

# NHLA

# NEWSletter

Vol. 39 No. 6

Informing and educating members of the Green Industry

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## NHLA Twilight Meeting Coming Up July 12 at Van Berkum Nursery

**O**ur July Twilight Meeting will find us at Van Berkum Nursery in Deerfield, NH. Well known to most NHLA members, Van Berkum's was established in 1987 by Leslie and Peter van Berkum, who ran the business until 2021 when they sold it to their operations manager, John Gedraitis. The nursery continues to offer a diverse selection of native, woodland, and ornamental perennials for New England gardens.

Van Berkum cares deeply about the environment. Their plant collection is thoughtfully grown and cared for in small batches on their 22-acre property. In recent years they have developed new

*Continued on p. 19*

The *NHLA Newsletter* is published by the New Hampshire Landscape Association for its members, free of charge, 10 times a year.

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The *NHLA Newsletter* seeks to encourage a lively discussion of topics of concern to NHLA members. Opinions and proposals presented in the newsletter are those of the writers to whom they are attributed and are not a statement of official policy by NHLA, unless so stated.

**Prof. Consultants**

**NHLA BUSINESS MANAGER**  
**Pamela Moreau**  
 603-321-0329  
[nhla@comcast.net](mailto:nhla@comcast.net)

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR AND DESIGNER**  
**Carolyn Isaak**  
 603-499-2143  
[editor@nhlaonline.org](mailto:editor@nhlaonline.org)

**ADVERTISING MANAGER**  
**Annette Zamarchi**  
 603-661-3488  
[alzbps@gmail.com](mailto:alzbps@gmail.com)

**CERTIFICATION COORDINATOR**  
**Abby Zuidema**  
 Mosaic Plant Design  
 603-502-4894  
[plantmosaics@outlook.com](mailto:plantmosaics@outlook.com)

**EDUCATION COORDINATOR**  
**Mike Barwell**  
 Perfect North Lawncare LLC  
 603-491-0847  
[mikebarwell@yahoo.com](mailto:mikebarwell@yahoo.com)

**Committee Chairs**

**CERTIFICATION CHAIR**  
**Mac McPhail**  
 United Ag & Turf NE  
[malcolm.mcphail@uatne.com](mailto:malcolm.mcphail@uatne.com)

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 North Point Outdoors  
 603-867-1929  
[andrew@northpointoutdoors.com](mailto:andrew@northpointoutdoors.com)

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 Linehan Landscaping & Property Maintenance, LLC  
 603-234-7267  
[heather@linehanlandscaping.com](mailto:heather@linehanlandscaping.com)

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 603-609-5200  
[designbyrainey@gmail.com](mailto:designbyrainey@gmail.com)

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 David DeJohn Landscaping  
 603-608-7860  
[DDEJo71@aol.com](mailto:DDEJo71@aol.com)

**Donny Piccirillo, Dir.** Mar. '26  
 Pierson Nurseries, Inc.  
 339-221-3711  
[dpiccirillo@piersonnurseries.com](mailto:dpiccirillo@piersonnurseries.com)

**Cori Cahow, Director** Mar. '25  
 Organic Garden Girl  
 603-540-2041  
[organicgirl@gmail.com](mailto:organicgirl@gmail.com)

**John Crooks, Director** Mar. '24  
 John's Landscaping of Madbury, NH  
 603-817-7788  
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**President's Notes**

by Andrew Pelkey

The NHLA Board of Directors, consultants, and volunteers have been busy the past month planning and coordinating our second annual Field Day in September. We are excited to offer this event for the second year while also growing its offerings and audience. This year should be fantastic, and I hope to see you all there!

The American writer William S. Burroughs is credited with the quote "If you're not growing, your dying."

Our Association made it through Covid with some bumps and bruises. And we're determined to grow the membership above and beyond where it's been in years past. We plan to achieve this through various avenues, such as enhanced programs and new events and offerings, along with improved website and social media marketing efforts. We are focused on growing the membership and developing our offerings simultaneously, providing as much education and as many resources to our members and the local landscape industry

as possible.

We are initiating a "two-track path" to improve our resources for the membership. The first path is one the Association has mostly concentrated on in the past, with educational events and resources focused on the field skill sets for the industry. The second — and new additional path — will be geared towards ownership and management, targeted on skill sets that involve financial literacy, best practices, human resources, estimation, and more.

This two-track path will be the catalyst for growth of the Association by bringing value to both field and managerial members of the industry.

For those of you reading, have you thought about joining an NHLA committee? Or maybe know someone who is a good fit? Send them our way. Growing our team will making growing the Association all the easier.

The 2023 season is poised to be a turning point, establishing a platform from which the Association can develop a sustainable and productive future.

We are focused on providing education and resources to our members and the local landscape industry.

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**The Cost of Not Training Webinar**

NHLA and Greenius are presenting a valuable webinar on July 19 at 5:30 pm. Together we will explore the costs and consequences that arise when employees are not trained and onboarded correctly. We will help you understand the significant costs incurred by companies that neglect proper training practices, impacting productivity, employee turnover, customer satisfaction, and due diligence compliance. We will present an onboarding strategy to develop highly productive and profitable employees that help drive overall company performance with little impact on a manager's time and resources.

Matt Crinklaw, SVP of PProduct Development, LMN/Greenius, will be our presenter.

Don't mis this 45-minute webinar that will help improve employee morale, client satisfaction, and your bottom line.

Questions? Email [nhla@comcast.net](mailto:nhla@comcast.net). Register at [nhlaonline.org/happening-now](http://nhlaonline.org/happening-now).

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## Save the Date! Bigger, Better NHLA Field Day Sept. 20

Don't miss the second annual NHLA Field Day coming up on Wednesday, September 20, at the Belknap County Fairgrounds. This year's event will have more credit classes, more vendors, and more exhibitors, as well as indoor spaces for classes and vendors.

Classes will include *Working Safely with Ticks*, *Using Drones in Landscape Design*, a pair of two-hour chainsaw safety sessions, a DES class on waterfront/stream permitting, and Cooperative Extension credit classes on plant identification and other topics.

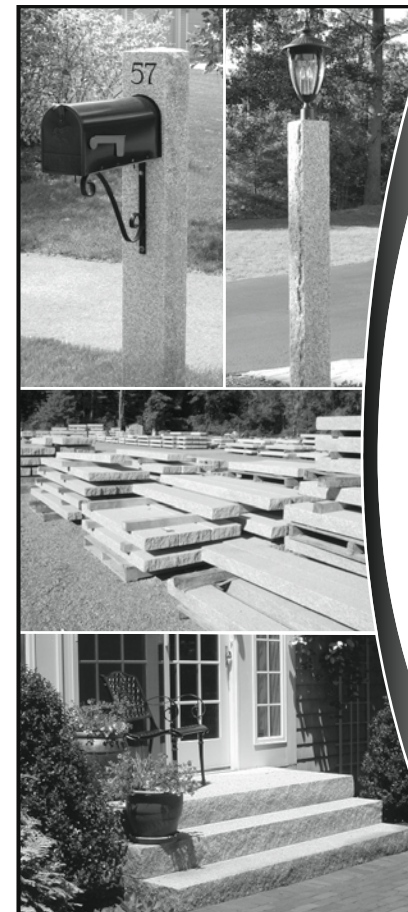
We'll also build a fire pit for the fairgrounds and plant a new maple tree, both for credits.

This year we are keeping attendance pricing the same: pre-registration is \$25 per person for NHLA members; \$45 for non-members. Same day, cash-only attendance is \$35 for members and \$50 for non-members.

Vendor and exhibition spaces are bigger and better this year, with indoor vending spaces available for only \$500 and outdoor spaces available for \$500 and \$800. Food vendors will be on site as well.

**Vendors: please Contact Mike Barwell, 603-491-0847, [mikebarwell@yahoo.com](mailto:mikebarwell@yahoo.com).**

See you there! Registration details will be available soon.



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## UNH Extension Can Help You and Your Customers Identify Insects

by Amy Papineau, Landscape & Greenhouse Horticulture Field Specialist, UNH Extension

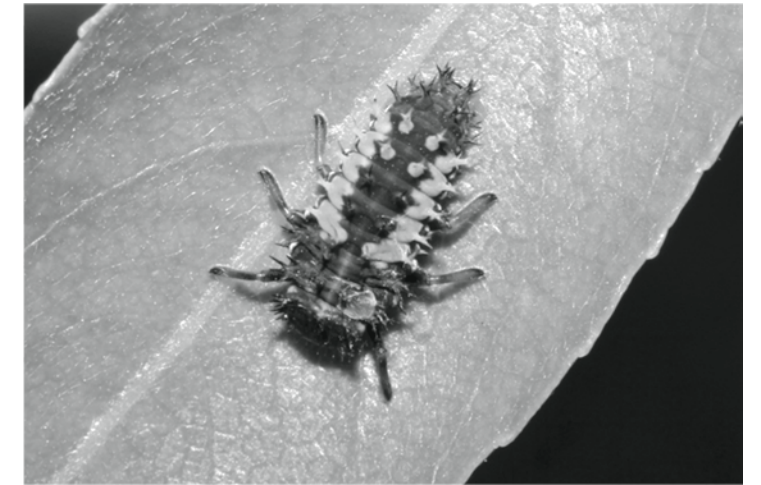
If you work outdoors, you likely encounter many different insects on plants, structures, the ground, and just about anywhere. The vast majority of insects encountered in the landscape are not harmful. Most are harmless residents of the landscape. Many are beneficial, helping to keep pests in check.

UNH Extension can help you identify the insects you find, and can help determine what, if any, control methods will be appropriate. Whether you're concerned about the potential for an insect to cause harm in the landscape, or a customer is concerned about an insect causing harm to their family or property, or if you're simply curious to know about an insect you have found, UNH Extension can help.

Accurate identification can help you save time and money, avoid unnecessary control measures, and identify developing problems before damage becomes significant.

The UNH Arthropod ID Service is a collaborative effort between UNH College of Life Science and Agriculture, Department of Biological Sciences, Entomological Collection and UNH Extension to provide residents of New Hampshire with trusted information about insects, spiders, ticks, and other arthropods impacting their lives.

NH businesses, residents, public health officials and others deliver arthropods (insects, spiders, ticks, etc) to the lab, usually by mail. From there, University entomologists accurately identify the species of arthropod by examining the specimen under a microscope and comparing it to documented literature and to existing arthropods preserved within the 700,000 specimen collection. UNH Extension staff provide information about the species and its significance, including information about how to protect people, plants, and property, if needed.




UNH Extension can help you identify the insects you find, and can help determine what, if any, control methods will be appropriate.

In many cases, insects can be identified by sending digital images to [answers@unh.edu](mailto:answers@unh.edu). If the insect cannot be identified from the image, we will recommend that the specimen be sent to the lab for closer examination.

If you are experiencing a plant growth problem, consider calling your local Extension Field Specialist as well. Extension

specialists in each NH county are available to work with farms and green industry businesses to diagnose plant problems and to provide recommendations for control or management.

LEARN MORE about identifying insects in the landscape with UNH Extension's Rachel Maccini at the 2023 NHLA Field Day, September 20, 2023. 



### 9th Annual NHLA Golf Tournament Tuesday, August 1, 2023

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## Pillar # 2: When Things Go Wrong, Don't Go With Them

by Andrew Pelkey, NHLA President

**W**hen things go wrong, don't go with them. Emotions feed problems, and more often than not, create problems when they don't need to exist. Focus on the solution, not the problem.

Let that sink in for a moment. It's profound. It sounds so simple. Yet it's probably one of the hardest things to adopt in your personal mantra.

When things go wrong, don't go with them: Pillar # 2 of our North Point Outdoors ten Pillars of Culture. This is my personal favorite. And for those of you who know me personally or have worked with me in the past, you can probably attest to the fact that I operate on this premise. I didn't always, and I can remember the day it changed for me. It wasn't until some years later when Dave and I were putting Pillars of Culture together did I realize it.

I was 23 years old with a Ford 150 and 8x12 trailer with a walk-behind mower. That mower happened to be in for service. I stopped to pick it up and the manager of the repair shop told me it wasn't ready, even though they had originally said it was going to be. It was a Thursday, and I had been without the mower

Imagine a group of people **ONLY** focused on the solutions to problems, never living in negative thought, only in the "how do we fix this" rather than why did this happen to us...

for a day or two. At the time, I had 40 or so lawn accounts that I cut on my own each week. I must have thought I was big time, because I laid into that service manager saying it wasn't acceptable that it wasn't ready, and that I had work to do. He replied "you think you're the only one with work to do and a mower broken? If you don't like it, wheel it up on the trailer and take it somewhere else."

It was at that moment that I realized I wasn't the only one. I wasn't the only one with a broken mower, a list of lawns to mow, or for that matter dealing with a problem in my business and even more profoundly in my life.

When/if you can master the concept of being dealt a problem or an issue and immediately focus your energy on the solution rather than the emotional reaction to said issue, you will become a force to be reckoned with in your career/business and you'll also be happier in your personal life.

Now that we understand this concept. Let's do something wild. Let's lead and teach those on our teams in our landscaping companies to all operate under the mentality of when things go wrong, don't go with them. Imagine a group of people **ONLY** focused on the solutions to problems, never living in negative thought, only in the "how do we fix this" rather than why did this happen to us...

This concept is a choice. Anyone and everyone on your team

can operate this way. As a leader, however, you have the burden of being consistent for your team to always hold true to this. If you make a mistake and stray from the course, it is your responsibility to your team to identify it, apologize, and move forward.

Here's to being unphased by conflict and focused on the solution. ↑

— Andrew Pelkey is chief operations officer and co-owner of North Point Outdoors. He is the current president of NHLA.

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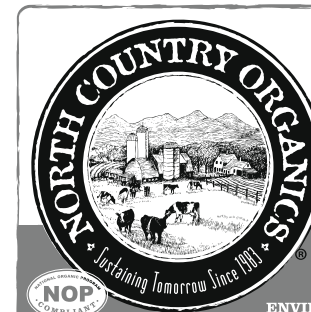
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# Controlling Runoff

by UNH Cooperative Extension, modified from the book:

Water's Edge: A Manual for NH Landowners and Landscapers

Controlling water runoff should be a major objective of any shoreland landscape design. As water collects and flows through channels, it gathers energy for its erosive force. The faster water flows, the greater the particle size and quantity of pollutants it can carry along to the receiving water body (pond, lake, stream, river, wetland or coastal water).

Modifying the landscape with any type of development has the potential to cause changes to water flow, nutrient- and pollutant-loading, and groundwater recharge. Integrating runoff control strategies along with appropriate choices of plants and horticultural products into your landscape design are keys to ensuring a healthy shoreland environment.

*Landscaping at the Water's Edge* is a manual for NH landowners and landscapers that covers the concepts and practices of ecological design for water quality protection in lakes, rivers, streams and coastal areas. This book, written in 2007 by several specialists from UNH Extension and others, remains a valuable tool that will help you understand the basics of how watersheds and shoreland ecosystems function so you can use the strategies and techniques below, as well as others, to help prevent soil erosion, nutrient and pesticide runoff, exotic plant invasions, and other detrimental processes associated with developed landscapes. Order a hard copy or download for free at [extension.unh.edu/resource/landscaping-waters-edge-book](http://extension.unh.edu/resource/landscaping-waters-edge-book)

### Runoff Control Strategies:

*Detention* – holding back or “ponding” a volume of water to slow the speed of its outflow. In

some cases, water detention may also allow for infiltration and/or evaporation to reduce the final outflow volume.

*Diversion* – preventing water from traveling over the area of concern, thereby reducing surface runoff and minimizing the potential for erosion and the transport of nonpoint source pollutants.

*Flow spreading* – allowing a concentrated flow to spread out over a wide, gently sloped area to reduce the water velocity and encourage infiltration.

*Infiltration* – allowing water to percolate into the ground rather than running across the surface.

*Plant absorption and transpiration* – the movement of water from the soil into plant roots, up through the stems and leaves and the release of water vapor through the stomates to the atmosphere.

### Techniques Used to Control Runoff:

*Berm* – A stabilized mound of dirt or stone to create a diversion and/or redirect water flow.

*Check dam* – A small mound of stabilized dirt or stone that breaks up the flow of water in a drainage ditch or trench to slow down velocity and allow for the settling of heavier materials.

*Cut-in (or Cut-out)* – A small

The faster water flows, the greater the particle size and quantity of pollutants it can carry along to the receiving water body...



trench that diverts water out of an existing channel, to be treated/infiltrated to prevent a significant volume of water from accumulating as it runs down a driveway, walkway or path. Multiple cut-ins may be required for long distances or high slopes.

*Infiltration trench* – A dug-in trench commonly used for roof runoff that allows for storage of runoff and encourages infiltration into the ground.

*Plunge pool* – A dug-in hole stabilized by stone, typically placed in a drainage ditch or trench. This allows water to fall below the level of the surface to slow the runoff velocity and capture heavy particles. These are often constructed in a series along a sloped route.

*Rain garden* – A shallow infiltration basin planted with water tolerant plant species, designed to capture concentrated runoff. Rain gardens are designed to pond water for just a few hours at a time, allowing it to be taken up and transpired by plants or infiltrate into the ground.

*Swale* – A stabilized trench that can act to store water (detention), sometimes also engineered to

enhance infiltration.

*Vegetative buffer* – A relatively flat area stabilized with vegetation that allows water flow to spread out, slow down, infiltrate and be filtered by the soil, and/or be intercepted and transpired by plants.

*Waterbar* – A diversion device that diagonally crosses a sloped trail, path or road to capture and divert runoff to the side. Commonly made of a log, a stone, a small, reinforced drainage channel, or a partially buried flexible material, a waterbar is most useful for small contributing areas (watersheds less than one acre) that receive foot and vehicle traffic.

Contact UNH Extension for more information about integrating landscape practices that protect the state's waters. Resources for professionals and homeowners are available on the UNH Extension website: [extension.unh.edu](http://extension.unh.edu); or by contacting [amy.papineau@unh.edu](mailto:amy.papineau@unh.edu).

Attend the 2023 NHLA Field Day, September 20, 2023 to learn about NH shoreland and wetlands permitting with Eddie McKenna from NH DES. 🌱

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# Cleaning and Sealing Hardscapes

by Bill Gardocki

In 2011 my company installed the Techo-Bloc Showcase project at my home. By the time we finished, we had 3,800 sq ft of pavers, 1200 sq ft of wall block, 415 LF of cap, 68 Rocka steps, 1 firepit, 6 pillars with Rocka cap, 60 LF of Tundra edging, one 7-ft 200-year-old granite bench, 48 night lighting fixtures, 2 Aquascape fountains, and heated areas under the driveway and front walk pavers (we are 100% solar powered).

We started the three-week project in early October. Paver Pete did his filming: yes, eighty 2-to-5-minute segments for the 2012 Showcases that were starting in December. We would have to stop all work on the site so the film crew could set up and catch all that was needed. They were

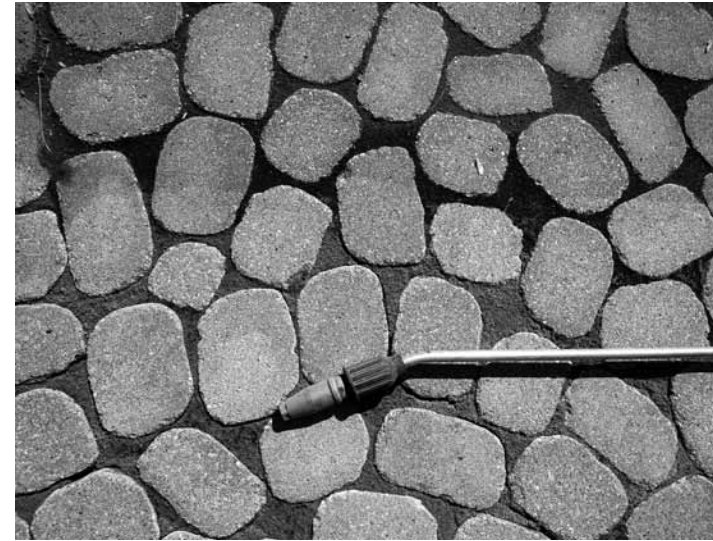
very professional (they filmed the NFL games in NJ at MetLife Stadium every weekend for the Jets and Giants games). Then they were back to our home for Monday mornings. It was stressful for me, but as I look back, it was well worth it and a lot of fun.

We were about 90% done by mid-October when I had to leave for Hardscape North America in Louisville. The Techo-Bloc guys had to head there as well, so that worked out well. When my son Tom and I flew home on Friday night we had to plow 12 inches of snow on Saturday from a surprise snowstorm. Luckily it warmed up towards the end of the month and we were able to finish the work. It was very cool to see my house on the cover of the 2012 Techo-Bloc catalogue.



**Granite bench left side not hot water pressure washed. Right side hot water pressure washed**

At the time of this project, I was not thinking about any upkeep or maintenance of the hardscape materials. Fast forward 11 years to today and I have not done a bit of maintenance to my hardscapes. In an effort to get our property into saleable shape



**Pavers and polysand before and after hot water pressure washed**

(we are downsizing) I have been looking at cleaning my hardscape areas, freshening up any mulch beds, and pruning plant material that has gotten very mature. In trying to decide what I should concentrate on I concluded that I would just power wash all my

I concluded that I would just power wash all my hardscape areas... I never did sealing, only cleaning. What is your experience?

hardscape areas. Hot water works very well, so I borrowed Tom's hot water pressure washer and spent three days cleaning.

It has been a "wow" moment as I can see such a difference in the hardscape materials. I think if I had hot water pressure washed every five years or so I would be very happy with the way things look and it would not take nearly the time it did waiting 11 years.

The hard question remains – should I seal everything? I must

admit I always have been kind of a weenie when it comes to sealing pavers and wall block. I have felt it is a job for the strong willed, and I was always afraid to screw things up and then have to replace a whole patio, walk, or retaining wall. In all my years of hardscaping I never did sealing, only cleaning. What is your experience?

— Bill Gardocki is a past president of NHLA (1994). He is now a Hardscape Educator.

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See current listings at:  
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**Certification Corner**

by Abby Zuidema, NHCLP Certification Coordinator

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The New Hampshire Certified Landscape Professional Exam will be held September 23, 2023. The Plant Identification and Written Portion will be offered on this date. More information on the exam and application can be found on the NHLA website, [nhlaonline.org/how-to-become-certified](http://nhlaonline.org/how-to-become-certified)

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# Strategies for Dealing with Landscaping Labor Shortages

by Jason Keely; article adapted from the Edge, the magazine of the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP)

**O**ne of the strange results we've seen in the post-pandemic economy is an overall labor shortage affecting virtually every industry. This includes manufacturing, technology, and the service industry especially.

If you run a landscaping company, you're likely already familiar with this labor shortage and have been seeing it for some time. Unfortunately, it hasn't shown any signs of easing, as national unemployment is still low across virtually all industries.

This means employers need to get creative and implement strategies they may not have considered before so they can attract the best talent from a shrinking pool of possible candidates.

In this article, we'll discuss some strategies to overcome these labor shortages and make sure you can attract the talent necessary to service your clients and grow your business this year and beyond.

## Causes Of Labor Shortage

There are many factors causing the labor shortage in landscaping. First and most important is simply the overall low unemployment in the country right

now. Job seekers have options and that just makes it harder for every business to attract talent.

Next, there is some evidence that there is less interest in entering the horticulture field. So the number of overall industry-specific applicants is lower as well. However, the need for horticultural services is growing. So this creates an imbalance and a shortage of workers.

Despite the reasons, landscaping companies need to navigate this new era of labor troubles. Here are some proven tips to do just that.

## Examine Your Wages and Compensation

Business owners generally don't like to hear this, but it may be time to raise your wages if necessary. A competitive labor market means you have to position your business as a better alternative for potential landscaping job seekers.

This will be different for every area, so some research may be needed. To begin, look around your local area and determine similar jobs offered by other companies. Compare jobs that are similar to what you are looking for.

Examine what those other jobs pay and make sure your wages are competitive. You may be surprised to find that only a small increase is enough to make a psychological difference when a job seeker is deciding to apply or not.

Most job seekers have a set pay threshold in their minds when searching for a job. If a job pays below that, they will likely skip over it. So make sure you aren't offering a pay rate just under the threshold for job seekers in your area and industry.

## Consider Bonuses

Bonuses are also a great way to attract new employees. These bonuses can fall into a few different categories. For starters, you can consider hiring bonuses that are paid after a certain amount of time of employment. For example, \$250 or \$500 after 90 days.

This may seem like an extra cost but think of it like an investment. The time you are going without the necessary employees may mean you're also losing jobs or not servicing your current clients. So money spent on bonuses will turn out to be a wise investment if it lands quality team members.

Next are bonuses that can be made during employment and are related to specific goals or metrics that an employee can meet. For example, there may be a bonus for every five upsells of an additional service to an existing client that an employee makes.

These all have to be tailored to your own business and fee structure, but offering clear incentives is a way to boost your

own bottom line and improve wages and hiring at the same time.

## Use Every Online Job Board

There are so many job boards out there that it's hard to keep track of them all. But when searching for workers in a competitive labor market, you want to cast the widest net possible.

This means making sure your job is posted on every job board. This can be time-consuming if done manually, so consider using a site like Indeed, which has thousands of partner publishers across the internet.

This not only streamlines your hiring process and helps keep track of applicants, but can also post your job to dozens of job boards with just one click.

## Use Gig Apps or Temp Workers to Fill the Gap

There are several gig-economy apps that specialize in short-term work, such as Instawork. There are also new ones popping up all the time.

Although these can be hit or miss, it does offer another avenue to seek out employees. If a temp worker turns out to be a great fit for your team, you can always offer them a position.

Local temp agencies may be able to help in this way as well. This will depend on your area but contact local temp or staffing agencies and ask if they work with landscaping companies and workers.

## Automation and Robot Mowers

Another option is to use technology to do more with less. Ro-

*Continued on p. 21*

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*TWILIGHT MEETINGS Continued from page 1*

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Join us on Wednesday, July 12, 5-7 pm, to find out more. John Gedraitis will be our host and tour guide. Twilight Meetings are free but registration is required. Register at [nhlaonline.org/happening-now](http://nhlaonline.org/happening-now). Please contact Mike Barwell at [mikebarwell@yahoo.com](mailto:mikebarwell@yahoo.com).

*July's Twilight Meeting will find us at the renowned Van Berkum Nursery in Deerfield, New Hampshire. The event is free but registration is required.*

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### DEALING WITH LABOR SHORTAGES, *Cont'd from p. 17*

robot mowers have come a long way in recent years and if you haven't kept up, you'd be surprised what they can do for your business.

For example, commercial robot mowers from companies like Belrobotics or Husqvarna can be used to free up your staff to work on other more important tasks.

These advanced robot mowers can be paired together so one employee can drop several off at different locations and leave them to mow the property. The employee can monitor the progress on an app and pick them all up when finished.

This can free up employees to do other tasks that earn more for the business.

#### Expand Your Hiring Pool

Landscaping has predominantly attracted men to participate in its workforce, but this means

half the labor pool is untapped.

Try to reach out to women with both your job advertising as well as the culture around your business. If you can make it attractive to women workers, you may be able to double your labor pool to choose candidates.

#### Invest In Easy-To-Operate and Versatile Equipment

Having equipment that is both easy to learn and versatile means it can be used for different jobs and get those jobs done faster. It also means your staff can learn how to use equipment faster so they can be dispatched to more jobs instead of relying on one or two key employees who know the equipment.

Equipment like skid steers that can be quickly equipped with various attachments is an example of maximizing your

equipment and labor force. This means one piece of equipment can be used instead of two or even three on a job site. Therefore, you can service more job sites at the same time instead of having all equipment at one site.

Remember, simple and versatile will help you get the most out of your equipment and employees.

#### Training

Finally, make sure your staff is all trained to a similar skill level on the various equipment you do have. Most equipment has online learning materials for owners, so make sure to take advantage of this to bring your whole staff up to speed.

If every team member can be dispatched to any job, it makes your workforce stretch further even if you are short-staffed or could use some extra help.

#### Dealing With Labor Shortages in the Long Term

At least for the foreseeable future, the labor market for landscaping will continue to be rather competitive.

This means successful landscaping companies will need to leverage every tool at their disposal to stay ahead and make sure they have the talent and resources to service their clients and grow.

By following the tips in this article, you should be able to develop a plan for dealing with labor shortages and get the ball rolling on the path to finding that next great team member.

—Jason Keeley is the owner of *MowingMagic*, a landscape company in Virginia specializing in robotic lawn mowers.



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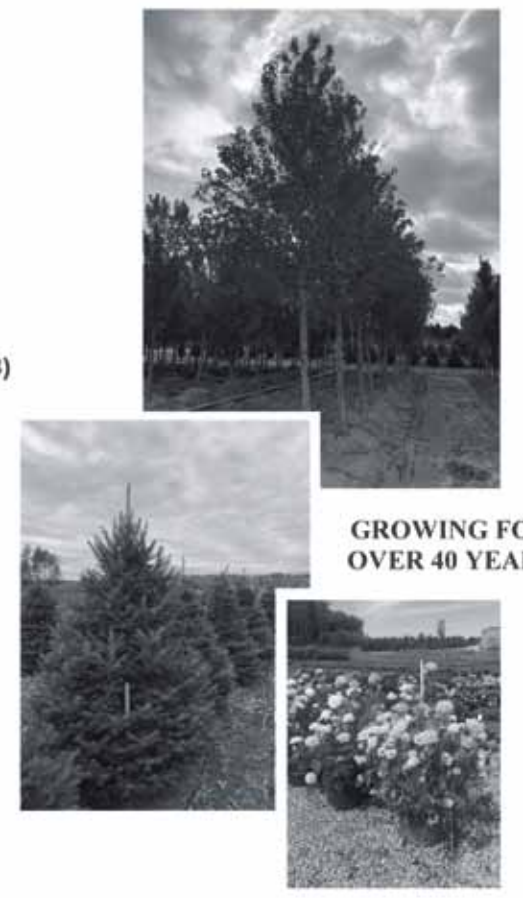


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# Calendar

■ **JULY 12**

NHLA Twilight Meeting, Van Berkum Nursery, see page 1

■ **JULY 19**

NHLA-Greenius workshop: *The Cost of Not Training* Webinar, see page 3

■ **JULY 27**

Massachusetts Nursery Association Down to Earth Summer Conference & Trade Show, Marshfield Fairgrounds, Marshfield, MA, [mnl.com](http://mnl.com)

■ **AUGUST 1**

Annual NHLA Golf Tournament, see page 7

■ **SEPTEMBER 20**

NHLA Field Day, See page 5. Registration information available soon at [nhlaonline.org](http://nhlaonline.org)

■ **SEPTEMBER 23**

NHCLP Exam, see page 15