5" adjustable control tower, zero-turn pivot point and the shock-absorbent operator platform provide maximum comfort and ease.

- Grasshopper's first stand-on mower has an Adjustable Command Center Tower that provides 4.5" of range and easy accessibility to levers and controls. The extra-wide, extra-thick pad provides all-day operator comfort.
- The EZ Deck Lift Lever allows for easy adjustment of cutting height. The transmission and engine are mounted on the deck, ensuring no damage



to drive belts or engine components when adjusting your deck height.

- The Anti-Slip Operator Platform's shock-absorbent coil-spring suspension gives you the smoothest ride possible.
- The SO26's 810 cc OHV B&S Vanguard engine is perfectly matched for your choice of either 52" or 61" extra-deep DuraMax decks.

For more info: grasshoppermower.com

JOHN DEERE 200 G TIER EXCAVATOR

The pitch: The latest addition to the John Deere lineup of mid-size excavators is the brand-new 200 G-Tier.

- Helping to enhance efficiency and reliability without sacrificing power or torque, the PowerTech 4.5-liter engine on the 200 G-Tier delivers optimal performance for operators of all skill levels.
- The easy-to-maintain, high-uptime exhaust filters help decrease downtime for service while the in-monitor adjustable flow and pressure auxiliary hydraulics can be controlled using the auxiliary function lever.
- The Powerwise Plus hydraulic-management system in 200 G-Tier combines extra ability with smooth control and pinpoint finesse.
- With the push of a button on the joystick, operators can boost power and toggle on automatic boom-up and lifting functions.

For more info: deere.com/en/





STIHL

COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE

**WITH AMERICAN-MADE
CUTTING POWER***



*The STIHL line of zero-turn mowers are made in America of U.S. and global parts. **Warranty terms vary by mower. See dealer for details.

The pursuit of the perfect cut. Reliable performance. A smooth ride. Whatever it is you're after, the all-new zero-turn mowers from STIHL are here to help you in your pursuit. With the durable construction that comes with being Made in America*, our full line of zero-turn mowers gives homeowners and pros the performance and precision they expect from STIHL with the power and reliability they demand, all backed by up to a 3-year limited warranty.** If you're ready to cut a new path forward, then we invite you to come along for the ride.

LEARN MORE AT: [STIHLUSA.COM/SOMETHING-NEW](https://stihlusa.com/something-new)

BUSINESS FOR SALE



ACQUISITION
EXPERTS LLC

FOR SALE EAST COAST OF FLORIDA

LANDSCAPE
BUSINESS & NURSERY
15 ACRES OVER \$5M
WIP ASKING \$3.6M

40 ACRE FOLIAGE BUSINESS
& NURSERY \$8.120M

CONTACT JOHN BROGAN 772-220-4455
EMAIL: JOHN@ACQUISITIONEXPERTS.NET

HELP WANTED



EXPERTS IN FINDING LANDSCAPE TALENT!

No upfront fees.

We know what rocks to look
under to find the hidden candidate.

Need to upgrade or replace
confidentially?

We're the firm to call.

Expanding your business?

We're the firm to call.

THE FOCUS AGENCY

877-362-8752

www.focus-agency.com

search@focus-agency.com

*In business over 30 years
with clients coast to coast.*

LAWN SIGNS

PROMOTE TO NEIGHBORS

LAWN NOTIFICATION SIGNS



RND SIGNS.com
MARKETING, DESIGN & PRINT

Advertising Ideas Online

Ideas to help you get started.

We will design your masterpiece!

800.328.4009

Posting Signs • Door Hangers

Brochures • Mailers • More

FOR SALE

Discount Small Engines & Parts

Small engines & parts
from Briggs & Stratton, Kohler,
Tecumseh, Robin Subaru,
Hydro-Gear and more.

www.smallenginesuppliers.com

Florasearch, Inc.

In our third decade of performing
confidential key employee searches
for landscape and horticulture
employers worldwide. Retained.

Career candidate contact welcome,
confidential and always free.

Florasearch, Inc.

Phone: 407-320-8177

Email: search@florasearch.com

www.florasearch.com

PLANTS, SEEDS & TREES

NATIVE SEEDS

Largest producer of native seeds in
the Eastern U.S. Hundreds of species of
grass and wildflower seeds for upland to
wetland sites. Bioengineering material
for riparian areas and erosion control.

Contact **ERNST SEEDS** today.

www.ernstseed.com – 800/873-3321

STORK'S PLOWS

610-488-1450

Year round Snow and Ice experts
With nearly every brand and over 1500
plows and spreaders in stock

The largest plow part
selection in the industry.

Value, Selection, Honest, Excellence
WWW.STORKSPLOWS.COM

lawnandlandscape.com



FIND US
ON **FACEBOOK**

[facebook.com/
lawnandlandscape](https://facebook.com/lawnandlandscape)

**REACH
YOUR
TARGET
AUDIENCE!**

Place your **classified ad**
here today!

Contact: **Andrew Hatfield**
800/456-0707 x291 | ahatfield@gie.net

Lawn & Landscape

Advertiser	Page #	Advertiser	Page #	Advertiser	Page #
Billy Goat Industries	29	Grasshopper	11	Neely Coble Co.	13
billygoat.com		grasshoppermower.com		neelycoble.com	
BOSS Landscape Management	23	Greene County		Permaloc Aluminum Edging	9
bosslm.com		Fertilizer Company	24	permaloc.com	
Cascade Lighting	33	greencountyfert.com		Pro Landscape/ Drafix	21
cascadelighting.com		Gregson-Clark	28,39	prolandscape.com	
Christianson Systems	23	gregsonclark.com		Progressive	2
christianson.com		Hunter Industries	52	progressivecommercial.com	
Corteva Agriscience	14,15	hunterindustries.com		SePro Corporation	40
corteva.us		JR Simplot Co.	38	thestewardsofturf.com	
Envu	35	simplot.com		Smartgate Conveyors	24
us.envu.com		Kress Commercial	45	smartgateconveyors.com	
Exmark	51	kress.com		Software Republic	42
exmark.com		Kubota	5	raincad.com	
Finn Corporation	42	kubotausa.com		STIHL	41
finndealers.com		Lawnline Marketing	25	stihlusa.com/products/battery-	
Graham Spray Equipment	22	lawnline.marketing		products/ap-series	
grahamse.com		Lebanon Turf Products	43	Turfco MFG, inc.	7
Grass Roots Turf	34	lebanonturf.com		turfcodirect.com	
grassrootsturf.com				Wilbur-Ellis Co.	47
				wilburellis.com	



**NEED TO
RENEW
OR UPDATE
YOUR
DELIVERY?**

Reach us any time at
subscriptions@lawnandlandscape.com



TAKE MY PICTURE TO CONTACT US!





RAISE THE BAR
WITH JUSTIN WHITE
CEO OF K&D LANDSCAPING
JWHITE@GIEMEDIA.COM

RAISE THE BAR is a monthly column by Justin White, CEO of K&D Landscaping, written to help improve professionalism in the green industry.

NEW YEAR CHALLENGE: CLEAR THE CLUTTER AND MAXIMIZE TIME

→ **DO YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF REACHING** the end of the day and wondering where all the time went? If you said yes, you are not alone. It is a constant battle in our life; how do we get more done in less time and still achieve the results we desire in our business and personal life? If you can spare six minutes to read this article and implement a few strategies, I guarantee you will see an improvement in your time management this year.

THE 80/20 RULE — TRIVIAL MANY, VITAL FEW: The 80/20 rule, also known as the Pareto Principle, states that 80% of your results will come from 20% of your activities. Adversely, 80% of your activities will only yield 20% of your results. At K&D, we call this our “trivial many, vital few.” The exercise: make a list of the top 25 tasks you do regularly, (tip: keep a journal for 2-3 weeks and this list will create itself), and then choose five tasks that you feel are the most important and yield 80% of your results. Next to each vital task, write how you will do more of those essential duties in the future.

The remaining 20 are now by default your trivial many; create a plan next to each of these tasks to reduce, eliminate or delegate them. There may be items on here that need to continue to be done, such as taking checks to the bank or walking the dog. These are tasks that may not yield great results but are important for security or your mental health. After completing this exercise, you will be more aware of your top 20% and when you find yourself in the bottom 80%, ask yourself if you are the best person to be doing this task.

DEFAULT CALENDAR. In the landscape industry, time escapes easily and we can end up jumping from fire to fire and meeting to meeting without any real purpose or intent. Setting up a default calendar will help keep you focused on what is essential. Set time blocks in advance for those tasks you can't seem to spend enough time on, such as strategy, following up with clients, getting back to emails and prospecting for future employees or new work.

The exercise: Utilize a digital calendar such as Google or Apple that will sync between devices and connect via email. Start by blocking out 1-2 hour sessions for your top 5 vital tasks every week. For example, Monday morning could be for jobsite visits and Monday afternoon can be used for calling all potential clients back whom you

quoted last week, and so on. The goal of this exercise is to dedicate time to spend on your most important tasks while taking care of the day-to-day firefighting in between these blocks. Every week is going to be different; however, the more consistency and rhythm you can bake into your weekly calendar, the smoother your week is going to be.

PREPARE FOR SUCCESS. Every Sunday evening, I spend up to an hour preparing for the week. I review my calendar, meetings and to-do list to ensure I am focusing on the right tasks. If my week looks like I am living in my “trivial many” rather than my “vital few,” I will rearrange my week or delegate tasks to maximize my efficiency. I may excuse myself from certain meetings if my presence does not present added value to me or the team. Doing this on Sunday allows me to start Monday with a prepared mind and complete focus on execution.

Let me know how you do! I would love to read some of your 80/20 lists and results from these exercises. Feel free to drop me an email with any questions or feedback on how your time management can be improved. **L&L**

↓
CARVING OUT YOUR MOST VITAL TASKS can remove clutter from your work week and allow you to be a more efficient leader.

ADAPT[®]

EASILY OPTIMIZE CUT QUALITY

FOR A VARIETY OF TURF TYPES



SCAN ME
TO SEE IT
IN ACTION



**LUSH, WET
CONDITIONS**



**STEMMY GRASSES
AND WEEDS**



exmark.com



IN THIS CASE, IT'S OK TO BE
CALLED A KNOW-IT-ALL.
HUNTER UNIVERSITY.



Become a Product Specialist. Boost your irrigation IQ with the no-fee Product Specialist Program from Hunter University. From best-in-class rotors and sprinklers to industry-leading valves and controllers, you'll discover the features, benefits, and competitive advantages that make Hunter core and advanced products the most reliable in the industry. **KNOW YOUR STUFF.**

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL IRRIGATION | Built on Innovation®
Learn More: training.hunterindustries.com

Hunter®