



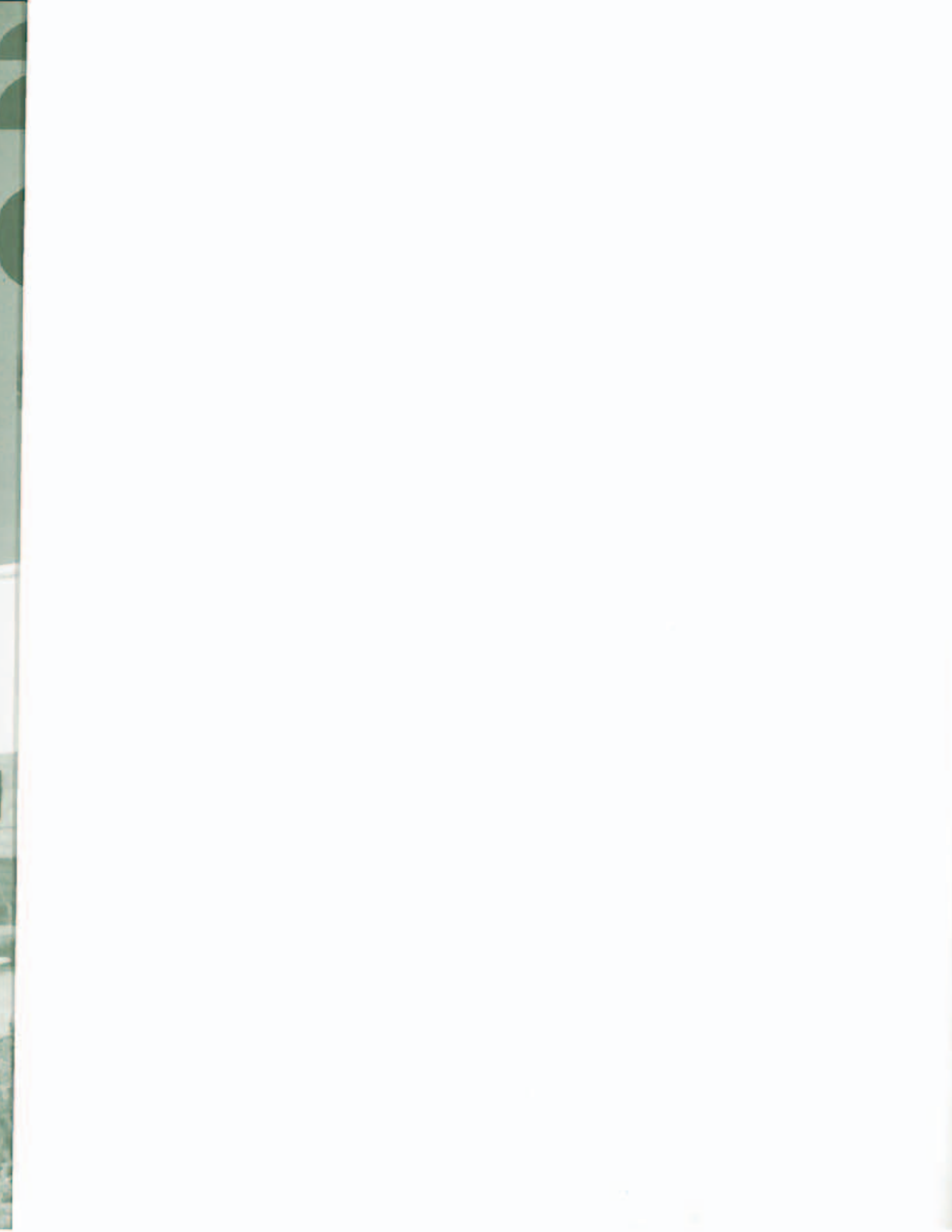
Landscape Ontario
HORTICULTURAL TRADE ASSOCIATION

25 Years Growing



s of Together







A Message from the Yearbook Committee Chair

It is indeed a pleasure for me to present to the members of Landscape Ontario this 25th Anniversary Yearbook in commemoration of this historic event. This project represents several years of behind-the-scenes research and writing and I am particularly grateful for the support received from the members of the Committee as well as staff.

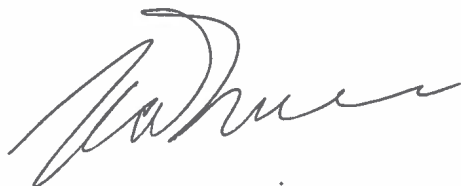
It came as no real surprise that the archival material of the three founding associations that joined together to form Landscape Ontario, or indeed, the archives of Landscape Ontario itself during its formative years, were at best sparse. After all, the work of these young organizations was accomplished mainly through the efforts of industry volunteers who also had their own businesses and families with which to be concerned. The idea that someone might need access to complete records 25 years or even further into the future for the purposes of compiling an historic perspective, would have been the least of their concerns at that time!

While tracking down records and photos was indeed a large chore, it was at the same time an enormously informative and interesting process. I believe we should take the time more often to reflect upon the past before we determine where we are headed with our futures.

A project of this scope requires a great deal of input from many sources, too numerous to mention here. I am particularly grateful for the kind support of all those people who dug into long-forgotten nooks and crannies in their homes and offices in search of photos and records. Thanks also to those people whose keen memories helped to fill in the blanks when appropriate records were not available. A word of appreciation is also in order to our profile contributors and advertisers for your support and especially for the valuable insight into our industry provided by your companies' historical perspectives.

We were particularly grateful that Gwen Stupple, who was herself so intimately involved in the industry and the associations for so many years, agreed to "come out" of her well-deserved retirement to research and chronicle the history of the associations and events leading up to the formation of Landscape Ontario as well as a detailed account of the association's accomplishments to date.

Once again, my sincere appreciation to the Yearbook Committee for their support and assistance. It is our hope that this historical account of industry and its trade associations will become a treasured and often-referred to volume in the years to come.



by: Monica van Maris

President's Message

As we celebrate our silver anniversary as an association, it is time to reflect on what has been accomplished over those 25 years. It is also a time to look forward to the future and to be cognizant that the groundwork laid today will have an impact on our industry for the next 25 years in the same way the foresight of our predecessors saw us to where we are today.

The joining together of the landscape contractor, maintenance contractor and nursery sectors of our industry into one association 25 years ago did not come about without considerable growing pains. Many companies were not supportive but those with vision and foresight prevailed and Landscape Ontario became a reality. Since that time, the association has grown and prospered and now provides its membership with services that enhance their business potential. Some, such as the group insurance plan, give small businesses the opportunity to provide big-business benefits to their employees. Others, such as the diverse educational programs, the two publications, *Landscape Trades* and *Horticulture Review* or Landscape Ontario's Annual Congress provide the association with a great deal of visibility within the industry. Most important are the many more behind-the-scenes activities such as government lobbying and negotiations with the Worker's Compensation Board that are of particular benefit to the industry on a long-term basis.

The strength of Landscape Ontario lies in its membership which has grown to more than 1100 member firms. Thanks to the vision of those who brought us together 25 years ago, Landscape Ontario is now an association which is well known and respected at all levels of government, providing us the opportunity to voice concerns of relevance to our members. That same vision has now enabled us to actively and aggressively raise consumer awareness of Landscape Ontario and the benefits of dealing with a member firm.

Landscape Ontario continues to be a visionary association. Their preparations for the next 25 years include the development of their property in Milton as a horticultural centre for the province and, in partnership with the Canadian Nursery Trades Association, the ongoing recognition of the industry through the advancement of the Horticultural Certification program. Both of these endeavours have unlimited potential in advancing the professionalism of our industry which, in the longer term, is by far Landscape Ontario's most important "raison d'etre."

As your association's president in this anniversary year, it is with a great deal of humility and pride that I wish to thank those people who had the vision to bring together our three founding associations under the Landscape Ontario banner. Thanks also to those many people who have since then given unselfishly of their time and talents to advance the vision of our founders to bring us to where we are today. It is also my wish that when the next book is written 25 years from now, those who follow will also be able to say "well done!".



Paul Olsen
President, Landscape Ontario



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of Ontario
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M7A 1A1

Le Premier ministre
de l'Ontario
Hôtel du gouvernement
Queen's Park
Toronto (Ontario)
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Greetings from the Premier

LANDSCAPE ONTARIO HORTICULTURAL TRADES ASSOCIATION 25TH ANNIVERSARY 1973-1998

It is with great pleasure that I pay tribute to Landscape Ontario on the occasion of its silver anniversary.

This is a special milestone in the history of this organization. For a quarter of a century Landscape Ontario has worked hard to serve the needs of more than 1200 members of the horticulture industry while promoting the benefits of landscaping and gardening to the public. Landscape Ontario members can take great pride in the accomplishments of this association. Their training programs have developed high standards of professionalism in the industry and contributed to the commercial success of many association members. Their promotional activities have increased the popularity of gardening and landscaping among people of all ages in locations across the province.

As you plan events in celebration of this 25th anniversary year, I send my best wishes for continued success in the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael D. Harris".

Michael D. Harris, MPP



Welcoming Letter from the Executive Director

Congratulations Landscape Ontario on your 25th Anniversary!

1998 marks the 25th year of Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association and congratulations are in order. But exactly who are we congratulating and why? Are we applauding some bureaucracy to which dues are sent to every year? Are we lauding the board of directors who happen to be presiding over the Association in its 25th year? Or are we saluting the staff? No, the true and rightful recipient of honour and felicitation is you.

You, the founding members who had the foresight to organize an association based on the principle of collective synergy.

You, the past and present members of the various chapters, committees, boards and commodity groups who have contributed thousands of hours in the service of advancing the industry for mutual benefit.

You, the visionaries who keep developing an organization and industry of individuals who are grounded in the principles of professionalism, contribution, quality, excellence and ethics.

You, the believers of the mission who have demonstrated your support by your membership, dedication and continued commitment.

You, the future members who will continue to build on an excellent and stable foundation.

Congratulations!



Tony DiGiovanni
Executive Director, Landscape Ontario



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Landscape Ontario HORTICULTURAL TRADES ASSOCIATION

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ONTARIO NURSERY TRADES ASSOCIATION



1960



1961



1963

THE HISTORY OF THE NURSERY INDUSTRY IN Ontario really begins in the late 1700's, when fruit growers discovered the favourable climate and soil of the Niagara Peninsula. By the early 1800's fruit growing was well established. Writing in the *Canadian Nurseryman Centennial Yearbook* of 1967, R. Warren Oliver tells of an early list of 120 members of the Fruit Growers Association of Ontario that read like a social blue book of "the golden triangle formed by Niagara, Toronto and Windsor."

Again referring to Mr. Oliver's article, many of the land owners were public spirited men who soon became interested in using ornamentals and forestry products, as well as fruit, to improve the country. A number of prominent citizens became nurserymen, among them a Samuel Taylor, who started a nursery at Fonthill in 1837. The firm underwent a couple of reorganizations, eventually building a nation-wide sales force with a head sales office in Toronto. In 1967, the year of Canada's Centennial, Fonthill Nurseries was the oldest nursery still operating in Canada. E. D. Smith (later Senator Smith) started the Helderleigh Nurseries in Winona in 1882, and very rapidly developed it into a large operation with sales representatives across Canada. These two nurseries dominated the industry from 1890 to 1910, during which period many small nurseries were forced to close due to their competition and a slump in orchard planting.

Sheridan Nurseries Ltd. started near Toronto in 1913, then moved to an old farm near Clarkson, in time becoming the largest ornamental nursery in Canada. The McConnell Nursery Company Limited started at Port Burwell in 1912, and though it has undergone changes in ownership, remains there to this day. Within the following decade John Connon established a nursery, first at Stoney Creek and then at Waterdown; Downham's opened at Strathroy, and Endean's at Thornhill. These firms, along with others, organized the Eastern Canada Nurserymen's Association in 1922, and continued it until 1948, when the Canadian Association of Nurserymen was formed as the first truly national association.



Over the next decade the CAN spoke for nurseries across Canada. For the most part, members were large growers or mail order firms whose representatives met infrequently to discuss matters of national concern. The small grower, landscape contractor or garden centre operator did not feel they had a voice. In January, 1957, a group of Ontario nurserymen got together in London, Ontario, to discuss the formation of a provincial group to be known as the Ontario Nurserymen's Association. By 1958 they were well under way, and already publishing a small monthly newsletter. It had begun as a mimeographed sheet in 1957, and the first printed one appeared in August the following year. At the request of the National Library in Ottawa in 1960, a copy of that issue of the *ONA Newsletter* was sent to them for listing in *Canadiana*, a monthly bibliography of books of Canadian interest distributed to libraries throughout Canada and abroad.

A Constitution had been drawn up by 1958, and a logo adopted. The first President elected was Arthur Fitzsimmons, of Fitzsimmons Garden Centre in Clappison's Corners. Other members of the Board of Directors that year included Harry Stacky (Secretary), of the Ontario Sod Co. Ltd. in Malton; Leno Mori (Treasurer), Mori Nurseries Ltd., Niagara-on-the-Lake; Herb Neumann, Neumann Nurseries, Orangeville; William Davidson, of Hillcrest Nurseries, Burlington; Stan Lightle, Lightle's Nurseries, Stoney Creek; William Wellington, Stone & Wellington Nurseries (formerly Fonhill Nurseries), Fonhill; Robert Nielsen, Robert Nielsen Nurseries, Oakville; Frank Braun, Braun's Landscaping & Nursery, Hamilton; and Sidney Johnson, Johnson Nurseries, Hamilton.

The Association wasted no time in getting involved in the issues of the day that concerned the nursery trade. One of the earliest was the possible introduction of plant patents in Canada. According to David Bakker, of J. C. Bakker & Sons Ltd., St. Catharines, and Hugh McCracken of McCracken's Garden Gallery, Brantford, current members of Landscape Ontario who were there at the time, this matter brought in many new members who had a stake in the outcome. Certain U.S. firms, along with a few Canadian ones, were pushing for an American-style plant patent law that some felt would virtually shut out Canadian growers. Flyers were sent out, special meetings were held, and feelings ran high. Those opposed to the law succeeded



Arthur Fitzsimmons, first President of the ONA.

in having it stopped, but it was a controversial topic that brought forth letters to the Editor in the *ONA Monthly Newsletter*, and caused some hard feelings at both the provincial and national level.

Also in 1958, the ONA was co-operating with the Ontario Association of Architects concerning calling and handling of bids for landscaping, and corresponding with the American Association of Nurserymen about licensing people in the nursery trade. In the following year, the ONA worked on such diverse matters as co-op buying, Sunday closing, unemployment insurance, the sale of insecticides, etc. in food stores, false advertising in the Yellow Pages™, and service clubs and other organizations intruding on their business. The latter topic continued to be a thorny issue, and surfaced in the minutes of meetings almost every year thereafter.

In early 1959 Arthur Fitzsimmons became the first paid Executive Secretary of the Association. The office was located in his garden centre on Hwy. 6 just below Clappison's Corners near Hamilton. He also continued to edit the monthly *ONA Newsletter*, as he had done from the beginning. In February the Directors approved an expenditure of \$50 to solicit advertising, and also approved the addition of a Classified column.

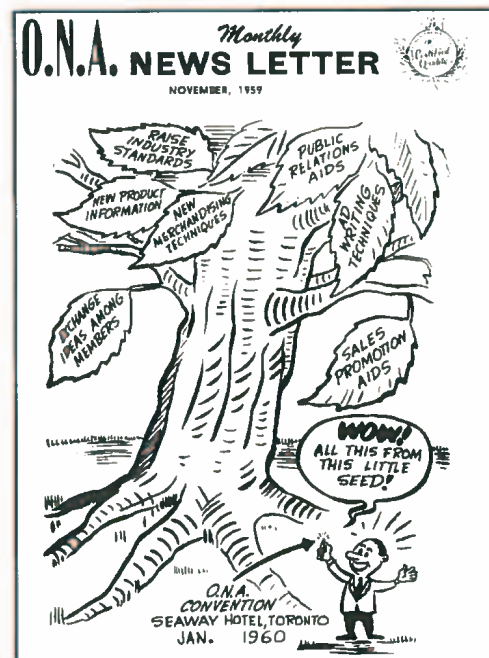
Dues at that time were \$50 for Active and Associate Members, but even this seemingly modest amount was difficult for some members to pay, because it was due on January 1st, when business was at a low ebb. To overcome the problem, the Executive Secretary was authorized to use his discretion to arrange a time-payment plan for any member who needed assistance, the only stipulation being that the outstanding balance was payable by June 30. A new category of non-commercial (Horticultural) members was also introduced in 1959 for only \$5.

By August of 1959 the Ontario Nurserymen's Association could boast a membership

of 67, of whom 25 were either on the Board of Directors, the Board of Governors, or the President's Council. They were actively going after new members, using the *ONA Newsletter* as a major tool. In November of that year the 6-1/2" x 8-1/2" black and white publication was increased from eight to twenty pages, with a corresponding increase in circulation from 600 to 1500. A full-page ad cost \$25, with a half-page going for \$15.

The theme of the Annual General Meeting, held in March, 1959 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Hamilton, was "Let's Stay in the Race." Delegates could attend the one-day affair for \$4 (\$3.50 advance registration) and that included a beef tenderloin dinner at noon. Members were asked to provide a photo of themselves to be sent out along with a news release to their local newspapers, regarding their attendance at the meeting.

A flyer put out by the Association in 1959 advertised promotional material, including a 20-inch x 8 ft. banner painted in black, green and white on weatherproof hardboard, two sizes of landscape signs in the same three colours, two sizes of electros of the association crest (logo), and copies of the Code of Ethics printed in two colours on heavy bond. All of these were available for rent - \$9 for the banner, \$3.75 for the large lawn sign, \$3.25 for the small sign and the electros, and 25¢ for the Code of Ethics. To rent them, the member was required to sign a pledge stating they would uphold the Code of Ethics of



The front cover of the November, 1959 issue of the *ONA Newsletter* promoted membership in the fledgling organization.



160 people turned out for the first ONA Educational Tour in 1959.

the Ontario Nurserymen's Association. They had to further agree that in the event of a dispute between themselves and a customer, they would abide by the ruling of a Board of Arbitration set up by the ONA.

1959 also saw the first Educational Tour, held in July, with members travelling by bus to visit nurseries and garden centres in the Oakville area. These summer tours remained a popular event for many years, with as many as 165 people attending. They visited several areas in Ontario, and out-of-province as well, including Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Detroit. By 1969, however, attendance had dwindled, possibly due to the difficulty of covering places of interest to all sections of the industry. That year it was decided to discontinue the general tour in favour of individual tours sponsored by the Growers, Garden Centre and Landscape Groups.

The ONA was working in close liaison with the Canadian Association of Nurserymen, as well as the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture, and the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph. At the request of OAC, two members of the Ontario Nurserymen's Association, Robert Nielsen and Keith Laver (Pinehaven Nurseries Ltd., Cooksville), were working with them on the O.D.H. Correspondence Courses, then just in the process of becoming a reality. The Trillium Award was established, and the first recipient chosen to receive it at the 1960 Convention. Incorporation proceedings were already under way in 1959, though it was to be another ten years - February 11, 1969 - before this was finally accomplished. Regional chapters throughout the province were proposed. The Board of Directors met on a monthly basis, and one marathon session was recorded as starting at 7 p.m. and adjourning at 2 a.m. the following morning.

Other ambitious projects undertaken in

1959 included planning the first trade show, to be combined with the Second Annual Convention being held at the Seaway Hotel, Toronto, in January, 1960. Exhibit space was available at \$35 for a 6' x 10' booth. Half-page ads in the Special Convention Issue of the *ONA Newsletter* cost \$15, and included an accompanying half page article about the firm. Stone & Wellington ran a full page ad offering flowering shrubs at prices ranging from 25¢ to 42¢ each, 2-year standard apples for 80¢, pears for 85¢ and dwarf apples for \$1.20. Members could attend the 2-day



G. R. "Dick" Sale and his wife were among the dancers at the 1960 Convention.

event for \$15, non-members for \$20, and horticultural members for \$10, and prices included one luncheon and one banquet, dance and entertainment. Mayor Phillips of Toronto conducted the official opening, and was presented with a certificate for 100 Queen Elizabeth roses for the new Toronto City Hall. The whole affair was a smashing success, with over 150 people attending the banquet and dance.

This marked the first time wives had been included in the planning. Due to a last-minute resignation by one of the members, Gwen Stuppel, who had recently been hired by the Association on a part-time basis to assist Art Fitzsimmons, was asked to fill in as Ladies' Chairman. Her instructions were to "keep the women out of our hair while we're at the meetings." The fact that most of

the women who attended worked right alongside their husbands in the nursery business notwithstanding, they were not expected to attend the sessions, and it wasn't until years later that women finally became recognized as an integral part of the industry. The April, 1960 issue of the *ONA Newsletter* contained a new regular feature written by Gwen Stuppel called "Something for the Girls." The main topic that month was spring housecleaning - tips on how to make it easier. The page also contained a recipe for Mrs. Leno Mori's Black Devil's Food Cake.

In 1960, Frank Ewald (Ewald's Highway Nurseries, Branchton) established his Junior Nurseryman's Award. That same year saw a further increase in membership to a total of 88 (62 Active, 22 Associate and 4 Horticultural). This trend continued, peaking in 1971, when according to the minutes of the Annual General Meeting there were 137 Active and 57 Associate members.

The 1961 ONA Convention and Trade Show moved to Hamilton's Sheraton Connaught Hotel, and featured a Garden Show open to the public free of charge from 7 to 10 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday evenings. The show included all exhibits, plus movies, demonstrations and talks by leading gardening authorities. There were 48 exhibit booths available at \$35 to \$65 each. Ad prices in the Special Convention Issue of the *ONA Newsletter* were up to \$70 for a full-page. Three dollars each was budgeted for the ladies' program, and a total of \$200 for publicity. The ONA set up their own booth to promote the Association, and three members appeared on television during the convention.



Past President Richard Watts (left) hands over the gavel to 1960 President Leno Mori.



In January of 1961, Art Fitzsimmons resigned as Executive Secretary and Editor of the *ONA Newsletter*, to devote more time to his own business. Gwen Stupple, who had been working part-time for the Association since October, 1959, was hired to fill the positions. The office was moved to her home in Waterdown, where it remained for two years. In 1963 the ONA rented an office above a drug store on Hwy. 5, also in Waterdown, that was large enough to accommodate regular Board meetings.

In March of that year, the Association declined an offer by *Canadian Florist* to incorporate the *ONA Newsletter* into that magazine, opting instead to increase the size to 7 x 10-1/2," and publish 10 issues a year, with January-February and July-August being combined. A highlight that year was to begin a listing in *Canadian Advertising* (a directory of magazines referred to by national advertisers). Circulation was controlled at 1,150, printing cost (including green ink on the front and back cover) was \$14 per page, and members were being urged to help get ads.

1961 proved to be one of the most important in the ONA's brief history. At the Annual General Meeting, members passed the following resolution: "To protect the Canadian nursery industry and the Canadian public from imported diseases, and to ensure hardy nursery stock, it is resolved that all imported nursery stock with soil on the root part of the plant shall be put under quarantine for a period of one year." This resolution was subsequently taken to Ottawa by David Bakker, Keith Laver, Leno Mori and Ian Smith (Brookdale-Kingsway Ltd., Bowmanville),

for official presentation to the Canadian Horticultural Council by Spencer McConnell (The McConnell Nursery Co. Ltd., Port Burwell), Chairman of the Floriculture and Nursery Committee of the CHC.

Also at the 1961 Annual General Meeting, members approved an amendment to the Constitution that paved the way for formation of the Growers, Landscape and Garden Centre Groups within the ONA. These three Groups began an extensive program of activities geared to their specific interests, including holding tours and field days, meetings with special speakers, blackboard sales (for growers), sales clinics (for garden centre operators) and drawing up a standard contract (for landscapers). They were also responsible for their own sessions at annual conventions, and turned out



1961 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Hugh McCracken, Herbert Neumann, Robert Nielsen, David Bakker, John Guldemond; seated: E. J. (Bud) Hebel Sr., Gordon Wilson (President), Leno Mori, Sidney Johnson.

and in 1964 and 1965 the Convention was once again held at the Seaway Towers. Toronto's Skyline Hotel was the locale for the next three years. The Convention and Trade Shows featured grand prizes of a trip to Tampa in 1965, Jamaica in 1966, and to Bermuda in 1967 and 1969, when the Convention had moved to the Inn on the Park.

Among the issues the Association tackled over the next several years, few received more attention than the problem of Conservation Authorities and other government bodies growing ornamental nursery stock. The first mention appears in the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors on October 23, 1961, and continues for the next 10 years, with no permanent solution in sight. Other matters of concern were the sales of nursery stock by unscrupulous firms, especially when accompanied by false or misleading advertising.

The next major step occurred on January 1, 1964, when the name was officially changed to the Ontario Nursery Trades Association. This was done to coincide with the national association's similar change to Canadian Nursery Trades Association. Along with the new name came a smart new logo depicting a kneeling figure planting a tree. An amendment to the Constitution allowed the ONTA to become integrated with the CNTA, with provincial members automatically becoming national members. A new dues structure was adopted, changing from a flat rate of \$50 to a system based on gross sales, with one-third of the dues from active and associate members going to the national association.

Also in 1964, at the Annual General Meeting, members approved the operation of



Past President Leno Mori (left) congratulates newly-elected 1961 President Gordon Wilson.

to be one of the most successful ventures the Association had undertaken to date.

In early 1962 the Oshawa Regional Chapter was formed, with the main purpose of advertising and promoting the ONA, and educating the public to buy with confidence from members. One of their first undertakings was to submit a regular 500 to 800 word garden column to the eight local newspapers. Another project being planned was a booth at local fall fairs using the recently-completed ONA evergreen or shade tree displays.

In March of 1962 the *ONA Newsletter* included a Growers' Catalogue and Want List. A separately-printed insert on coloured paper, it appeared in March, May and September for the next few years.

The same Hamilton location and format were chosen for the 1962 convention, then in 1963 it returned to Toronto and the Park Plaza Hotel. The Garden Show was discontinued,



This picture of the new ONTA evergreen display appeared on the front cover of the November, 1962 *ONA Newsletter*. The portable display, flanked by potted mums, was used for the first time at the Rockton Fall Fair, where lists of members were made available.



THE FOUNDING ASSOCIATIONS



1962 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Leonard Hoare, Hugh McCracken, Leno Mori, Frank Braun, Gordon Wilson, A. J. (Tony) Hooydonk, George Blyth; seated: Robert Nielsen, E. J. (Bud) Hebel Sr. (President), Keith Laver.



1963 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Al Rundle, Frank Braun, A. J. (Tony) Hooydonk, Leno Mori, Ian Smith, David Bakker, Denis Gysel, George Blyth, Hugh McCracken; seated: Gordon Wilson, E. J. (Bud) Hebel Sr., Keith Laver, Executive Secretary Gwen Stupple, Robert Nielsen (President), J. V. (Bill) Stensson.

a Credit Reporting system for a period of one year. That, too, proved successful, and continued to operate within the Association until the formation of Landscape Ontario in 1973, at which time it became a separate entity.

The Association's publication underwent an important change as well, growing from a newsletter to a full-fledged magazine format called *The Nurseryman*.

"Something for the Girls" had long since disappeared, but a member of the Editorial Committee, Lynda Rundle, of Rundle's Garden Centre, Oshawa, undertook to write a feature called "Ladies' Lingo" that dealt with plants. Another innovation was a page or so by Art Drysdale, also a member of the Editorial Committee, called "Time Out," covering many different topics of interest to those in the industry. Circulation was now 1,800, and the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association, the Nursery Sod Growers Association and regional associations in other provinces were all invited to contribute material. The Directors agreed to having Gwen Stupple join the Canadian Industrial Editors Association, and allowed her the \$2.50 per month cost of luncheon meetings.

In November of that year, following meetings with the Canadian Nursery Trades Association, it was decided to rename the magazine *Canadian Nurseryman*. It was to continue to be published from the ONTA office, and a separate bank account was opened, with the two associations jointly providing financial backing. A voluntary subscription rate for non-members was set at \$2 per year, or \$5 for three years. For members, the CNTA and the regional associations would each initially contribute \$1 per member to the

magazine, to be discontinued as soon as the magazine was financially independent, as it was not intended to be profit-making. A new Magazine Committee was set up, with representatives from both the ONTA and CNTA, and in January 1965 the first issue of "Canada's official nursery trades publication" appeared.



Some of the members' wives who enjoyed the "Ladies' Programme" at the 1963 Convention held at the Seaway Towers, Toronto.

da's official nursery trades publication" appeared.

In December of 1964, the ONTA office had moved to Brant St. in Burlington, to coincide with the hiring of Roberta Naylor as Executive Secretary and Editor, replacing Gwen Stupple who had resigned to take up other duties. Late in 1965 a second person was hired for a brief period to help with obtaining advertising, then in March of 1966 some further major changes occurred. Editorials began to appear in both French and English. Betty Nielsen, Secretary of the Canadian Nursery Trades Association, became a member of the Magazine Committee. In October of that year she took on the duties of Editor, with Roberta Naylor remaining as Business Manager. In March W. E. (Bill) Hartnoll was hired as Advertising Director. He resigned in December, and was replaced

by Lloyd Murray, who proceeded to double the advertising in one year. Roberta Naylor left in September 1967, to be followed by Muriel Williams, who continued in the job until 1969. Margo Gamsby joined the paid staff as Editor in 1967, assembling material and directing the layout, as well as writing a monthly article entitled "Pot Pourri," until she passed away suddenly in May of 1970.

The Association continued to be active in many areas throughout that decade. They petitioned the government to provide adequate facilities to test for and control nematodes; recommended a minimum standard guarantee for retail sales; worked on guide specifications for nursery stock; provided an outside tax consultant for members; and worked with Bell Canada to have the heading "Garden Centres" included in the Yellow Pages™. The ONTA co-operated with the CNTA in their Centennial project, a garden at Expo '67 in Montreal. They also sent 200 Peace roses, donated by the McConnell Nursery Co. Ltd., for a garden at Expo '70 in Japan, and worked with the CNTA to provide a street planting of Tilia de Groot trees in Japan that same year.

Among other organizations the ONTA was actively involved with were the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation, the Canadian Horticultural Council, the Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario, the Ontario Shade Tree Council, the Ontario Ornamentals Research Committee, the Pesticide Advisory Board, the Construction Safety Association, and the Farm Safety Association. They were also invited to appoint a representative to the Canadian National Exhibition Agriculture Committee. They



1965 Board of Directors (l to r.) standing: Harry van Belle, R. H. (Bob) Keith, Ian Smith, Walter Bowley, David Bakker, Harold Roberts; seated: Executive Secretary Roberta Naylor, Jens Pedersen, Hugh McCracken, J. V. (Bill) Stensson (President), Keith Laver, Lloyd Johnson.

1964 Board of Directors

A. W. (Al) Rundle, Glen D. Ogilvie, Martin Verluis, Paul Olsen, Spencer McConnell, Ian Smith, William Black, Quint Slabbekoorn, Leonard Hoare, Joerg Leiss, R. H. (Bob) Keith, Hugh McCracken, J. V. (Bill) Stensson, Robert Nielsen, Executive Secretary Gwen Stupple, Keith Laver (President).

1966 Board of Directors

Jens Pedersen, David Bakker, Peter Nielsen, Leonard Hoare, Harry van Belle, Walter Bowley, Lloyd Johnson, J. V. (Bill) Stensson, Hugh McCracken (President), Spencer McConnell, Executive Secretary Roberta Naylor.

helped establish an Arbor Day program, and worked with the Ontario Department of Transport to provide an adequate supply of nursery stock for their requirements.

The Association helped set up the ODH Correspondence Courses, and established scholarships. They were represented on the Arboretum Committee at the University of Guelph, and assisted in financing research at the U of G on overwintering of nursery stock and other projects.

In 1969, the ONTA initiated talks with the Ontario Department of Agriculture in an effort to have them provide someone equivalent to an Ag. Rep. to help nurserymen with their problems in propagating and growing. That same year, Burke McNeill was hired to fill that position, and he was immediately invited to attend meetings of the Growers' Group and Board of Directors.

The most profound change to affect the



The new ONTA logo adopted in 1964.

Ontario Nursery Trades Association began with a brief mention in the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors held on March 8, 1961, when "as a result of a meeting held with the Ontario Landscape Contractors' Association and the Nursery Sod Growers Association, Keith Laver was authorized to report to the Canadian Association of Nurserymen that the O.N.A. will represent to the best of its ability all facets of the nursery trade in Ontario." The minutes go on to state that "liaison is being established with all groups in Ontario."

Nothing of further significance in that regard appears in the minutes until March 24, 1964, when J. V. Stensson (Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., Etobicoke), Chairman of the Committee on Liaison with Sod Growers, etc., stated in his report that "renewed efforts ought to be made to bring the three groups (ONTA, OLCA and NSGA) together with local autonomy for each group, and the committee



1967 Board of Directors (l to r.) standing: Howard Stensson, Frank Fitzelle, Leonard Hoare, Jens Pedersen, David Shuttleworth, Otto Timm, Richard Duke; seated: Len Cullen, Peter Nielsen, Walter Bowley (President), Executive Secretary Roberta Naylor, Hugh McCracken.



1968 Board of Directors (l to r.) standing: Leo Brick, J. V. Olsen, E. J. (Bud) Hebel Jr., Howard Stensson, Barry Benjamin, Carl Stewart, David Shuttleworth; seated: Frank Fitzelle, Peter Nielsen (President), Executive Secretary Muriel Williams, Walter Bowley, Leonard Hoare.



1969 Board of Directors (l to r.) standing: Knox Henry, Carl Stewart, Dennis Davison, Howard Stensson, Frank Parker, J. V. Olsen, Ken Cullen, G. R. (Dick) Sale, Michael Laver; seated: E. J. (Bud) Hebel Jr., David Hull, Leonard Hoare (President), Executive Secretary Muriel Williams, Frank Fitzelle, Peter Nielsen.



would welcome proposals from each group as to how this might best be accomplished." In June of that year, Convention Chairman W. B. Black (Braeheid Sod Supply Ltd., Waterdown) reported that negotiations with the OLCA and NSGA regarding a joint convention had fallen through, and therefore the ONTA would hold its own convention in 1965 as usual. However, the Presidents of the two other associations, and their wives, were invited to attend as guests of the ONTA.

Further evidence of the desire for teamwork among the various associations appears in September, 1966, when in response to a request from Glenn B. Peister of the OLCA, the ONTA agreed to co-operate with them to initiate an apprenticeship training program for the landscape industry in Ontario. In April of 1967, then President John Northwood of the OLCA wrote to advise that they were considering an Equipment Field Day with all allied associations participating, and ONTA President Walter Bowley (H. C. Downham Nursery Co. Ltd., Strathroy) replied offering to send out a notice to his members publicizing the event. In the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of February 6, 1968, there is mention of a proposed co-operative setup of training courses, and at a Board meeting immediately following the Annual General Meeting of 1969, Werner Berger, representing the OLCA, attended and stated that a combined convention would be very desirable from their point of view. He further expressed the hope that their



1970 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: David Petrie, Executive Secretary Lloyd Murray, Bill Richardson, Jack Parker, Paul Windover, Michael Laver, Keith Overbaugh; seated: William Black Jr., Frank Fitzelle (President), Leonard Hoare, E. J. (Bud) Hebel Jr.

Convention Chairman, Willy Huber, could meet with a group from the ONTA within the next ten days to discuss the matter.

In March of 1969, preparations were being made for a meeting between the ONTA, OLCA, NSGA and OGMLA to attend a meeting for the purpose of considering an amalgamated Trade Show. The ONTA also moved to formally invite the allied associations to their summer tour and "all other paying activities of the ONTA." In January 1970, at Toronto's Inn on the Park, the first Allied Horticultural Trades Congress was held, marking real progress toward eventual unity.

This was also the first time an outside group was engaged to handle the trade show. The theme that year was "Stamp Out Winter - Think Green." The following year the Congress was held at Toronto's Royal York

Hotel, with a record attendance of 469 at the banquet. Sixty women registered for the one-day ladies' program. At the Annual General Meeting it was suggested that in future the ladies' program might be arranged for the same day as the association business meetings, so the women could attend the various speakers' sessions if they wished to.

In August of 1970, Art Drysdale became Editor of the *Canadian Nurseryman*. A little over a year later, following his resignation, Gwen Stuppel was hired to replace him, and the magazine office was moved to her home in Carlisle. Lloyd Murray, who in 1969 had become Executive Secretary of the Ontario Nursery Trades Association, working out of

his Dundas home, continued as Advertising Director. In February 1973, following the formation of Landscape Ontario, the ONTA agreed to sell the *Canadian Nurseryman* to the Canadian Nursery Trades Association.

The Allied Horticultural Trades Congress moved back to the Skyline Hotel in 1972, and at that location in January 1973, members of the Ontario Nursery Trades Association, at their Annual General Meeting, voted to accept the proposed new constitution for, and become a part of, Landscape Ontario.

No history can be complete without paying tribute to the people who made it all happen. It would be impossible to mention everyone who contributed their time and effort toward the outstanding success of the Ontario Nursery Trades Association, but there are some who deserve special mention.



1971 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: John Bakker, Keith Overbaugh, Knox Henry, Paul Windover, William Black Jr., Don Leaver; seated: Executive Secretary Lloyd Murray, J. V. Olsen, E. J. (Bud) Hebel Jr. (President), Howard Stensson, Frank Fitzelle.



1972 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Keith Overbaugh, John Hutton, Paul Windover, Jim Fidler, Tom Bell, Don Leaver, Jack Parker, Harry Bakker, Executive Secretary Lloyd Murray; seated: David Hull, Knox Henry, Howard Stensson (President), J. V. Olsen, E. J. (Bud) Hebel Jr.



Those who served as President were:

Arthur Fitzsimmons	Fitzsimmons Garden Centre, Clappison's Corners	1958
Richard Watts	Watts Nurseries, Fonthill	1959
Leno Mori	Mori Nurseries, Niagara-on-the-Lake	1960
Gordon Wilson	Hardy Plant Nurseries, Clarkson	1961
E. J. (Bud) Hebel Sr.	York Nursery, Kitchener	1962
Robert Nielsen	Robert Nielsen Nurseries, Oakville	1963
Keith Laver	Pinehaven Nurseries, Cooksville	1964
J. V. Stensson	Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville	1965
Hugh McCracken	McCracken's Ldsp'g. & Garden Centre, Brantford	1966
Walter Bowley	H. C. Downham Nursery, Strathroy	1967
Peter Nielsen	Robert Nielsen & Son Nurseries, Oakville	1968
Leonard Hoare	Tower Landscaping, St. Catharines	1969
Frank Fitzelle	McConnell Nursery Co.	1970
E. J. (Bud) Hebel Jr.	York Nursery, Kitchener	1971
Howard Stensson	Sheridan Nurseries, Etobicoke	1972
Donald Leaver	D. & R. Garden Supply, Oakville	1973

The following people served five years or more on the Board of Directors of the Ontario Nursery Trades Association:

Frank Braun	Braun's Landscaping & Nursery, Hamilton	from 1958
Sidney Johnson	Johnson Nurseries, Hamilton	" 1958
Leno Mori	Mori Nurseries, Niagara-on-the-Lake	" 1958
Robert Nielsen	Robert Nielsen Nurseries, Oakville	" 1958
David Bakker	J. C. Bakker & Sons, St. Catharines	" 1959
Frank Ewald	Ewald's Highway Nurseries, Branchton	" 1959
Keith Laver	Pinehaven Nurseries, Cooksville	" 1959
Hugh McCracken	McCracken Ldsp'g. & Garden Centre, Brantford	" 1959
Jens Pedersen	Rose Arbor Nurseries, Oakville	" 1959
E. J. (Bud) Hebel Sr.	York Nurseries, Kitchener	" 1960
Gordon Wilson	Hardy Plant Nurseries, Clarkson	" 1960
David Hull	Central Nurseries, St. Catharines	" 1961
J. V. Stensson	Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville	" 1961
Leonard Hoare	Tower Landscape Contractors, St. Catharines	" 1962
Spencer McConnell	McConnell Nursery Co., Port Burwell	" 1963
Walter Bowley	H. C. Downham Nursery Co., Strathroy	" 1965
Frank Fitzelle	McConnell Nursery Co., Port Burwell	" 1967
E. J. (Bud) Hebel Jr.,	York Nursery, Kitchener	" 1967
Howard Stensson	Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville	" 1967
J. V. Olsen	Royal City Nursery, Guelph	" 1968



ONTARIO LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION



IN AN ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR THE *CANADIAN Nurseryman Centennial Yearbook* of 1967, Albert E. Brown, then vice-president of Sheridan Nurseries Limited, told about the early years of the landscape industry in Ontario. Having started with the company as a landscape foreman in 1915, he had seen many changes. For instance, up until the beginning of World War I, the principal work of the landscape contractor was in the development of large private estates, and often extended over one or more years. At that time there was very little equipment used, the work being all hand labour aided by horses and mules. The average rate per hour for labour was 30¢, and a unit consisting of driver, horse and wagon charged \$1 per hour. By 1928 the introduction of the small Caterpillar tractor and other equipment led the way to more modern methods.

In plant material, pine and spruce were the principal evergreens propagated by nurseries. Deciduous trees consisted mainly of the American elm, some sugar maple, an abundance of soft maple (because they were fast growing) and Lombardy and Carolina poplar since they too were fast growing. Most large estates had their own greenhouses for producing planting-out material, but even in public parks most flower plantings consisted of geraniums and salvia. Perennials, heretofore practically unknown, were introduced into this country early in the century, and became quite popular. Lorrie Dunnington-Grubb pioneered the development of many of Ontario's large perennial borders during the late 1920's and through the 30's, planning and personally planting the gardens herself.

Mrs. Grubb, the former Lorrie Dunnington, was a landscape architect in England. She met her future husband, Howard Grubb, a Yorkshireman and fellow landscape architect, as she was presenting a lecture on town planning in 1911. They married, created a hyphenated surname, and emigrated to Canada in 1912. Together they opened an office in Toronto. Lorrie Dunnington-Grubb lectured and wrote extensively on landscape



and horticulture. Howard Burlingham Dunnington-Grubb (1881-1965) left his mark on the landscape field with such projects as the Oakes Garden Theatre and Rainbow Bridge Gardens in Niagara Falls, Gage Park and McMaster University Entrance Park in Hamilton, and University Avenue in Toronto. In 1958 he established a foundation for the development of Meadowvale Botanical Gardens, northwest of Toronto, and "as a side-note," to quote an article by J. V. Stensson (Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., Etobicoke) in the *Canadian Nurseryman Centennial Yearbook*, he founded a nursery - Sheridan."

Leslie Hancock (1892-1977) was one of the most influential figures in the early days of landscape contracting in Ontario. In the *Canadian Nurseryman Centennial Yearbook*, he told his own story in typical fashion, glossing over his achievements and giving a humorous account of the many difficult times he encountered. Born in England, he worked in various nurseries there until he managed to save up enough money to emigrate. It was a toss-up between Canada and Australia, but learning that Fonthill Nurseries in Ontario needed men for the spring work, and were offering \$1.75 a day, about twice the English wages at the time, decided the issue. Only a few weeks after work started, workers were told the daily pay would be dropped to \$1.50, so young Hancock found a job at a nursery in New York State budding peaches and apples for "the magnificent sum of \$1.75 a day and board."

Returning to Fonthill with nearly \$100 saved, he found there was no work, so it was a case of "either further education or bread lines." He chose the former, enrolling at the Ontario Agricultural College, but his education was interrupted by the First World War. He enlisted in the army and served overseas, finally coming home in 1919. His next job was with the E. D. Smith & Son Nurseries at Inelund, Ontario. Pay was now \$3 a day. He was determined to continue his education, and eventually graduated in 1922. A teaching appointment at Nanking University took him to China, where he met and married Dorothy Macklin, daughter of a Canadian medical missionary. Their son Donald recalls his father saying in later years that while in China he learned more than he went there to teach. He studied plant propagation, including the method that is now used called "burlap cloud" for summer cuttings. It came from the rice paddies, where the rice is planted in mud.



Albert E. Brown, shown here with his wife, was given an Honorary Life Membership plaque by the OLCA in 1966.

In 1927 the advance of the Chinese Nationalist army under Chiang Kai Shek forced the young family to evacuate, and they returned to Canada. Though the "great depression" had not yet begun, times were getting tougher, and no new additions were being made to college teaching staffs. Landscape construction and contracting, however, was a new and growing business, and Leslie Hancock was able to find work in that field, first with Sheridan Nurseries Limited and then with Brookdale Nurseries in Bowmanville. In the 1930's he established a small nursery on Camilla Drive in Cooksville. Here he perfected his method of mist propagation. Woodland Nurseries also became a kind of summer school for students from OAC. Hired as seasonal workers, they were taught not only landscape design and construction, but also the Latin genus and species, how the plants grew, whether they liked sun and shade, and so on. According to Glenn Peister, (McLean-Peister Limited, Kitchener)



Howard B. Dunnington-Grubb (left) receiving an OLCA Honorary Life Membership plaque from Willy Huber in 1965.

who worked there along with Don McLean (also of McLean-Peister), Bill Schreiber and John Northwood (both of Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Cooksville) and others, to his knowledge this was the only nursery that gave students that kind of opportunity to learn.

It wasn't until after World War II that the landscaping industry really came into its own, fuelled by the building boom of the late 40's and 50's. University graduates with degrees in horticulture were joined by those who simply had a love of the land. Many were immigrants from Europe, and together they built an industry that has become a major economic force in the country.

Some two years before the formation of the OLCA, a small group of landscape contractors under the leadership of Leslie Hancock had begun meeting during the winter months, together with employees of the Metro Toronto Parks Department, in a high school in Port Credit. They called themselves the Landscape and Horticultural Guild, and were mainly devoted to education. The concept was based on European methods of vocational or trades training. The Guild, according to Glenn Peister, offered an early and splendid opportunity, not only to learn and exchange trade ideas, but also to develop lasting friendships among those engaged in the landscape trade at that time.

Early in 1959, with the encouragement of Leslie Hancock, the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association was formed with 14 founding member firms. The first President was Glenn B. Peister. Jean Willsher, whose husband Dick worked for McLean-Peister for several years, was the first Secretary-Treasurer, and the Association office was located in her home in Kitchener. Plans were under way for incorporation, and by the first Annual General Meeting on February 25, 1960, the OLCA had become solidly established, celebrating the granting on January 19 of its Provincial Charter.

By November of that year there were 26 active members. Dues were set at \$50 for active and \$25 for associate membership. The latter included nurseries and sod growers. The Membership Chairman at the time, Walter Menne, warned that although the OLCA needed more members to get good representation, they should be selective and careful to accept only suitable landscape contractors.

With the launching of the Horticultural Correspondence Courses by the Ontario Agricultural College (later the University of



Guelph), in which representatives of the OLCA had been involved, it was decided to investigate the possibility of dovetailing the practical Guild training with the correspondence courses. Eventually, in 1960, the two groups were combined. In 1960 the OAC asked for a representative from the association to serve on the advisory board for three years, and Glenn Peister and Don Hancock (Don Hancock Landscape Architecture, Cooksville) agreed to assist as co-members in this capacity, with either to represent the OLCA.

Scholarships were established for ODH students, financed initially by voluntary contributions from members, and the relationship continued throughout the years.

In the spring of 1962, with still only 33 active members, the current President, Helmut Schmitz (Conniston Construction Co. Ltd., Ottawa) suggested the time had come for the association to relax its policy on the selection and admission of new member firms. No action appears to have been taken on this until 1965, when a move was under way to admit maintenance contractors as a special group with their own chairman, and a representative on the Board of Directors. There was some urgency to put this plan into action, since the maintenance contractors were considering forming an association of their own. Although the OLCA By-Laws were changed to allow the admittance of special groups, membership increased slowly. By 1972 there were 58 Active, 23 Associate, four Interim, four Allied, one Honorary Associate, two Honorary Life, and one Honorary Allied, for a total of 93 members.

From its inception, the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association had very clear-cut aims and objectives, which they immediately began to address. Publicity and public relations were high on the agenda, and one of the first projects was to adopt a crest the association and its members could use on letterheads, advertising, etc. Members were shown several examples, a vote was taken, and the symbolic tree they chose remained a distinctive symbol that identified the OLCA throughout the life of the association.

Full-colour brochures for residential landscape sales were made available to members through the association in 1960, and John Putzer (John H. Putzer Limited, Toronto) prepared a folder for distribution to architects and contractors, outlining the aims of the



A group of OLCA members on a tour of Braeheid Sod Supply, Waterdown (circa 1960).

OLCA and including a complete membership list. He and Leslie Hancock also prepared articles publicizing the OLCA for the *Canadian Architect* and other journals. The association appeared in write-ups in the *Daily Commercial News* and the *Toronto Telegram*, the latter courtesy garden personality W. G. "Bill" Hartnoll.

In 1959 work had already begun on a set of general landscape specifications for use by the industry and allied groups. Over the next several years this project continued, with many individuals contributing their time and effort. Four allied groups - the Ontario Nursery Trades Association, Nursery Sod Growers Association, Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscape Association, and Ontario Association of Landscape Architects - who at that time, along with the OLCA, made up the Ontario Horticultural Landscape Trades Council - all endorsed the final draft. Finally, early in 1971, the specifications of the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association were printed and ready for distribution. A year later a Maintenance section was added.



Leslie Hancock (right) being presented with an OLCA Honorary Life Membership from Donald McLean in 1965.

The newly-formed association was quick to establish liaison with other allied groups, including the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects. In February, 1960, the first of a series of meetings with the CSLA was held, designed to foster improved understanding and working relations between the two bodies. It took the form of a panel discussion with three members from each association taking part, and all OLCA members were invited to attend.

On March 17, 1960, four members from the Ottawa area met at the home of Helmut H. Schmitz, with the intention of forming a regional group within the OLCA. Up until that time, all OLCA meetings had been held in the Toronto area, and the few members around Ottawa (who up until that point had never even met one another!) "felt like a satellite in a far-away orbit around Toronto." The Ottawa group became an important part of the Association, and the first annual OLCA Summer Meeting was held there in 1960. Other regional groups were formed in Kitchener and Hamilton, as well as Metropolitan Toronto.

The Summer Meetings continued each year, marking the end of the "rush" season, and giving members, their wives and families a chance to get together in a relaxed atmosphere. The first four, held in Ottawa, Hamilton, Kitchener and Cornwall respectively, featured a general meeting, films, speakers, and a dinner and dance on the first day, then field trips to points of interest to the landscape industry on the second day. A ladies' program was also included. By 1964 it was decided to try a different format, and members and their families travelled to Bigwin Inn in Muskoka for three days of fun in the sun, with only a short time allotted to meetings. The same location was chosen for the next two years, then in 1967 space was booked at MacDonald College in Montreal, allowing members to attend Expo '67. In 1968 the meeting was once again held in Muskoka, this time at the Britannia Hotel, who also hosted the 1970 and 1971 get-togethers. The Delawana Inn in Honey Harbour was the site in 1969, and in 1972, the final Summer Meeting before the formation of Landscape Ontario, the OLCA met at Arowhon Pines in Algonquin Park. Starting in 1968, the group also held an annual "Freeze-up" dinner and dance in December.



The Toronto area was the location of choice for annual conventions of the OLCA. The first one was held in March, 1961, at the King Edward Hotel, with John Putzer as Chairman. Members were advised that their "better nine-tenths" would be welcome. To help plan a program for them, they were asked to "let us hear what the 'little woman' would like to see or do while visiting the big city." The Four Seasons

hosted the group in 1962 through 1964, then in 1965 the Convention, held jointly that year with the Nursery Sod Growers Association, moved to the Inn on the Park. Other locations included the Canadiana Motor Hotel in 1966, the King Edward Sheraton in 1967, the Skyline in 1968, and back to the Inn on the Park in 1969. Following two years of discussion between the OLCA, the Ontario Nursery Trades Association, the Nursery Sod Growers Association and the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscaping Association, the four groups held their first joint convention in January, 1970 at the Skyline Hotel. The second Allied Horticultural Trades Congress, held at the Royal York Hotel in January, 1971, included not only the four previously mentioned groups, but also the Canadian Nursery Trades Association and the Growers Section of Flowers Canada. The Skyline was once again the locale in 1972 and again in 1973.

Early in 1962, a committee under the chairmanship of Don McLean began working to implement landscape awards for various categories of landscape construction. The first ones were presented at the Convention banquet in January, 1963. In 1967 three special Centennial Awards were given out as well. In 1972 a new award was established honouring the late Howard Dunnington-Grubb, considered by some to be the father of landscape architecture in Canada.

Education was one of the most important responsibilities the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association undertook. By November of 1959 they were already looking into the possibility of setting up an apprenticeship system for landscape workers, and considering ways of co-operating with government in establishing and supporting courses at various levels within the education system.



1964 Board of Directors (l. to r.): John Northwood, Michael Nagy, Aussie Watt (President), Harry van Dyk, John Putzer and Donald McLean.

In 1962 the President, Helmut H. Schmitz, and Don Hancock, Chairman of the Education Committee, were invited to attend the National Conference on Agricultural Training in Ottawa. The two-day conference was initiated by the federal Department of Labour, and brought together delegates from all over Canada. The OLCA representatives, in conjunction with the Canadian Association of Nurserymen, presented a lengthy resolution pointing out the educational needs of the horticulture industry, along with some ways and means to economically integrate these with existing and planned educational facilities. This was followed up by a letter from the President to the Deputy Minister of Labour, pointing out the urgent need for an educational system for horticulture in Canada.

Ontario's then Minister of Education, the Hon. William G. Davis, attended the OLCA Convention in January, 1963, and gave members a number of pointers on how to go about getting the kind of programs they needed for their industry.

By 1965, horticultural training was available at the Ontario Vocational Centre in Ottawa. The OLCA was asked to appoint a representative to the advisory committee, ensuring that courses offered would be of a

practical and current nature. Morris James (James Landscaping, Arnprior) agreed to take on the task. The course got off to a slow start, with only 10 students enrolled for the 1966-67 school year. Eventually, however, the school became the Algonquin College of Applied Arts & Technology, and the Horticultural Division began to attract more and more students.

In 1967, a brief prepared by the OLCA's Education Committee, under the chairmanship of Glenn Peister, was submitted to Gordon Wragg, the first President of Humber College of Applied Arts & Technology in Toronto, requesting the establishment of courses for young people in the many facets of the science and art of horticulture, and to train them as Landscape or Horticultural Technicians to meet growing employment demands. A subsequent brief was presented to Sheridan College at Brampton. By September, 1968, the course at Humber College was available, and Glenn Peister was part of a committee that interviewed and hired Richard Hook as the first instructor. OLCA members were being urged to recommend at least one person, to ensure a full enrollment. The effort proved successful, and twenty-five students entered the course that first year. In December, 30 OLCA members attended a general meeting held at the College, where they were greeted by the instructors, Gordon McNair and Richard Hook. The members met the students, and were greatly impressed with their quality and the calibre of instruction. During the social period after the meeting there was an opportunity to discuss summer employment. The Landscape Technology course started out as a two-year program,

but was extended to three years in September of 1970, for those wishing to continue the advanced program.

Under the guidance of Willy Huber (Associated Landscaping Ltd., Malton), apprenticeship was another educational area being vigorously pursued by the association. At their general meeting in May, 1966, members established a wage scale ranging from \$1.50 per hour for a first year apprentice, to \$3.50 for a third year journeyman. Discussions continued at the August meeting, when it was suggested that an apprenticeship school should be



1965 Board of Directors (l. to r.) back row: William Schreiber, Bruce Evans, Aussie Watt, John Northwood; front row: John Putzer, Harry van Dyk (President).



a joint venture between the OLCA, the Parks Boards, and the Ontario Nursery Trades Association. Three people from the OLCA - Bruce Evans (Evans Contracting Co. Ltd., Agincourt), John Putzer and Glenn Peister - met with a representative of the Ontario Department of Labour to discuss the feasibility of setting up a program that would be conducted and sponsored by that

Department. At the Annual Convention in January, 1968, an Apprenticeship Committee was set up, and by April of the following year, they were able to announce the establishment of an apprenticeship system for the landscape trade. The July *OLCA News Bulletin* featured a program outline being carried out with the aid of Humber College and the Government of Ontario. Getting enough people signed up proved to be a problem at first, but on January 12, 1970, 37 apprentices commenced a 12-week in-school training program at Humber College. On completion of the schooling in early April, the apprentices returned to their employers to carry on with prescribed in-field training during the 1970 season, then returned to Humber again the next winter for a further eight-week course which would complete their basic schooling.

In the spring of 1966, the OLCA sponsored a two-day Department of Education course for owners and/or managers on "Planning for Profits." This was followed in December by another management course on "Finance and Taxation." A seminar on "Personnel Management" was held in December, 1967, and another management course in "Taxation" took place in 1970, as well as a "Labour Relations" seminar, all programs established by the Ontario Department of Education and sponsored by the OLCA. They were held at the Ascot Inn in Toronto, where the OLCA regularly met, and "graduates" were given appropriate diplomas for having attended. "The major benefit," said Glenn Peister, "was to realize that others had the same problems, which we tried to understand and solve together in a socially friendly atmosphere."

In March of 1967 the first Foreman's Short Course was given at Kitchener. The course director was Professor Ted McNinch, who was also Director of the Horticultural Correspondence Courses at the University of Guelph. The course was repeated



1966 Board of Directors (l. to r.): Bill Lee, Bruce Evans, Harry van Dyk, John Putzer (President), John Northwood, Tony Koch.

in Kitchener in 1968, then in 1969 it was moved to Humber College, and carried out in partnership with the Metro Parks Department. Also in co-operation with Metro Parks, the OLCA in 1969 established a Short Course for Supervisory Personnel at Humber College. In 1970 it was decided to offer a special one-day training course at Humber College for OLCA supervisory and management personnel. Other courses offered through Humber College included a ten-evening course in "Pesticide Technology," and one-day course on "Explosives in the Landscape Industry", and a two-day seminar on "Landscape Construction Management," studying bidding practices and profit maximization.

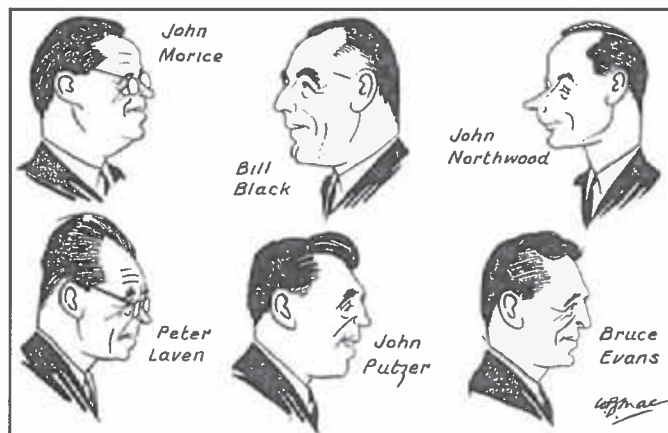
As well as these more formal activities, evening meetings or "bull sessions" were held at Humber College during which topics such as Job Estimating, Record Keeping, etc. were discussed. In November, 1967, then President John Northwood, along with Education Chairman Glenn Peister, represented the landscape industry as part of a panel with students at the University of Guelph, discussing career possibilities the horticulture industry offered to those about to graduate. That same year John Northwood spoke to members of the Alumni Association of the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture, on the

potential of the landscaping industry. In addition to the ODH Correspondence Courses, scholarships were also given to students of the School of Landscape Architecture at the University of Guelph, Humber College's Apprenticeship Course, and others.

While more could undoubtedly be written about the educational activities of the Ontario Landscape

Contractors Association, it can readily be seen that a great deal of effort was put into this. One interesting footnote - throughout most of the reports found in the *OLCA News Bulletins* dating back to 1959, references were invariably made to "men," or in some cases "boys." However, in summing up the educational activities of the OLCA to date in October, 1972, Richard Hook of Humber College had this to say: "The Ontario Federation of Women's Liberation recently announced that for every woman in management, there are 30 in labour. A disparity also exists in landscaping, where few ladies are found. This year at least six girls enrolled in Landscape Technology at Humber as part of our program to beautify the industry." He could not have foreseen that within 25 years, women would not only become a major part of the work force, but would also be elected to head both provincial and national horticultural trade associations.

One of the earliest and most important issues the OLCA tackled was the effort to have government contracts at all levels opened up to public tender by members of the landscape industry. As early as April, 1961, this item was listed among the proposed activities for the year by the Public Works and Employment Committee. That year they submitted a brief to Don Pettit of the National Capital Commission in Ottawa, asking for public tenders for all NCC landscape construction work, which gained considerable publicity in the press. They received support from the Canadian Construction Association, the Canadian Horticultural Council, the Canadian Association of Nurserymen, the Quebec Landscape Gardeners and Nurserymen's Association, and the Horticultural Trades Association of B.C. Under the direction of Helmut Schmitz, acting in the double capacity of President of the Association and Chairman of the Public Works Committee, considerable



This sketch of the 1967 Board of Directors appeared in the Toronto Telegram.



activity regarding the NCC took place over the next several months, including contacts with the federal Minister of Public Works. Meanwhile the Glassco Commission on Government Organization was looking into various aspects of work being done by government departments. Among their recommendations was the following: "The Commission refers to the landscape operation of the National Capital Commission in its report and recommends that such work could be profitably transferred to private enterprise."

In 1962, Parks Commissioners in Toronto and Ottawa were contacted requesting the calling of public tenders for landscape construction. Results from the Ottawa Parks Department were favourable, but to quote the Public Works Chairman's remarks in the minutes of February, 1962, the answer from the Toronto Parks Commission "was a polite NO." The town of North York, however, recommended that all new developments be let by contract, and in connection with the building of a vocational school there, a Toronto landscape architect introduced a clause in the tender call stipulating that only OLCA members were eligible to submit bids as sub-contractors. This development was welcomed by the group, and pointed out the acceptance of the standards of the Association.

Some of the other government bodies the Association was working with included the Ontario Department of Highways, Department of Public Works, and Department of Transport, all of whom began to reduce the amount of work done by their own staff and equipment, in favour of contracting out through public tender. The issue continued to be pursued throughout the ensuing years. In his report to the Annual General Meeting in February, 1971, Public Works Chairman John Northwood stressed the need for unity within the industry in order to effectively convince public bodies of its capabilities and skills. The matter has never been completely resolved. Again quoting Glenn Peister, "While a great deal of landscape work has been and will continue to be tendered by public agencies, it will always be very difficult to unseat established and ingrained public operations."

In 1962 the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association was invited



1968 Board of Directors (l. to r.): Peter Laven, Werner Berger, Bruce Evans (President), John Morice, John Northwood.

to become a member of the Canadian Centenary Council, a private undertaking set up to co-ordinate plans and ideas, and to guide, advise and make recommendations for the observance of Canada's Centennial in 1967. Helmut H. Schmitz (Artistic Landscaping, Ottawa), was the first representative. Others who served in this capacity were Morris James and John Northwood.

During 1962, the Legislation and Employment Committee began to consider the possibility of landscape workers becoming unionized. By 1966 some member firms had signed union agreements with their employees, which led to improved conditions and increased benefits, thereby attracting better personnel to the industry. The following year a Labour Committee was established to study the present agreements being used by member firms, and to come up with recommendations for a collective agreement for members of the OLCA, so they could negotiate as a group. The Association also hired a lawyer to represent the group in its negotiations with the union. Although comparatively few



1970 Board of Directors (l. to r.) back row: William DeLuca, Harry van Dyk, John Morice; front row: William Schreiber, Werner Berger (President), Leslie Solty.

member companies were unionized, the Legislation and Employment Committee continued to be an active one throughout the life of the OLCA, and within the landscape industry the problem still persists.

Research was another area that concerned the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association. At their annual general meeting in January, 1968, members unanimously passed a motion earmarking \$1,500 for the coming year, as a start on a research fund. By the following year the Research Committee was

able to report the selection of a subject, "Transplanting of Large Trees in Southern Ontario." The study, carried out by a graduate student at the University of Toronto's Shade Tree Research Laboratory, got under way in 1970, and continued for the next two years. In addition, the OLCA cooperated with Humber College in carrying out other research projects.

Publicity for the association, along with promotion of individual member firms, was always an important part of the OLCA agenda. Members were urged to use the distinctive crest on company advertising, letterheads, cheques, etc., as well as placing decals on vehicles and other places where they could be seen by the public. As early as 1961 the Association had a display at the Canadian National Exhibition. They also participated in the Garden Club of Toronto's Spring Flower Show, the National Home Show, and in 1972 prepared an exhibit for the convention of the Ontario Association of Architects.

In 1962 the decision was made to purchase the film "Vienna and Her Gardens." This 45-minute film, considered at that time to be one of the best ever made concerning landscaping, was to be used for publicity and as a money-making proposition by renting it out. Members were urged to underwrite the initial cost of approximately \$1,200, the money to be returned to them as revenues came in. However, although loaning it out did produce a fair amount of good publicity and promotion, the film never did bring in the earnings expected. In 1965 it was turned over to the library of the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, who agreed to maintain it and continue to loan it out.

Starting in 1963, members in the



Toronto area were being listed in the Yellow Pages™ under the OLCA heading, and by 1971 similar listings were being investigated for other areas where members requested them.

Brochures on landscaping, and bearing the OLCA crest, were made available to members for distribution to their retail customers. Thousands were also given out wherever the Association had an exhibit. During the "Green Survival" campaign of the early 1970's, carried out by the American Association of Nurserymen and the Canadian Nursery Trades Association, promotion materials were made available to the OLCA. Members wrote articles for the garden pages of newspapers and magazines, and appeared on radio and television garden shows. Write-ups and photos were sent to newspapers following each convention, and a genuine effort was made to educate the public on the value of having their landscape work carried out by a member of the OLCA.

Within the Association, members were kept informed through the pages of a typewritten monthly newsletter containing minutes of meetings, technical articles, and items of general interest. The first one was published in 1959. Initially it was edited by the President, and put together by the Secretary. One of the earliest issues, in May of 1960, contained an article by Leslie Hancock on the need for a national trade magazine. Mr. Hancock was a prolific writer, and his articles appeared in many issues over the years.

In 1961 the first advertisements appeared, and in April, 1962 the cover page began to carry a green masthead featuring the OLCA logo. The name was also changed from *Newsletter* to *News Bulletin*. That July the circulation had reached 175, and new names were being added regularly. The President recommended that in the future an editor should be elected, and he further suggested that all similar news bulletins in Canada should be combined into one publication by an independent editor, representing the various segments of the industry. For a brief period in 1963, the association considered upgrading their journal, and possibly turning it over to an outside publisher. However, it was decided that such an option was too costly.

In May, 1964, a new feature was added. Titled "Getting to Know You," it carried a short biographical article about a different



1971 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Peter Braun, William DeLuca, John Midlane, Werner Berger; seated: William Schreiber (President), Peter Laven.

member each month, usually written by the member himself. In the December issue that year, Joe DeLuca, owner of Aldershot Landscape Contractors Ltd. in Burlington, had this to say: "My wife Audrey and I have four children. The unfortunate part of it is we have only one boy (William) and he is taking Business Administration, so it looks like I will be out of business shortly."

At the Annual General Meeting in January, 1965, Edward J. Jennings, of Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., became the first elected Editor of the *News Bulletin*. He immediately set about obtaining original articles, and also reduced the page size from 8-1/2 x 14" to a more manageable 8-1/2 x 11." Ed Jennings continued in the job until his unfortunate death the following year. Various members assumed the editorial duties over the next few years, with others taking on the task of Advertising Director. Circulation continued to increase with the addition of other groups such as parks superintendents. In 1966 the



1972 Board of Directors (l. to r.) back row: Ilmar Ois, Peter Braun, John Midlane; front row: Peter Laven (President); William Schreiber, William DeLuca.

first photographs began to appear. In March of 1971, members endorsed a proposal put forward by Art Drysdale, at that time Editor of the *Canadian Nurseryman*, to publish one magazine for the Canadian horticultural trade, but agreed to continue putting out their own newsletter, including advertising. The final issue, No. 157, still typewritten and put together by the Secretary, appeared in February, 1973.

Following Jean Willsher's move to California in 1960, W. E. (Bill) Hartnoll took over as Executive Secretary for a few months. In March of 1961, Dena Heather became Secretary,

and the office address was changed to Brampton, where it remained until May, 1972, when Ms. Heather left to take up a new challenge in St. Croix, Virgin Islands. At that point, owing to the increasing work load, it was decided to hire both an Executive Secretary and a Secretary. Harry Wttewaall and his wife, Margaret, took on these jobs, and moved the office to Mississauga. Also, from April, 1962 until December, 1967, J. R. (Bob) Burns, of the Canadian Horticultural Council, Ottawa and a former Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Association of Nurserymen, acted as Honorary Secretary of the OLCA. Margaret Wttewaall continued as Secretary until the formation of Landscape Ontario in January, 1973.

A good deal of cooperation always existed between the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association and other horticultural trade groups. Many members, due to the nature of their business, belonged to two or more associations. In 1962 a short course at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph was jointly sponsored by the OLCA and the Ontario Nurserymen's Association. That same year OLCA President Helmut Schmitz attended the annual meeting of the Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario, and also the annual banquet of the Quebec Landscape Gardeners and Nurserymen's Association. For one year, in 1965, the NSGA and OLCA held a joint convention.

In the March, 1965 issue of the OLCA *News Bulletin*, a write-up by Art Drysdale on the sixth annual convention of the Ontario Nursery Trades Association included a pitch for a joint convention. Later that year, members of the OLCA were invited to attend the ONTA Annual One-Day Tour, as well as the ONTA Landscape Group Field Day.

During 1966 a serious effort was made



to bring members of the newly-formed Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscape Association into the OLCA. In his President's Message in the November, 1967 *News Bulletin*, John Northwood told of being invited to the Annual Conference of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, and proposed a closer liaison with them. His message in January, 1968, reiterated the need for closer cooperation with all those in allied fields, including town planners, the nursery industry, landscape architects, landscape contractors, garden maintenance people and other related groups. In March of that year, 1968 OLCA President Bruce Evans delivered an address at the Nursery Sod Growers Association Convention.

By the following year meetings were being held between the OLCA, ONTA, NSGA and the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscape Association to discuss a proposed joint convention, and the first Allied Horticultural Trades Congress was held in January, 1970. On March 31 of that year, the Presidents of the four associations, plus the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, met to discuss their various needs, and passed the following motion: "To establish a Horticultural Landscape Trades Council as a governing body to act as a unifying force to the common interest of the horticultural landscaping industry relating to provincial issues." They continued to meet throughout the year, and one of their main points of

discussion was the possibility of one magazine for those associations wishing to participate. Meetings continued through 1971 and 1972, and finally, on January 24, 1973, three of the groups, the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association, the Ontario Nursery Trades Association and the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscape Association, agreed to unite in a common body to be known as Landscape Ontario.

Throughout the 14 years of its existence, getting members to take an active part was a continuing problem. Nevertheless, although membership in the OLCA never exceeded one hundred, through the efforts of a dedicated group the association achieved an impressive list of accomplishments.

Those who served as President were:

Glenn Peister	McLean-Peister Limited, Kitchener	1959
Leslie Solty Sr.	Leslie L. Solty & Sons Ltd., Scarborough	1960
Willy Huber	Associated Landscaping Ltd., Malton	1961
Helmut Schmitz	Conniston Construction Co. Ltd., Ottawa	1962
Donald McLean	McLean-Peister Limited, Kitchener	1963
Aussie Watt	Frank Watts Sod & Seed Supply, Willowdale	1964
Harry van Dyk	Sheridan Nurseries Limited, Etobicoke	1965
John Putzer	John H. Putzer Limited, Toronto	1966
John Northwood	Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Cooksville	1967
Bruce Evans	Evans Contracting Co. Ltd., Agincourt	1968
Leslie Solty Jr.	Leslie L. Solty & Sons Ltd., Scarborough	1969
Werner Berger	Bluegrass Turf Farms Ltd., Cedar Valley	1970
William Schreiber	Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Cooksville	1971
Peter Laven	Laven Associates Ltd., Cooksville	1972
William DeLuca	Aldershot Landscape Contractors Ltd., Burlington	1973

The following people served five years or more on the Board of Directors or as Committee Chairman of the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association:

Glenn Peister	McLean-Peister Limited, Kitchener	from 1959
Willy Huber	Associated Landscaping Ltd., Malton	" 1960
Donald McLean	McLean-Peister Limited, Kitchener	" 1960
John Northwood	Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Cooksville	" 1960
John Putzer	John H. Putzer Limited, Toronto	" 1960
John Berchtold	Knecht & Berchtold, Brampton	" 1961
Harry van Dyk	Sheridan Nurseries Limited, Etobicoke	" 1961
Michael Nagy	Humber Nurseries Ltd., Woodbridge	" 1962
William Schreiber	Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Cooksville	" 1962
Aussie Watt	Frank Watts Sod & Seed Supply, Willowdale	" 1962
Bruce Evans	Evans Contracting Co. Ltd., Agincourt	" 1965
Peter Braun	Braun's Landscaping & Nursery Ltd., Hamilton	" 1968
Peter Laven	Laven Associates Ltd., Cooksville	" 1968
William DeLuca	Aldershot Landscape Contractors Ltd., Burlington	" 1969

ONTARIO GARDEN MAINTENANCE & LANDSCAPING ASSOCIATION



ONTARIO
GARDEN MAINTENANCE
AND LANDSCAPING
ASSOCIATION



1970



1971



1972

GARDENING, ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE by G. F. Blenkarn in the July 1969 issue of the *OGMLA Newsletter*, is probably the oldest skilled job in history. He goes on to say that the famous hanging gardens of Babylon certainly required the services of men especially trained in horticulture. They were slaves, as were those who tended the gardens of ancient Egypt, Crete, Greece and Rome. In mediaeval times the gardener progressed one step upward, becoming an outdoor servant, but even in the early part of this century he was still considered “nothing better than a common labourer.” Only the wealthy could afford to employ a gardener. There were no gardening courses in the schools, and skills had to be learned from predecessors.

During the Depression of the 30’s, a “bum with a green thumb” would often go from door-to-door, seeking jobs in the garden. It wasn’t until after World War II that gardening began to become a respectable occupation. A good deal of the credit must go to those who came to this country seeking a new and better life. Many had been trained in horticulture in Europe, and gardening offered a way of establishing themselves by setting up their own business with little equipment - sometimes not much more than a few tools in a wheelbarrow. It wasn’t easy for them. Difficulty learning the English language caused problems in communicating with customers, and even within the Association that was eventually formed, Old World animosities sometimes caused problems. In the March, 1969 *Newsletter*, President Sydney Queripel (D. Queripel & Son Ltd., Willowdale) wrote a lengthy letter urging members to put their differences behind them, and to work together as Canadians.

“In the fall of 1964, on the way back from a short course in Guelph, some gardeners were having a coffee in one of the small restaurants along the way, and the idea of an association was



discussed. However, nobody acted on the idea until January, 1965. At that time Casey van Maris (Parklane Nurseries Ltd., Agincourt) and Tony DeGroot (Hensberger & DeGroot, Willowdale) phoned Bernie Bouwmeister, (Modern Holland Landscaping, Unionville), John van Roode (also of Parklane Nurseries Ltd.) and Hank Deenen (Hank Deenen Landscaping Ltd. West Hill), asking them to devote some of their time to get this new association rolling. An invitation was printed out at a friend's office for a meeting to be held on February 22 at O'Connor Grill in East York, and these invitations were handed out at the Guelph examinations on February 17." So begins a write-up by Casey van Maris about the formation of the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscaping Association Inc.

The meeting was duly held, with Hank Deenen in the chair. He had come well prepared with a printed agenda that included an outline of nine proposed objectives:

1. A better image as a maintenance group to the public.
2. Educational program to upgrade the knowledge of members.
3. Proper presentation to government departments.
4. Advice on equipment and suppliers.
5. Arbitration committee on difficult accounts.
6. A service to help fellow members when sick.
7. Business overflow and labour and equipment pool.
8. Set standard rates.
9. One rental agency to rent special equipment for the trade.

In his opening speech Hank Deenen outlined the need for an association of the smaller landscape gardeners, and listed the above as possible objectives. The following suggestions were then brought forward by those at the meeting:

1. That the committee send a list of complaints to the provincial government about the way in which the examinations were conducted for exterminators class 3-6 (on Feb. 17/65).
2. That the length of maintenance be extended to eight-month contracts.
3. Look into the possibility of supplying contract forms to all members.

Following a lengthy discussion about proposed names for the new association, a

temporary committee was formed that included the five people who initiated the first meeting, plus Jack Barrett, Highland Creek, (secretary), Reg. Beausejour (Reg. & Paul's Friendly Lawn & Snow Service, Scarborough) and T. F. "Red" Schofield, also of Scarborough. The committee met twice during the following two weeks, and work got under way on a survey of equipment, and investigating rates charged by different garden maintenance companies. A letter was written to the University of Guelph regarding the aforementioned examinations. Two names were proposed for the association, and after consulting a lawyer regarding their legality, the Provincial Secretary's office at Queen's Park was contacted asking for permission to use one or the other. Also, a letter was prepared for committee members to mail to landscape gardeners in their area, explaining about the association and advising them of the time and place of the next general meeting. It was held on March 1 at St. Philip Neri Church on Jane St. in North York, with seven committee members plus 14 new members present.

In an effort to contact more prospective members, the committee agreed at their next meeting to go through the Yellow Pages™ for all of Toronto and outlying areas from Clarkson to Oshawa, as well as points north, compiling a mailing list and following up letters with a telephone call. They also asked radio station CFRB to announce the next general meeting. As a result, when they met again at St. Philip Neri church hall on March 30, they signed up 28 new members.

No further activity took place until the fall, when the first permanent Board of Directors was voted in at an executive meeting on September 7. T. F. "Red" Schofield was elected President, John van Roode as Secretary, with Hank Deenen remaining as Vice-President and Casey van Maris as Treasurer. Four committees were formed to handle various jobs: Rules ("Red" Schofield, Jack Barrett, John van Roode, and Hank Deenen); Printing (Tony DeGroot, Casey van Maris, and Bernie Bouwmeister); Public Relations (Reg. Beausejour, Tony de Groot and Casey van Maris); and Activity (Hank Deenen, Bernie Bouwmeister and Reg. Beausejour). By the time the next general meeting was held, on November 9 at Edwards Gardens, Toronto, dates had been set for executive and general meetings for the next 18 months. A crest produced by Hank Deenen had been adopted, and the committee had already

begun a newsletter, with the printing being paid for out of revenues from advertising. They had also decided on yearly dues of \$25. This latter point came up for discussion at the general meeting, and the membership voted unanimously to change the dues to \$50. The group also agreed to register as an association. 27 paid-up members were present, and raffle tickets were sold at the door to help defray expenses.

Monthly general meetings continued at Edwards Gardens through April, 1966, commencing again in September. Executive meetings took place throughout the year at members' homes. Responding to the problem of maintenance people being unable to pass government examinations for exterminators, a pesticide course was held at the Civic Garden Centre. Early in 1966 the association hired a telephone answering service to refer prospective customers to members in their area. Also, 7,500 letters were printed on association letterhead for members to send to their customers. Members were given decals of the crest, one for each vehicle, and these were also available to associate members. A social evening was planned for late March at \$2 a couple, and plans were under way for a summer picnic. A committee was set up to look into all types of insurance. The executive authorized an expenditure of up to \$800 for radio and newspaper ads, and a further \$50 for signs to be located in associate members' places of business. It was decided to make up a brochure containing tips for the homeowner, for distribution during Canada's 1967 Centennial Year. At the general meeting of December 13, 1966, it was reported that the association's charter had been received, and Thomas Wells, M.P.P., made the formal presentation at a general meeting on February 14, 1967.

One of the perennial problems gardeners had to deal with was the client who thought they had been over-charged. It was suggested that a standard estimate form be devised with all the different items of garden maintenance, along with a column for members to fill in the price to be charged. The jobs could be checked-off, and the customer would sign an acceptance at the bottom before any work was commenced. Early in 1968 a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dierk Fromme (Fromme Garden Service Ltd., Agincourt) to work on such a form.

The OGMLA was working with the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association, the



Ontario Nursery Trades Association, the Nursery Sod Growers Association and the Ontario Shade Tree Council to develop educational courses in various aspects of horticulture. In January of 1968 the most successful pesticide course to date was held at Edwards Gardens, and through the efforts of these groups the Ontario government was about to set up courses at Humber and Centennial College. Interest was also being shown in an apprenticeship type of training, and the association was co-operating in this phase of the program.

By 1968 general meetings were no longer being held at Edwards Gardens. The Annual General Meeting in March of that year was held at the Westbury Hotel, with every paid-up member in attendance. The day featured displays by 16 exhibitors, and the dinner and dance in the evening was attended by representatives of the ONTA, the OLCA and the Ontario Horticultural Society. The after-dinner speaker was well-known gardening personality John Bradshaw, who gave the association some publicity from time to time on his Saturday morning radio show.

The April meeting was also held at the Westbury, but in September the group moved to the Conroy Hotel in North York. Membership continued to grow in 1968 - by October there were 80 active members, and 25 associate. Some of the projects under way included a group insurance plan and a revised landscape cost guide. At the October meeting, the guest speaker from the Ontario Department of Labour would explain new legislation dealing with wages and hours of work, and members were urged to attend and bring the person who did their bookkeeping - usually their wives.

The question of licensing came in for a good deal of discussion at that October meeting as well. It was pointed out that the government regarded the various segments of the industry, i.e. nursery trades, landscape contractors and others, as a whole, and therefore any approach to government would have to be made in conjunction with the other groups. To further complicate the problem, at that time the authority was divided between the Dept. of Health and Dept. of Agriculture. Another thing to be considered was the possibility of unions stepping in to try to organize the industry if members were licensed. Nevertheless it was decided to form a committee to look into the possibility, and desirability, of licensing. It was a matter that continued to occupy the attention of the

association over the next several years. By 1971 joint meetings were being held between representatives of the OGMLA and the OLCA, to try to come up with a workable solution, but as of this writing the matter remains unresolved.

Also at the October, 1968 meeting, a letter was read from Bruce Evans, President of the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association, inviting the OGMLA to join with them, the Ontario Nursery Trades Association and others in a combined convention and trade show in 1969. A committee composed of John van Roode, "Red" Schofield and Tony DeGroot had been meeting with representatives of the other Associations throughout that year, to look into the feasibility of such a venture. Members were asked if they agreed to the proposal, and it was passed without a dissenting vote. However, the joint convention did not materialize in 1969. The OGMLA once again held their one-day get-together at the Westbury, featuring a business meeting, trade show, luncheon, reception, dinner and dance. Special guests included the Presidents of the OLCA and the Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario.

By May of 1969, however, meetings were again taking place between representatives of the various organizations. The catalyst proved to be the exhibitors, who had formed an Exhibitors Trade Council to speak on their behalf. Their reasoning was that expenses for "one-day stands" were quite heavy, and the potential customers somewhat limited. They presented a proposed agenda calling for a four-day convention, with the first day for setting up exhibits, and the second for each association to have a separate room in which to hold its annual meeting and election of officers. The third day was to be for speakers, and the fourth for the joint banquet. Plans called for the arrangements to be handled by a professional firm, and the event was tentatively named the "Allied Horticultural Trades Congress." Despite some initial fears about the danger of losing individual association identity, and the possible high cost, enthusiasm was running high.

The first Allied Horticultural Trades Congress opened on January 27, 1970 at the Skyline Hotel in Rexdale. It brought together the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association, the Ontario Nursery Trades Association, the Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario, and the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscaping Association, and featured a sold-out trade show - in fact 40

applications from exhibitors had to be turned down due to lack of space. Along with individual business meetings, there were speakers on a wide variety of subjects, plus receptions, a banquet and dance.

From the OGMLA's point of view, the one disappointment was the small number of their members who attended. Part of the reason may have been the price, which was considerably higher than they were used to paying. But as one writer in the *Newsletter* put it, "Members should realize that we are no longer a two-bit organization occupying the lower rungs of the horticultural ladder." He went on to point out that numerically they were second only to the ONTA, the oldest organization, and they wielded a good deal of influence in their dealings with government on behalf of members. "We have considerable prestige," he went on, "a very necessary thing in modern life, but a thing which costs money. We cannot afford to go back into our shell ... It is a rule of life that you progress or you die."

The problem of low bidding, or price cutting, was another subject that concerned members during 1969. It was felt that in most cases, those who charged too low a price were ignoring hidden costs, forcing them to skimp on their work to the detriment of industry as a whole. Sydney Queripel, the President that year, pointed out that one of the reasons the members had gotten together in the first place was to upgrade and bring their rates to a fair parity with other trades. With this in mind, a committee was formed to carry out a survey to determine the real cost in time and money of all the various jobs a garden maintenance contractor was called upon to do. The report was completed and sent out to members early in 1970. This report, along with an annual average cost guide begun in 1965 and compiled from information supplied by several member companies, provided valuable tools to enable members to determine charges based on their real cost of doing business.

The Civic Garden Centre of Toronto paid a compliment to the Association in the spring of 1969, asking them to nominate 15 or 20 places, both residential and commercial, that could be incorporated into their Garden Tour that year. Members were urged to give the matter serious consideration, and several entries were submitted. It was a great public relations opportunity, as viewers were advised that the work had been carried out by members of the OGMLA.



1970 Board of Directors (l. to r.) back row: Peter van der Werf, Jack Kroon, Don Salivan, Bruno Mettel, Rudi Zeller; front row: Tony Gundert, Dierk Fromme (President), Elizabeth Vandenberg, Tony Vandenberg, Jim Nobuto.



1971 Board of Directors (l. to r.) back row: Jim Nobuto, Peter van der Werf, Bruno Mettel, Rudi Zeller, John Cameron, Syd Queripel, Hans Schmitz, Clarence Beuving; front row: Elizabeth Vandenberg, Marc Thiebaud, Tony Vandenberg (President), Jack Kroon, Don Salivan.

One item that came up for consideration during 1969 was the adoption of a working uniform for members and their employees. It was generally agreed that uniforms would add to the dignity of the profession, and to quote an item in the May, 1969 *Newsletter*, "would certainly be more acceptable to our customers than the sight of men working, bare to the waist, as some do on a hot summer's day." The same writer continued, "It would better the image of the industry, as our men would not look like common labourers on a road gang." The Directors decided to look into the matter, and at a general meeting in March, 1970, a speaker brought sample uniforms. Though it was agreed the decision of whether or not to go into uniforms was a matter for the individual gardener, the Association encouraged it, and began investigating the possibility of producing an OGMLA crest for use on uniforms. It was eventually decided that the crest would not be of sufficient value to justify the cost, and that it would be better for the gardener to have his own firm name on his uniform.

Group insurance was another major achievement of the association. By 1969 members were able to obtain coverage for public liability, as well as life and income insurance, at considerable savings over their individual policies.

For the first five years, membership was concentrated mainly in the greater Toronto area. Some attempt was made in 1969 to accommodate those coming from outlying centres by arranging alternate general meeting places at the east and west ends of the city, just off Hwy. 401. However, the telephone Yellow Pages™, where members could be

listed under the association heading if they so desired, only covered Metropolitan Toronto. A member operating in the Oshawa/Pickering area raised this question from the floor, and it was pointed out to him that the logical solution was for him and others in similar situations to form local groups by bringing others in their region into the Association. This matter had already been discussed at an earlier board meeting, and the Directors were looking into the possibility of setting up associated groups in areas such as Oshawa, Kitchener, Hamilton and Niagara Falls.

Meanwhile, in London, Ontario, a group of gardeners were already getting together, and they invited a delegation from the OGMLA to attend a meeting with a view to possible affiliation. The contingent - Sydney Queripel, Louis Ruppert (of Downsview) Tony Vandenberg (Tony Vandenberg Landscape Gardening Ltd., Agincourt), Peter Van der Werf (of Toronto) Dierk Fromme and Gordon Blenkarn, publisher of the *OGMLA Newsletter* - travelled to London on January 12, 1970, where they met with 14 prospective members. They explained fully what the Association was all about, and at the end of the evening the London group voted unanimously to affiliate. Subsequently, on the advice of a corporation lawyer, a "letter of intent" was sent to the London Chapter giving both parties one year to see how the arrangements were working out. At the end of that period they could sit down together to work on changing the OGMLA by-laws to cover the incorporation of Chapters.

With the formation of the London Chapter, it was decided in 1970 to add a new job

to the roster, that of District Chairman. Sydney Queripel was chosen to fill the position, with a mandate to set up new chapters. In March, accompanied by Tony Vandenberg, he travelled to Ottawa for the dual purpose of addressing the graduating class in gardening and landscaping at Algonquin College, and looking into the formation of an Ottawa Chapter. On April 15 the two again travelled to Ottawa, this time to meet with gardeners, and as a result of their efforts the Ottawa Chapter was organized, with an initial membership of 16. The following year saw the formation of two more groups, the Windsor-Essex & Kent County Chapter, and the Hamilton Chapter.

At a general meeting on September 14, 1971, members voted unanimously to amend the By-Laws of the Association to accommodate local Chapters in six designated areas - Hamilton region (to include Niagara peninsula); London, Windsor, Ottawa and Kingston regions, and Northern region (to include Huntsville, North Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie). Each Chapter required a minimum of twelve members, to be governed by a Board of Directors of at least three persons, with the right to elect one delegate to attend meetings of the Board of Directors of the Association. Dues and other fees as set by the Association were payable to the regional Chapters, who were then required to remit \$15 per member to the Association. The addition of the four regional Chapters brought total active membership up to 194 by October, 1971. Each Chapter operated on its own, and by providing province-wide representation, they were considered the key to the success of the OGMLA.



One of the OGMLA's proudest moments came in August, 1972, when members turned out in force to fulfil a pledge made on their behalf. This had occurred during a telethon in the spring of 1971 to raise money for Participation House in Markham, a residence for handicapped young people aged 19 years and over. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Annable, of Annable Nurseries in Unionville, had donated all the plant material necessary for the landscaping, and Syd Queripel promised the services of Association members in planting the 250 trees and shrubs of 30 different varieties. It was a worthy effort, and one those members who were involved will long remember.

Perhaps the most lasting achievement of the OGMLA began in a small way, when in the early days of the Association, Tony DeGroot and Casey van Maris asked the Board to allow them to spend \$50 on a duplicating machine. The reason, according to a report by Tony Vandenberg at an Annual General Meeting some years later, "was to get through to all the guys that were not members, which was pretty hard to do without some sort of publication." The Board agreed to the expenditure, and for some time a newsletter was produced by the two men, along with John van Roode and other volunteers.

A further step forward came with the appointment in February, 1966 of another member, Roland Porter, as the first paid Editor of the news bulletin. At the March executive meeting that year, the Directors voted to have him make up a newsletter for six months at a cost of approximately \$450. This arrangement lasted until November, when Tony DeGroot agreed to take over the job for the rest of the winter. With the coming of the busy season the following spring, he was authorized to farm out the assembly of the newsletter whenever necessary, for a monthly fee of \$35.

The next milestone was reached in December, 1967, when certain members of the executive proposed transferring the publication of the newsletter to a third party, not a member of the Association. They presented a proposal from Gordon Blenkarn, a freelance writer who had already been doing some reporting and other work for them. The matter caused a good deal of dissension at both a Board meeting and later at a general



1972 Board of Directors (l. to r.) back row: Marc Thiebaud, William Underhill, Ernie Kunsch, Syd Queripel, Casey van Maris, Peter van der Werf; front row: Jack Kroon (President), Elizabeth Vandenberg, Tony Vandenberg, Don Salivan.

meeting, but in the end Gordon Blenkarn was hired, and he continued in the job until his retirement in May, 1971 at the age of 74. One of the conditions he specified when accepting the post, along with the purchase of a new mimeograph machine and an electric typewriter, was that there must be no interference, and he never backed away from expressing his own opinion. He was a prolific writer, and as well as reporting on the meetings and other activities of the Association, he wrote many lengthy articles. Most of these centred on the need to upgrade the gardening profession, both in their own perception of themselves, and in the eyes of the general public. He hammered away at the low wages paid to workers, often quoting rates paid to those in other trades. His articles stressed the need for education, and urged greater participation by members in the affairs of their organization.

While the *Newsletter* was aimed primarily at current members, it was also a valuable tool in attracting new members. When Gordon Blenkarn took over in December, 1967, there were fewer than 100 active and associate members, but the circulation was 524, consisting mainly of garden maintenance people in the Toronto area. A full-page ad cost \$100 annually for 12 issues. Over the years other groups were added, such as the Ontario Diploma in Horticulture Graduates Association, as well as gardeners in ever-increasing areas of the province. By 1970 the circulation was 765, and the full-page ad rate had gone up to \$165 a year.

Other changes were taking place throughout the years as well. When it started out, the *Newsletter* consisted of several typewritten

mimeographed sheets stapled together. Gordon Blenkarn added a cover sheet that featured a black and white photograph of a garden pool. For reasons of economy, several thousand cover sheets had to be printed at one time, so the same picture appeared for over two years, with only the typewritten date indicating the issue. By 1970, advertisers were beginning to ask for a more ambitious publication, and when the May issue came out, it carried a full front and back cover on heavier paper. A new front cover design showed a typewriter, in black and white, on which all the keys carried gardening symbols except five, which had the letters O,

G, M, L and A, printed in green and white. The Association crest was printed in black and green at the top of the page. This design was used for the following two years, and once again the covers were printed in quantity to cut down on expenses. This time no date was shown on the front, and it was necessary to look inside to determine the issue.

Another change occurred during 1970. Up until that time the entire *Newsletter*, except the covers, had been mimeographed. This led one advertiser to remark that the *Newsletter* was "a damn good country newspaper - but you're operating in a big city." It was therefore decided that beginning with the September issue, ads would be printed in offset. At the same time, some single colours were incorporated, resulting in a much more attractive periodical. The editorial content was still being typewritten and mimeographed, but in March, 1971, the OGMLA proudly presented its first professionally-printed *Newsletter*.

Over the years several proposals were received from other publications. In 1968 the Canadian Nursery Trades Association offered to publish articles from the OGMLA in their magazine, *Canadian Nurseryman*. They also invited members to subscribe. In 1971 the subject again came up for discussion, when the OGMLA was approached, along with other Ontario associations, and asked to participate in the *Canadian Nurseryman*. Members were warned by one member that they should beware of the OGMLA losing its identity to the national magazine. It was further pointed out that the Association was numerically strong, with a good *Newsletter* of their own, and that if some other



organization wished to consider a combined newsletter, the approach should come from them. Also, members were reminded that a national magazine, however important from a horticultural standpoint, could not replace the local news and views which were of great significance to readers.

The *Newsletter* had always come under the jurisdiction of various committees, including Printing, Advertising and Publishing, with Association members assuming the job of Editor, and this practice continued throughout the life of the magazine. During his employment Gordon Blenkarn was referred to as Reporter and Publisher. The hiring of Neville Richards as Administrative Editor in May, 1971, following Gordon Blenkarn's retirement, marked a major change. He was an advertising, marketing and communications consultant with over 20 years experience directly involved with the lawn and garden industry. Part of his job was to provide advisory services on such subjects as how to promote and sell more business, how to collect overdue accounts, special promotional ideas, simple accounting methods, and other topics of interest and use to members.

Up until 1971 the *Newsletter* was mailed out free of charge, but in the middle of that year, with circulation approaching 900, it was decided to begin charging non-members \$6 per year. At the same time, ad rates were increased, and a full-page now cost \$240.

In March, 1972, the *Newsletter* underwent the most extensive changes to date, beginning with the name. *The Landscape Gardener* was a 36-page black and white magazine printed on glossy paper, with occasional touches of green ink throughout. The front cover, in green, black and white, featured the Association logo superimposed on a photo of an outstanding landscape job. The same photo was used several times - only three different ones appeared over the next year - and once again no date appeared on the front cover.

A couple of new columns were added that month. One was "Casey's Corner," in which Editor Casey van Maris wrote a variety of sometimes controversial articles intended to be informative and to stimulate the involvement of readers. He also initiated a series called "Spotlight on . . ." that featured write-ups on various members. A new name



Tony Vandenberg (centre) receiving a special token of appreciation in 1972 for his work over the years on behalf of the association. The award was presented by Don Salivan, at left, and Jack Kroon.

appeared on the title page as well, that of Shirley Martin, who worked as Assistant to Neville Richards.

Among the innovations during 1971 was a page titled "For the Ladies" in the October issue, all about the selection and cooking of turkeys, and how to use up the leftovers. The December issue under the same heading carried Christmas recipes. The April 1972 issue once again carried recipes, this time on three pages. The effort was not appreciated by at least one reader, who wrote a scathing letter to the editor in the June issue, asking "Is your magazine trying to teach landscapers how to cook, or are you just trying to fill in space?" The Administrative Editor replied that the occasional recipe or household hint for the wives of readers would certainly not be out of place. "Let's face it," he said, "we owe a

various groups and individuals regarding the possible amalgamation of several horticultural trade associations. One of the strongest supporters of this concept was Casey van Maris. It was a proud moment for him when, following the historic vote on January 24, 1973 that brought the ONTA, OLCA and OGMLA together, *The Landscape Gardener* (re-named *Landscape Ontario*) was chosen to become "The Voice of Ontario's Horticultural Industry," with Casey van Maris as Editor.

The social side of the Association was another important aspect. Being made up of mainly small businesses, the OGMLA was always very family-oriented. Summer picnics were held each year, and were open to members and non-members alike. The cost was nominal, and a real effort was made to entertain the whole family. Dinner dances were a regular feature during the winter. For the one held in November, 1968 at the Conroy Hotel, members voted for filet mignon at \$5.25 a plate "with all the trimmings." Total price including the dance, with a live orchestra, was \$6.25 per person. The Directors, however, found they were devoting much of their meeting time to arranging these events, so in the fall of 1968 they asked their wives to form a committee to organize the annual children's Christmas party. It worked out so well that a couple of months later, Mrs. Sydney Queripel was asked to form a Ladies Auxiliary to look after the social side of the organization. To quote an item in the January, 1969 *Newsletter*, "There are some things

a woman can do better than a man. Social events are among those things."

That was pretty much the way things were in 1969. Describing the program for the Convention that year, the writer said, "The morning period and the trade show is for men - men working in the gardening and landscaping business, member or non-member. The evening is for the ladies. You will have plenty of time after the Trade Show to return home for them." That isn't to say that the men did not appreciate their wives. On the

contrary, in the August, 1969 issue of the *Newsletter*, President Sydney Queripel paid a glowing tribute to the landscape gardener's wife, saying "During the busy spring months she plays many roles, sometimes a bookkeeper

CASEY'S CORNER

I would like to give my impressions and comments on the Pesticides Symposia. This was the first time the work shop system was used and it worked quite well, but I feel improvements could be made. The mornings could have been used to better advantage by starting the workshops after coffee, thus saving time. Also some workshops were dealing with the same material which I think is unfortunate. For instance "How to obtain a license" and "Rules and regulations."

There should be more time in the workshops for a question and answer period.

I did feel that some of the workshops dealing with the processing to produce a chemical were pre-occupied with advertising their products, both of which are of little value to the custom sprayer, who is far more interested in what a chemical can do for him.

Some workshops really did not relate to the listener. How many in the audience will spray by airplane? I hope I haven't given the impression that I think

symposia are a waste of time, far from it. My suggestions are made only to improve them, you might call them constructive criticisms. We should not forget that these Pesticides Symposia were started to keep all license holders up to date, therefore, eliminating the need to try examinations every five years.

The Allied Horticultural Trades Congress was well-attended and a very successful convention. There were good speakers, good meetings and a very informative trade show, although it was very hard to be in three different places at one time it was even harder to keep up with all the hospitality suites throughout the Hotel. All in all, a very good convention.

I left the convention feeling that closer co-operation is desired by all and do think we should pursue this with all of our energy.

I do hope to hear from members and readers of *THE LANDSCAPE GARDENER*, please address your letters to

3462 Kingston Road
Scarborough, Ontario

great deal to the girls!"

Other changes were taking place throughout the industry that would profoundly affect the OGMLA. For a number of years suggestions had been put forth by



for her husband's business, at all times a mother and a housewife, sometimes a psychologist, many times a psychiatrist. She has to put up with late dinners, and many times ruined dinners. Quite often she has to listen to her husband's complaints about this or that, and sometimes she is scolded for something or other that was his fault in the first place." He went on to recommend a well-earned holiday for husbands and wives, and ended by saying "Thank you, ladies, for being so patient and kind and loving, and may God bless all of you for what you are."

But times were changing. By November, 1970, an item in the *Newsletter* titled "It's No Longer A Man's World" told about "a very intelligent and attractive girl" who was a graduate of the University of Guelph and a landscape horticulture major, one of three "girls" in a class of seven. Listing the various accomplishments of the woman in question, the writer went on to say, "This is one girl who seems to know her business, but there are at least three more women somewhere and doubtless even more will show up in time."

One woman whose help contributed greatly to the success of the OGMLA was Elizabeth Vandenberg, who began doing secretarial work for the Association in the early days. In April, 1967, the Directors voted to pay her \$10 per month, then later that summer they agreed to have her submit invoices for the work she did. The scope of her work increased as time went by, eventually providing an office for the OGMLA. Except for a brief maternity leave for the birth of her daughter in 1970, Elizabeth Vandenberg remained with the Association until the formation of Landscape Ontario in 1973.

Relations between the Ontario Garden Maintenance & Landscaping Association and other horticultural trade groups had always been cordial. As early as March, 1967, John Northwood of the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association attended a general meeting to speak about a closer liaison between their organizations. The two groups worked together on the Pesticide Short Courses presented through the Ontario Dept. of Health. In 1969 OGMLA members, many of whom had come up the hard way, learning by working, were urged to take advantage of an invitation from the OLCA to attend their short courses in Landscaping being offered at Humber College. Invitations to send representatives to other conventions were accepted, and the favours were returned.

Further overtures came from the OLCA in 1970, when President Werner Berger attended a general meeting, and the two Associations, along with the Garden Club of Toronto, jointly sponsored a meeting for the general public at the Civic Garden Centre at Edwards Gardens. Later that year the OGMLA was given a copy of the recently completed OLCA Landscape Specifications, and invited to work on a set of maintenance specifications that could be incorporated with them.

Meanwhile, following the success of the first Allied Horticultural Trades Congress in January, 1970, the Presidents or one other representative of the five participating Associations - OGMLA, OLCA, Nursery Sod Growers Association, Ontario Nursery Trades Association and Ontario Association of Landscape Architects - met to form the Horticultural Landscape Trades Council, "as a governing body to act as a unifying force to the common interest of the horticultural landscaping industry relating to provincial issues." The name was later changed to Ontario Horticultural Landscape Council.

The Council continued to meet over the next two years, and by 1972 a Unity Committee had been formed and plans were actively being considered. In the fall of 1972, a Unity Proposal put forward by the Committee was sent to every member of the OGMLA, and the general meeting of October 10 was devoted entirely to a discussion of its contents. At the end of the evening a vote was taken, and a majority of members present agreed to accept the proposal. On January 24, 1973, at the close of the Ontario Horticultural Trades Congress, members joined with those from the Ontario Nursery Trades Association and the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association in an overwhelming vote to support the concept of unity, and Landscape Ontario officially came into being.

During its comparatively brief duration, the Ontario Garden Maintenance & Landscaping Association held monthly executive meetings throughout the year, and regular general meetings. Associate members were encouraged to attend, and were given an opportunity to speak about their products. The Association maintained a high standard for membership, and was able to hold the line on dues, increasing them only \$5 in 1972, from the original \$50 fee. The OGMLA was formed "to promote and develop the garden trade in the Province of Ontario and to give

the public a better image of the gardening and landscape business." Not only did they achieve this goal, but managed to chalk up a lengthy list of other accomplishments, including the following:

- Provided informative speakers and interesting monthly meetings;
- Supplied each member with a kit containing all of the information, sample forms, decals, etc. needed to take full advantage of membership.
- Produced a framed membership certificate;
- Acquired a free subscription for members to the U.S. magazine *Grounds Maintenance*;
- Sent lists of members to prospective clients;
- Ran ads in the Yellow Pages™ under which members could list their names;
- Had a form drawn up by lawyer and made available to members for the purpose of serving a writ against delinquent payers;
- Arranged Pesticide Courses in convenient locations;
- Successfully appealed to the government to stop compulsory yearly examination of licensed sprayers;
- Obtained the right to have members on the Board of Examiners of the Department of Health for the purpose of examining candidates for spraying licenses;
- Convinced the government to reclassify gardeners under the Employment Standards Act so it was not necessary to pay overtime for work done over 48 hours per week;
- Gained the approval of the Workmen's Compensation Board and the Construction Safety Association so rates did not increase;
- Provided a carefully-studied pension plan, ensuring the right one for members;
- Obtained excellent group insurance plans at reduced rates for members.

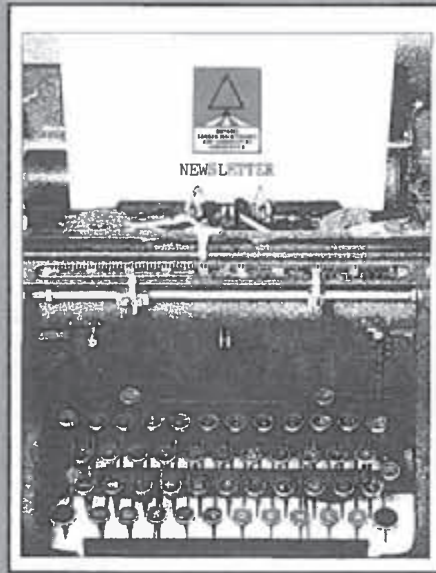
When the three associations united in 1973, the OGMLA brought in the largest single group of members. Their magazine was chosen to be the voice of the new organization. Perhaps most important of all, their network of Chapters already in existence formed the basis for a similar set-up within Landscape Ontario that has proven to be one of the most important factors in its success. As with any association, certain names stand out among those who devoted their efforts to its achievements.



THE EVOLUTION OF *Newsletter*



1969



1971



1972

Those who served as President were:

T. F. "Red" Schofield	Scarborough	1965,1966,1967
Sydney Queripel	D. Queripel & Son Ltd., Willowdale	1968,1969
Dierk Fromme	Fromme Garden Service Ltd., Agincourt	1970
Tony Vandenberg	Tony Vandenberg Landscape Gardening Ltd.,	1971
Jack Kroon	J. Kroon Landscaping, Willowdale	1972
Don Salivan	Salivan Landscape Ltd., Willowdale	1973

Those who served four years or more on the Board of Directors or as Committee Chairmen of the Ontario Garden Maintenance & Landscaping Association:

Reg. Beausejour	Reg. & Paul's Friendly Lawn & Snow Service, Scarborough	from 1965
Tony DeGroot	Hensberger & DeGroot, Willowdale	" 1965
T. F. "Red" Schofield	Scarborough	" 1965
Casey Van Maris	Parklane Nurseries Ltd., Agincourt	" 1965
John Van Roode	Parklane Nurseries Ltd., Agincourt	" 1965
Bruno Mettel	B. & L. Enterprises Ltd., Willowdale	" 1966
Sydney Queripel	D. Queripel & Son Ltd., Willowdale	" 1966
Tony Vandenberg	Tony Vandenberg Landscape Gardening Ltd., Agincourt	" 1966
Dierk Fromme	Fromme Garden Service Ltd., Agincourt	" 1967
Ernest Van Helsdingen	Van Holland Landscaping Co., West Hill	" 1969
Jack Kroon	J. Kroon Landscaping, Willowdale	" 1969
Don Salivan	Salivan Landscape Ltd., Willowdale	" 1970



UNITY - THE FORMATION OF LANDSCAPE ONTARIO

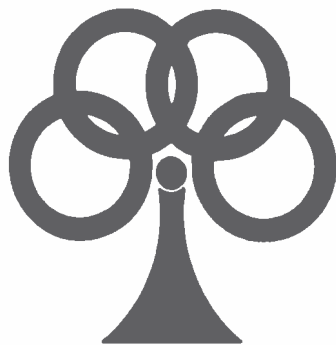


ON JANUARY 24, 1973, AT THE CLOSE OF THE Ontario Horticultural Trades Congress, after members of the Ontario Nursery Trades Association, the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association, and the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscaping Association had voted overwhelmingly to support the concept of unity within Ontario's horticultural industry, Landscape Ontario officially came into being.

That historic event at Toronto's Skyline Hotel was the culmination, according to then newly-elected LO President Glenn Peister, of "years of effort by unselfish, far-sighted people who sought to improve and promote their chosen vocation."

Unity within the horticulture industry was always seen as a desirable objective, but there were many obstructions along the way that had to be overcome before the end result was finally achieved. As early as 1961, following meetings with representatives of the OLCA and the Nursery Sod Growers Association (formed in March of 1960), Keith Laver of the ONA (later ONTA) reported to the Canadian Association of Nurserymen that liaison was being established with all groups in Ontario.

That same year saw a joint undertaking between the ONA and OLCA to present short courses for members at the Ontario Agricultural College (now the University of Guelph). The groups also worked together with the College to develop the ODH Correspondence Courses. Invitations were extended to attend one another's conventions, tours, field days and other events. In early 1964 J. V. Stensson, Chairman of the ONTA's Committee on Liaison with Sod Growers, etc., reported that "renewed efforts ought to be made to bring the three groups (ONTA, OLCA and NSGA) together with local autonomy for each group, and the committee would welcome proposals from each group as to how this might best be accomplished."



Allied Horticultural Trades Congress

Efforts were made to have the OLCA and NSGA combine with the ONTA's Sixth Annual Convention in January, 1965, but the plans didn't materialize. A small step forward did take place, however, when the ONTA invited the Presidents of the other two associations, and their wives, to attend. A write-up by Art Drysdale on the ONTA Convention appeared in the March issue of the *OLCA News Bulletin*, and included a further pitch for a joint convention.

That summer OLCA members were invited to attend the ONTA's Annual One-Day Tour and Landscape Group Field Day. Also by 1965, steps were being taken by the OLCA to bring the newly-formed Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscape Association into their organization.

In 1966 the ONTA agreed to co-operate with the OLCA to initiate an apprenticeship training program. John Northwood, then President of the OLCA, attended an OGMLA general meeting to speak about a closer liaison between the two organizations. The OLCA was also interested in having a greater rapport with the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, and John Northwood attended their 1967 Annual Conference. In his final President's Message in the *OLCA News Bulletin* before turning the job over to his successor, Bruce Evans, he again stressed the need for cooperation among all associations with a common interest, including town planners, the nursery industry, landscape architects, landscape contractors, garden maintenance and other groups in related fields.

Bruce Evans was invited to address the 8th Annual Convention of the Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario in March, 1968, and the OGMLA was sufficiently impressed with his remarks on "What's Ahead for 1970 in Landscape Contracting" that they reprinted the entire article in their *Newsletter*. The OGMLA also welcomed Bruce Evans, along with ONTA President Peter Nielsen, to the banquet at their 1968 Annual Convention. At that gathering, Sid Queripel reported attending a meeting of the OLCA and others, including the Ontario Shade Tree Council and the NSGA, with a view to developing a solid front to deal with problems of education within the industry.

Articles were already being freely exchanged between the various groups for publication in their individual newsletters. In March, 1968, an informal meeting was held in the offices of the Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food to discuss ways and

means to amalgamate the information disseminated through the newsletters into one publication. Representatives were in attendance from the Canadian Nursery Trades Association, the ONTA and the OGMLA. It was pointed out that other groups were welcome to submit relevant articles and information about events for publication in the CNTA's *Canadian Nurseryman* magazine, and it was generally agreed that for the time being members of other organizations could simply purchase subscriptions to it if they so desired.

Also in 1968, a move was afoot among the various organizations to hold a combined convention and trade show. The *OGMLA Newsletter* of October, 1968, refers to a letter from OLCA President Bruce Evans inviting them to join the OLCA, ONTA and others in considering such a venture for 1969. It took the exhibitors, however, to push the idea through. They pointed out the advantage of being able to set up for one large show that would reach a larger audience, instead of several smaller ones, and their argument paved the way. It would be another year before it materialized, but in January, 1970 the first Allied Horticultural Trades Congress was held. Under the Chairmanship of Associate Member G. R. (Dick) Sale, of Glen D. Ogilvie Ltd. in Caledonia, it proved to be the event that would finally bring about the unification of the landscape trade associations in Ontario.

Following the success of the first Congress, the Presidents of four associations - Ontario Nursery Trades Association, Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario, Ontario Garden Maintenance & Landscape Association, and the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association in cooperation with the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects - agreed to form a small group that would get together on a regular basis to discuss matters of common interest. The Ontario Horticultural Landscape Council held their first

meeting on March 31, 1970 at the Ascot Inn in Rexdale. Dena Heather, Secretary of the OLCA, acted in a similar capacity for the Council. Werner Berger, President of the OLCA, was chosen by those present to chair the meeting, with successive meetings to be chaired by representatives of the other groups on a rotation basis. At that inaugural meeting each President gave a brief outline of the structure of their association, its objectives and some of its problems. Members then passed the following motion: "To establish a Horticultural Landscape Trades Council as a governing body to act as a unifying force to the common interest of the horticultural landscaping industry relating to provincial issues."

One of the first stumbling blocks to eventual unity occurred shortly thereafter, when members decided at the June meeting to change the name to "Allied Landscape Trades Council." Although two representatives of the ONTA were at that meeting, and approved the change, ONTA President Frank Fitzelle was not in attendance. At the following meeting, in August, he raised several objections put forward by his association, having to do with the word "landscape" not embracing the entire industry. After considerable discussion, it was finally agreed to revert to the original name of "Ontario Horticultural Landscape Council."

The October meeting was chaired by Lloyd Murray, then Executive Secretary of the ONTA. He explained to the group that the magazine *Canadian Nurseryman*, which had grown out of the *ONA Newsletter*, had been a national magazine since 1965. Though still published out of the ONTA office, it operated under the joint financial support of both the ONTA and the Canadian Nursery Trades Association. He stated that the Editor, Art Drysdale, wished to put forward a proposal to the Council for a combined magazine with a new name and Canada-wide coverage. The proposal appeared in the December issue of the magazine, and generated considerable discussion at the December meeting. Art Drysdale attended the February 1971 meeting of the Council, where a motion was passed seeking approval of the proposal by each participating association, and setting January 1972 as a possible starting date for a new magazine. Subsequently both the OLCA and NSGA indicated a desire to be involved. The OGMLA, however, declined the invitation, stating their members were "not at all

interested in participating in a national magazine if it would be at the expense of the provincial magazine" - an apparent reference to their own publication, of which they were justifiably proud. It was suggested their members could subscribe on an individual basis at a cost of \$6 per year, and most indicated they would do so. Discussions with the ONTA and CNTA continued over the next couple of years, but when unity was finally achieved and Landscape Ontario came into being in January, 1973, it was the OGMLA publication, renamed *Landscape Ontario*, that was chosen as the official voice of Ontario's horticultural industry.

Another important step occurred in 1970, when Werner Berger asked the Council to agree in principle to choose an Executive Director to coordinate the activities of the different associations. He pointed out the advantages of having an umbrella association, and gave as an example the American Association of Nurserymen. He further suggested that Robert Lederer, who headed up the AAN and was scheduled to speak at the forthcoming Congress, might talk with members of Council about what was necessary to accomplish this move. In March of 1971, on a motion by Howard Stensson (ONTA) and seconded by Peter Laven (OLCA), it was agreed "that this Council go on record as recommending to each Association that they work towards the formation of a common association embracing all present groups." On a subsequent motion by Bruno Mettel (OGMLA) and seconded by Howard Stensson, it was decided to "go to the membership of the various groups and get their approval to set up by-laws for an umbrella association."

By 1972, another move was under consideration that could have a bearing on the future unity of the four Ontario associations, and it acted as a catalyst to move matters forward. Under the heading of "Task Force 2000", the Canadian Nursery Trades Association was proposing to set up a national office in Ottawa to represent all regional associations. The intention was to change their name to Landscape Canada, and to hire an Executive Vice President, with the aim of creating a better liaison with government departments and legislators, expanding promotional campaigns aimed at the consumer, and improving communications with members of regional associations. The anticipated annual budget would be in excess of \$30,000, as compared to their current one of \$13,000. To



D. Burke McNeill

finance it, they were suggesting annual dues at a rate of \$1.50 per thousand dollars of sales, with a minimum of \$100, to be collected by the national office who would then remit 40 per cent to the regional groups. At the present time, the regional nursery trades associations were collecting their own dues, and remitting 35 per cent to the national office.

At a special meeting of the Ontario Horticultural Landscape Council on April 6, 1972, two formal proposals drawn up by Casey van Maris for the amalgamation of the four member associations were presented. One plan simply recommended an umbrella organization with each organization remaining basically the same, but cooperating in a combined newsletter, meetings, social activities, government representation, education, and the Congress. The other recommendation gave a much more detailed outline, with all associations integrating into one main group to be called Landscape Ontario or any other acceptable name. The group moved to accept the former proposal at that time, and also agreed to have the Presidents of the OLCA, OGMLA and NSGA each write to the ONTA expressing their concerns about Task Force 2000 and the adverse effect its adoption could have on the hoped for unity they had been working for ten years to achieve. They requested the opportunity to be present at the Special General Meeting being held in June when ONTA members were being asked to vote on the Task Force proposals.

The June meeting, however, failed to attract a sufficient number of ONTA members to permit a deciding vote. Casey van Maris (OGMLA) attended, accompanied by Neville Richards, an advertising, marketing and communications consultant who was currently Administrative Editor of the OGMLA magazine, *The Landscape Gardener*. He spoke on behalf of both the OGMLA and OLCA, urging that the possibility of unity within Ontario be considered immediately. The ONTA passed a motion to participate in unity meetings, and D. Burke McNeill, Extension Horticulturist (Nursery) with the

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, agreed to act as neutral chairman of a steering committee made up of two representatives from each of the four allied associations.

The first Unity Committee meeting was held at the OMAF office in Milton on July 27, 1972. Present were delegates from the OLCA, representing 67 members, the OGMLA with 206 members, and the ONTA with 120 members. Invited, but did not attend, were representatives of the Nursery Sod Growers Association and the Canadian Nursery Trades Association. Quoting from the minutes, "The chairman, Burke McNeill, outlined the purpose of the meeting, which was called to present and discuss each association's views on unity, and if there was mutual agreement to proceed as quickly as possible toward preparing proposals for unity in one association."

From the discussions, it appeared all three groups present were in favour of unity in principle. To summarize, the main benefits to be derived included:

1. Education;
2. One well-produced magazine, eliminating duplication;
3. Convention (already a reality but could be improved upon);
4. One executive secretary, again eliminating duplication;
5. Joint meetings;
6. Public relations;
7. Government representation.

It was felt that any form of a new unified organization should allow for some degree of autonomy to let individual groups deal with matters of specific concern. On the topic of finances, it was agreed that Burke McNeill should obtain and analyze the 1971 financial statements of each association to determine total membership, revenue that could be available, as well as determining where savings could be made by cutting out duplicate expenditures.

The group agreed to report back to their associations, and to meet again on August 30. Meanwhile, the ONTA Board of Directors moved to advise the CNTA that the Task Force 2000 proposals had not been ratified by Ontario region, and that they would not be reconsidered until the unity question had been resolved.

On August 30, representatives of the three groups met to report on the reaction of their various boards, all of whom had

expressed approval to move ahead in some manner. Burke McNeill presented his findings on the financial aspects of an umbrella association, of which the bottom line was that a combined reduced budget appeared to be possible, and should generate a surplus of 1.5 per cent. After much discussion, it was decided to work out a definite proposal based on suggestions put forward by the OLCA, as follows:

- A) *A constitution for the council (as yet unnamed) would be prepared to give that body jurisdiction over:*
 1. Allied Horticultural Trades Congress
 2. Public relations (newsletter, etc.)
 3. Government representation
 4. Education
 5. Legal representation
 6. Dues collection
 7. Establishing an office and hiring a full-time executive secretary and assistants.
- B) *That each association in the council would remain a legally constituted association for a period of two years, after which time these associations would cease to exist.*
- C) *That the dues structure for this organization be based on Workmen's Compensation records, this structure to include a minimum and possibly a maximum amount of dues payable.*
- D) *That initially the directors to the council be appointed by each of the participating associations to serve for a period of two years. Following the dissolution of the associations all directors would be elected from the floor.*
- E) *That delegates from each association obtain estimates of the labour costs of their respective association for the next meeting.*

That meeting was scheduled for September 7 in the OMAF office in Milton, for the purpose of working out a proposal. The OGMLA, however, was one step ahead. Their representatives arrived with a complete agenda and 12-page proposal, prepared by Neville Richards. It included a budget figure of \$78,800 for the first year of operation.

The group went over the proposal point by point, making changes where appropriate. One of the most significant was in the list of suggested names for the unified association. The original proposal offered six possible



Congress Chairman G. R. (Dick) Sale (standing) is seen here addressing those present, flanked by the Presidents of the four participating associations (l. to r.) George McCague (NSGA), Syd Queripel (OGMLA), Leslie Soltz Jr. (OLCA) and Leonard Hoare (ONTA).

names, all beginning with the word "Canadian," e.g. Canadian Association of Horticultural Trades, Canadian Landscape & Nursery Association, etc. These same names were included in the revised proposal, but substituting the word "Ontario" for "Canadian." They also added an eighth suggestion, quite different from the rest. It was "Landscape Ontario."

On September 12, Burke McNeill sent copies of the amended proposal to representatives of each association, along with a covering letter urging them to have it discussed and hopefully approved by their general membership before the Unity Committee next met on November 16. The goal was to have a constitution and dues structure ready for approval by members at the Allied Horticultural Trade Congress in January.

Two items in the proposal were brought into question by the ONTA. The first concerned the suggested fee structure, which was based on a levy on nursery stock sales. Members also felt the budgeted amount of \$6,500 to be remitted to the CNTA indicated a lack of support for the national association. In view of these objections, Burke McNeill convened a special meeting of the Unity Committee, along with several members of the ONTA, to iron out the problems. As a result, two further amendments were made to the proposal, namely that fees would be a levy on labour, based on Workmen's Compensation figures, and that the amount remitted to the CNTA be increased to \$15,000.

In a further letter dated November 7, Burke McNeill opened by stating "We have reached the point of no return." He went on to say that all association members had now approved or had the chance to approve the proposal, and he urged committee members to come to the November 16 meeting

prepared to discuss the following topics:

- Appointment of a temporary secretary, treasurer, and chairman;
- Arrange for a constitution to be prepared;
- Establish an accurate budget and dues structure;
- Make plans for establishing a permanent office & employees;
- Name for the new association;
- Consider recommendations from participating associations.

He also asked that each association present accurate estimates of the total labour costs so they could get the dues structure resolved as quickly as possible. "Until now," he went on, "we have enjoyed rather informal meetings, but from now on we have to get down to business. We have a lot of work to do in the next 60 days."

When the Unity Committee met on November 16, the first item of business was to appoint D. Burke McNeill as Chairman and Neville Richards as Secretary, to serve in those temporary positions until elections were held at the Congress in January. Next came the selection of a name. "Landscape Ontario" was the clear choice, with "Ontario Horticultural Trades Association" a second choice only if it proved impossible to register the former. Eventually, Letters Patent proclaiming the new organization as Landscape Ontario were granted by the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Ontario.

Dues were next on the agenda. After considerable discussion, members approved a motion by Casey van Maris (OGMLA) that the basic dues structure for 1973 be 40¢ on each \$100 labour as reported to Workmen's Compensation, with a minimum of \$60 and maximum of \$1500. Associate member dues were to be \$100. He also recommended that minimum and maximum dues in 1974 be increased to \$100 and \$2000 respectively. A revised budget of \$79,800 was prepared, and on a motion by Glenn Peister (OLCA) it was agreed that interim finances be equally split three ways between the participating associations on all accrued expenses until Landscape Ontario was duly formed and approved.

Things were moving quickly now. By November 20 Fred Grespan, Comptroller of McLean-Peister Limited in Kitchener, had been hired to prepare a draft Constitution for the new horticultural trades association. It was to be ready for examination by committee members at a meeting on December 11.



At that time they also planned to discuss and act on the position of Executive Director, and clarify the financing and operation of the various chapters in the proposed new association. A further meeting was held on December 20, when members added another article to the draft Constitution and By-Laws concerning the establishment of a new magazine, to be called *Landscape Ontario* but adopting and expanding the existing format of the OGMLA's *The Landscape Gardener*. The magazine was to be wholly owned and operated by the Landscape Ontario association under the direction of a Magazine Committee. It was also agreed at that meeting to advertise in the *Globe and Mail* for the position of Executive Director of Landscape Ontario.

On January 11, 1973, the final meeting of the Unity Committee was held in the OMAF office at Milton. Those present were

Don Salivan, Casey van Maris and Marc Thiebaud (OGMLA), Peter Laven, Glenn Peister and Bill DeLuca (OLCA), and E. J. "Bud" Hebel Jr., and Neil VanderKruk (ONTA). Once again Burke McNeill acted as Chairman. One matter that came in for lengthy discussion was the OGMLA's request for a reimbursement of \$15,000 for their magazine *The Landscape Gardener*, should their group decide to opt out of unity within the prescribed time limit outlined in the Constitution (two years). Since the ONTA and OLCA both indicated a willingness to turn over their assets to Landscape Ontario with no thought of having these returned should either decide to opt out in the two-year period, it was felt the OGMLA should be prepared to do the same. As it turned out, the subsequent success of Landscape Ontario ensured the continued participation of all three

associations, so the matter became irrelevant.

Several other points were made, including a motion by Bud Hebel that the Constitution be printed and distributed to each participating Association, to be voted on at their annual meetings to be held January 21 and 22. It was further resolved that if unity was accepted, the total group would meet on January 24 to elect a Board of Directors.

At long last the day of decision was at hand. During the Congress members of the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscaping Association, the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association and the Ontario Nursery Trades Association held their Annual General Meetings, and each group voted to accept the new Constitution. Finally, on January 24, 1973, the long sought-after unity of Ontario's horticulture industries became a reality, and Landscape Ontario was born.



THE FIRST 25 YEARS



1973



1974



1994

1973

WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF UNIFICATION behind them, the founders of this fledgling organization looked forward to the many, no doubt exciting challenges which were still ahead of them. In order to be prepared to deal with all and any industry-related issues, they wasted no time in setting up a board and appropriate office facilities. The first step was the appointment of a new board of directors. Each of the three founding associations duly appointed two members to represent them on the board of the new Landscape Ontario. At a combined meeting three more were chosen, and the following were elected to the first Board of Directors:

PRESIDENT

Glenn B. Peister (McLean-Peister Ltd., Kitchener)

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Casey van Maris (Park Lane Nurseries Ltd., Agincourt)

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

William DeLuca (Aldershot Landscape Contractors, Burlington)

TREASURER

Marc Thiebaud (Oshawa Garden Service, Brooklin)

SECRETARY

Knox Henry (Brookdale-Kingsway Ltd., Bowmanville)

DIRECTORS

Howard Stensson (Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., Etobicoke)

Syd Queripel (D. Queripel & Son Ltd., Thornhill)

William Schreiber (Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Mississauga)

Dave Watkins (Green Thumb Horticultural Services, London)



One of the first duties of the new board was to hire an Executive Director. From among the twelve applicants, the person selected as being most suitable to get the association operating as soon as possible was



Glenn B. Peister, first President of Landscape Ontario.

Neville Richards, who had worked for the Ontario Garden Maintenance & Landscaping Association. According to the terms of their agreement, his first duty was to provide permanent office facilities. The first offices of Landscape Ontario were located at 3464 Kingston Road, Suites 202 and 204, Scarborough, and included a board room to accommodate executive and committee meetings. As well as his own full time work as Executive Director, Mr. Richards offered the services of a senior secretary along with full editorial and mechanical assembly facilities and production management for the monthly magazine. Normal secretarial functions such as recording minutes, maintaining records, and handling correspondence were outlined, as well as advertising, publicity and public relations, creative services for promotional material, planning and arranging for all meetings, social and business functions, and the Congress. He was to provide representation or assistance in all areas of government legislation, maintain liaison between the association and its chapters or trade groups, other related associations, the trade and the public at large. In addition he would represent Landscape Ontario at shows, conventions, and other events, and perform any other duties requested by the Board of Directors. The all-inclusive monthly fee for these services was \$1,850.

The initial agreement to amalgamate called for all active, associate, horticultural and honorary members in good standing with each of the three founding groups to become members of Landscape Ontario. Thus the newly-formed association began with a ready-made membership of nearly four hundred. The constitution also called for each member association to remain a legally constituted entity for a period of two years, during which time they could either choose to remain or opt out. The OGMLA chapters

already set up in Hamilton, Toronto, London, Ottawa and Windsor would remain active components of Landscape Ontario, with two new chapters representing the former ONTA and OLCA being formed with headquarters at the LO office in Toronto (Scarborough).

By the time the first General Meeting of Landscape Ontario was held on March 28, 1973, the Board of Directors had already met seven times. Each of the three participating groups had turned over their assets to the umbrella association, along with their office records. A news release about the new association had been prepared, and the LO logo was shown to members for the first time that night. A budget of \$69,700 was set for 1973, and dues were set at 40¢ per \$100 of payroll, with a minimum of \$60 and maximum of \$1,000. Provision was also made to levy a further assessment based on Workmen's Compensation figures if it proved necessary.



Neville Richards, first Executive Director of Landscape Ontario.

At that time he was also given the distinction of becoming the first Honorary Member of Landscape Ontario.

Since the agreement to unify called for the new organization to take over the former OGMLA magazine, to be renamed *Landscape Ontario*, Neville Richards took on the dual responsibilities of Executive Director and Administrative Editor. In February, 1973, after 13 years of continuous publication, the OLCA issued its final *News Bulletin*. William DeLuca and Alfred Knecht, the OLCA's president and newsletter editor respectively, became members of the newly formed Magazine Committee, along with Don Salivan of the OGMLA, and Howard Stensson of the ONTA, who had chaired the Magazine Committee for the *Canadian Nurseryman*. Following the decision to unify, the ONTA had agreed to sell their half interest in the latter magazine to the Canadian Nursery Trades Association for the sum of \$3000. Casey van Maris was named Editor and

Chairman of the Magazine Committee for *Landscape Ontario*.

The headline item in the May news bulletin to members concerned the successful appeal by Landscape Ontario, along with the Nursery Sod Growers Association, to have the Ontario government scrap plans to apply a seven per cent sales tax on nursery sod. It was the first major achievement of the unified organization, and likely saved many members the cost of their membership dues and much more.

By the end of 1973, Neville Richards and the executive of Landscape Ontario found themselves unable to come to terms for the continuance of their relationship, which was severed by a letter of resignation from Mr. Richards, to take effect in January. Subsequently a new Executive Director and Magazine Editor was introduced to the general membership at the Landscape Ontario Congress. Arnold Rowe-Sleeman was selected from over 35 applicants for the position. With 18 years experience as Managing Director of the Oil Heating Association of Canada, he brought with him extensive skills in finance and accounting, publications, membership and committee services, as well as trade shows and liaison with government agencies. The LO office now moved to 4569 Sheppard Avenue East in Agincourt.

1974

The 1974 Annual Congress exceeded the most optimistic projections in every way. Formally opened by then Ontario Premier



One of the first undertakings in the spring of 1973 was this display at the Canadian Pool and Patio Show, utilizing space already booked by the OGMLA. Jack Kroon, shown above, was one of the members who volunteered to staff the booth.

William Davis and chaired by Syd Queripel, the event saw greater overall attendance and better exhibitor participation than ever before.

By October 22, 1974, Landscape Ontario had yet another Executive Director and Magazine Editor. He was Tom Harkness, age 29, and according to the write-up that appeared under his photo, experienced in sales and association administration.

The two-year trial period was nearing an end, and members of the three founding associations were called upon to make their final decision. Ratification meetings were held, and while not well-attended, they produced an almost unanimous agreement to continue under the Landscape Ontario banner. The ballots were cast as follows:

	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Against</u>
ONTA	23	2
OLCA	11	0
OGMLA	91	2

At the same time, each former association advanced a number of recommendations they would like to see implemented, and Marc Thiebaud, the incoming President for 1975, promised to work toward that end. He wanted to see the Association improve to the point where all members would be satisfied within their own related fields, and felt that task was just as important as were the original unity proposals. "We have now arrived at the point where we must dissolve our former association charters," he wrote, "and climb united onto one wagon, that being Landscape Ontario."



Premier William Davis (right) is shown here receiving a gift plant from LO President Glenn Peister, at the opening of the 1974 Congress.



1975 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: John Northwood, Casey van Maris, John Van Staveren, Peter Hubbell, George Blyth; seated: Donald Ziraldo, Marc Thiebaud (President), Gordon Shuttleworth, Frank Edean. (Absent: Howard Stensson).

1975

At the Annual General Meeting on January 20, 1975, members heard reports of an impressive list of accomplishments during Landscape Ontario's first two years. Membership had increased by 25 per cent, and a group insurance program was well under way. In spite of this, it was felt that interest in chapter meetings throughout the year was dwindling. The reasons were varied - the landscapers felt they had lost the social contact they enjoyed prior to unity; the growers and garden centre operators believed the meetings were of little interest to them; and the garden maintenance people thought everything was getting too big, and they did not feel comfortable any more. To answer these grievances, the Board authorized all chapters to organize commodity groups if they so desired. As a result, a provincial Growers Group was formed in the Niagara peninsula, and a Garden Centre Group, Landscape Contractors Group and Landscape Maintenance Group were each incorporated into the Toronto area Chapter. It was also agreed that although picnics, social events and children's Christmas parties were still a necessary part of the association, they should in future be carried out on a self-liquidating basis, instead of being underwritten by association funds as had been done in the past.

Another innovation was the Youth Council, which was started at Congress to try to close the large gap between industry employers and their future employees. The idea was

to try to communicate directly with students and teachers of the various colleges and universities in an effort to plan the future of the industry with the people whom it would most affect, namely the students.

The Magazine Committee reported a rough time in 1974. Production difficulties caused them to fall so far behind schedule that they were forced to cancel the August issue in order to try to get back in line. Financially, although the bottom line on operations had improved over the \$10,000 loss suffered in 1973, it still showed a deficit of \$4,000. In an effort to try to get the magazine on a more solid footing, the Board of Directors had decided to bite the bullet and publish only six issues a year commencing with January, 1975. The only item of new business presented at the Annual General Meeting concerned a request by David Bakker to further investigate the possibilities of amalgamating *Landscape Ontario* magazine with *Landscape/Paysage Canada* (formerly *Canadian Nurseryman*) and possibly any other independent periodicals such as the new *Landscape* magazine being published by Gwen Stuppel.

A perpetual thorn in the side of the industry continued to be the sale of fertilizer by service clubs, church groups and other non-business organizations. In the May 1975 issue of *Landscape Ontario*, Casey van Maris, writing in "Casey's Corner," devoted his whole article to this subject, which had first been brought up by the Ontario Nurserymen's Association in 1959.

Another "first" in 1975 was the entering of a display booth at the Canadian National Exhibition for the purpose of promoting both Landscape Ontario and its members to a potential of over three million visitors. Constructed under the guidance of the Toronto Chapter, the venture proved to be an outstanding success.



Executive Director Tom Harkness.



1974 Board of Directors (l. to r.): Jack Kroon, George Blyth, Donald Ziraldo, Glenn Peister, John Northwood, John Van Staveren, Casey van Maris (President), Marc Thiebaud, Executive Director Arnold Rowe-Sleeman, Gordon Shuttleworth. (Absent: Howard Stensson).



1976 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: John Northwood, Leo Bezaire, Peter Braun, Frank Endean; seated: David Duplain, Marc Thiebaud, Gordon Shuttleworth (President), John Van Staveren, George Blyth. (Absent: Casey van Maris).

During that same summer a popular event, the Summer Convention of the former OLCA, was revived by Landscape Ontario. Held at Britannia Lodge near Huntsville, the three-day outing attracted 75 people including a number of children, and the wide range of activities ensured a good time was had by all.



A portion of the first LO display booth at the Canadian National Exhibition was set up as a memorial garden in memory of various gardening ideas that died because the owner had not consulted with a professional member of the industry.

1976

1976 was another banner year for LO, starting off in January with an expanded Congress hosting Landscape Canada's (the Canadian Nursery Trades Association) National Convention. The four-day event was held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto, and included Flowers Canada and the Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario, as well as a day-long Youth Council program. With over 70 firms entering displays, exhibit space was sold out. The first Post-Congress Tour, with 34 participants, took off for 10 days in

Curacao to relax after what everyone agreed was the best LO Congress yet.

Under the Chairmanship of Glenn Peister, a new awards program was developed to promote public recognition. To be known as Landscape Ontario Awards for Excellence in Landscaping, it was to be a province-wide competition culminating in an Awards dinner with all segments of the news media in attendance. A firm of public relations consultants was engaged to publicize the awards, which were to be presented early in 1977. The contest was open to LO members only, but was not limited as to size or date of completion, the only criteria being that the project had not previously won an LO award. There was also to be no limit on the number of awards given, and the entry selected as the most outstanding would receive the special annual Dunington-Grubb Award.

At the Canadian National Exhibition, the LO display was expanded to occupy 2,000 square feet, divided into four areas representing the four participating groups - garden centre, maintenance, grower and landscape contractor - with a consumer information centre located near the entrance. All materials were supplied by members, and the display was erected entirely by volunteer help, with 41 different member companies participating.

LO was reaching out to the public in other ways as well. The donation of a 4-1/2" caliper red maple tree planted in High Park to commemorate Arbor Day received recognition from Toronto Mayor David Crombie and City Council. The official planting, and Landscape Ontario's involvement, were publicized on both radio and television. Ottawa and London Chapters had display booths at

regional shows, and Windsor Chapter ran an ad campaign inviting homeowners to enter the LO Landscape Awards contest.

Commencing September 1, 1976, the University of Guelph began offering a Qualified Plantsman Independent Study Course. This was being done at the request, and with



G. R. (Dick) Sale is shown above (centre) with his wife, Alice, receiving a plaque from Syd Queripel at the 1976 Congress. It was a "thank-you" gift for his efforts in establishing the first Allied Horticultural Trades Congress that was the forerunner of the Landscape Ontario Congress.

the backing of Landscape Ontario. Education Chairman Don Ziraldo was instrumental in setting up the course.

The March, 1976 issue of *Landscape Ontario* carried an item about Deborah Pollock, of Rockingham, N.S., who was the first woman to graduate from the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture. That may have prompted Casey van Maris to write in the September issue that "more women should attend industry functions." He pointed out that there was a large percentage of family operations, and estimated there were at least 500 women in Ontario directly



1977 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: George Blyth, Peter Kamerman, John Wright, Willy Huber, Karl Stensson, Frank Endean; seated: Leo Bezaire, John Van Staveren (President), Gordon Shuttleworth, Frank Kearney.



1978 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Barry Benjamin, Frank Kearney, Henry Molema, John Wright, Casey van Maris, Executive Director Dennis Souder, George Blyth; seated: John Van Staveren, Leo Bezaire, Gordon Shuttleworth (President), Karl Stensson.

involved in the trade, running offices and garden centres, and working alongside their husbands in greenhouses and nurseries. In spite of this, there were generally only three or four "ladies" at meetings. "So how about it, fellows, bring your wife, you will have a lot more to talk about on the way home," he concluded. "I have a suspicion that once we get this rolling we might even have a Lady President of our association, SOMEDAY!" Prophetic words indeed.

By the end of 1975, the *Landscape Ontario* magazine had been expanded to 48 pages, and was now operating in the black. In November, 1976, managing editor Tom Harkness announced the appointment of Art Joy as consulting editor, working out of his own home. He also told readers it was hoped to begin publishing in four-colour. Up until that point it had remained the same black, green and white inherited from *The Landscape Gardener*. In January, 1977, the first four-colour issue appeared, thanks to the support of four advertisers - Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., H. L. Staebler Co. Ltd., The McConnell Nursery Co. Ltd. and Genstar Chemical Ltd.



The new Oshawa Chapter donated a tree to their city to commemorate Arbor Day 1977.

1977

Instead of employing an outside firm as had been done for several years, the LO staff took on another responsibility with the decision by the Board of Directors to manage the LO Congress themselves, commencing in 1978. This necessitated the hiring of another staff member. Bob Cheesman was employed as Executive Assistant to Tom Harkness. Although just 22 years of age, he brought valuable experience, having been previously employed by the *Toronto Star* where his duties included promotion, public relations and product sales. His employment brought the total office staff to four, including a full time secretary and part time bookkeeper. Membership was now up over 400, and a new Chapter had been formed in Oshawa. Co-op buying had begun with the purchase of *Landscape Ontario Planting Guides* and paper bags, both of which were completely sold out for the 1977 season.

In May of 1977 the first annual Landscape Ontario Awards Night was held at the Inn on the Park, Toronto. Approximately 150 people attended to assist in recognizing those companies and individuals being honoured. Awards presented included eight Awards of Excellence for various landscape projects, along with the Frank Ewald Jr. Nurseryman's Award, the Trillium Award, and the Dunington-Grubb Award.

Tom Harkness resigned as Executive Director in the fall of 1977, after three years at the helm, to take up a new position within the industry. He received universal praise for the fine job he had done in guiding the association, as well as improving the magazine,

and initiating a monthly newsletter to keep members up-to-date on association activities. He was succeeded by Dennis Souder, who brought to LO his experience as a financial adviser and association manager.

1978

Even though total attendance was down on the third day due to the worst blizzard in years, bringing traffic to a standstill, the 1978 Landscape Ontario Congress and Trade Show was nothing less than fantastic, according to all reports. Produced for the first time by LO's own staff under show manager Bob Cheesman, it included 95 exhibits which spilled over from the regular show space in the Sheraton Centre into the ballroom, making it necessary to hold the dinner and dance in the nearby Hotel Toronto.

In a lengthy report to the 1978 Annual General Meeting, Dennis Souder listed some of the association's accomplishments of the previous year. They included a net increase of 10 per cent in membership, and participation in a joint Canada-U.S. promotion campaign called Green Survival. The intent of this program was to help the horticultural industry capitalize on the ever-growing environmental movement by promoting the benefits of trees in particular and gardening in general.

One of the most significant triumphs of



Executive Director Dennis Souder.



1979 Board of Directors (l. to r.) Executive Director Dennis Souder, Frank Kearney, Neil Vanderkruk, Karl Stensson (President), Barry Benjamin, David Watkins, John Wright, Gordon Shuttleworth, Donald Salivan, Harold Deenen.



1980 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Staff member Robert Cheesman, Syd Queripel, Quint Slabbekoom, Rob Mori, Jim McCracken, Harold Deenen, Neil Vanderkruk, Executive Director Dennis Souder, Horst Dickert; seated: Karl Stensson, Frank Kearney (President), Barry Benjamin.

that year was the agreement by the Worker's Compensation Board to change the category of those in the horticulture industry from construction to agricultural. Achieved after several years of lobbying, the change resulted in a decrease of up to 40 per cent on members' WCB assessment rates. In many



Al Rundle (right), of Rundle Garden Centre Ltd. in Oshawa, presents the inaugural A. W. Rundle Trophy to Howard Dunton of Wen-Hal Ltd. The occasion was the annual Landscape Ontario golf tournament hosted in 1978 by the Oshawa Chapter.

cases the savings would pay for all or a substantial portion of members' association dues.

Also on-going for the past seven years was the attempt to include sod growers within the association. The proposals and counter-proposals which had gone back and forth between Landscape Ontario and the Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario were to no avail, however. Instead, in February of 1978, the Board of Landscape Canada passed a motion allowing the NSGA to become a member of the national group, in effect making them a part of the "family," while retaining their individual identity provincially.

Further changes were also happening at the national association level which were to have an effect on Landscape Ontario. By the

middle of 1978 it was felt by the majority of its board members that the Canadian Nursery Trades Association (Landscape Canada) was at a standstill. The previous decision, made in 1970 to move the national office to Ottawa in order to give the CNTA a better presence with the federal government, was proving to be too costly for the benefits received. A Landscape Ontario committee presented a proposal to the CNTA at their November board meeting to run the national association out of the same office facilities as LO.

At the same time, a relocation committee was investigating the possibility of new premises to replace the office in Agincourt. In the September issue of *Landscape Ontario*, President Gord Shuttleworth announced the leasing of a new office location at 3034 Palstan Road, Mississauga.

1978 saw the fruition of another project, the publishing of a *Plant Source List*. Available to members for \$10, or non-members for \$20, it listed over 250 varieties in quantities available by size ranges from up to 70 growers.

In spite of these many accomplishments, 1978 was a disappointing year in terms of membership. The first fee increase in five years may have been a contributing factor when almost 60 firms failed to renew. A strong membership recruitment program helped to offset the losses, and at year's end there were 260 active and 50 associate members, a net increase of about a dozen over the previous year.

The LO magazine, on the other hand, showed a marked improvement, with a net profit doubling the budget forecast. Up until that time a mimeographed newsletter called *News & Views* had been sent out on alternate

months to the magazine, as a means of keeping members informed. In 1978, this was superseded by *F.M.O.* (For Members Only). The new publication was typeset and printed offset, and included photos and ads.

1979

In his first President's Message in *Landscape Ontario* in March, 1979, Karl Stensson followed a practice instituted by his predecessor, Gord Shuttleworth, and set out five main goals for the year. They included a 20 per cent or 80-firm membership increase, development of a set of standard contract forms, formulation of a Code of Ethics, as well as obtaining a smooth-running office and book-keeping system and continuing chapter visitations by the board. He also announced the formation and functioning of the newly-approved Waterloo Regional Chapter. That same issue contained the first-ever colour photographs of the incoming Board of Directors.

In July of that year, the CNTA office was moved from Ottawa to the new LO office in Mississauga, where it was to be run by Landscape Ontario, sharing the same Executive Director. At that time, the decision was made by the national Board of Directors to discontinue publication of *Landscape/Paysage Canada* magazine, which for a number of years had been published six times a year on alternate months to *Landscape Ontario*. In an effort to keep communication with all parts of Canada alive, the Board of Directors of Landscape Ontario approved the initiation of a new publication to replace the national magazine beginning in October and again

running on alternate months to *Landscape Ontario*. The recommended name for the new magazine was *Landscape Trades*.

A new staff member, Susan Lawrence, was hired as Managing Editor of both magazines, with Dennis Souder listed in the masthead as Editor, Robert Cheesman as Advising Editor, and Art Joy as Consulting Editor. By January 1980 Bob Cheesman was being listed as Resourceful Advisor, and he was also Director of Member Services. Another name - Stephanie Wilson - appeared in January 1980, under the heading of Proofing, Horticultural Terms, with Circulation Control under Millie Bauer.



1981 Board of Directors (l. to r.) Executive Director Robert Cheesman, Barry Benjamin (President), Harold Deenen, Neil Vanderkruk, Karl Stensson, Jim McCracken, Frank Kearney, Rob Mori, Horst Dickert, Quint Slabbekoorn, Doug Taylor.

Conestoga College, and members of the Ottawa Chapter took part in a Pool and Garden Show.

1981 also saw the addition of a new commodity group, the Professional Sprayers (which has since changed their name to the Lawn Care Commodity Group). Along with the six regional chapters plus the Growers' Group, it brought the total number of individual sectors holding their own regular meetings to a total of eight.

Having matured considerably since its incorporation some eight years ago, the need was recognized for a vehicle to raise and distribute

and secondary schools, and assistance would be required from government departments such as Education and Manpower.

The Landscape Ontario office staff underwent another change in the fall of 1980, when Dennis Souder left, to be succeeded by Bob Cheesman as Executive Director. Eric Columbus joined the staff in the capacity of Manager - Communications, but was replaced in 1981 by Rick Gregory. Judy Palmieri was now editor of both magazines, and the total staff remained at five.

research and scholarship monies and an appropriate foundation structure was put into place. The Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation was established as a separate, totally independent registered charitable foundation. With its own board of directors and advisory committee, it allowed members to contribute funds and receive a receipt for income tax purposes. The goal of "The Foundation," as it is more commonly referred to, was to serve as a catalyst for research and scholarship projects. In most instances it did not wish to be the sole source of funding for projects, but, in general, hoped to fund no more than 25 per cent of the cost, thereby encouraging other organizations to participate. As Secretary of the Foundation, Bob Cheesman presented the first cheque on March 27 to Dennis Wale, the student with the highest standing in the Humber College of Applied Arts Apprenticeship Program. A publication entitled *Plants: Their Role in Modifying our Environment*, was also made available to LO members through the Foundation.

The formation of The Foundation, and the recognition by LO Growers' Group, of the industry's need to have better control over their research requirements, was the catalyst behind the start of the Annual Growers' Auction. Members were asked to donate plant material, containers, used equipment, or anything that might be of use to other companies within the industry, with at least 25 per cent of the proceeds going to the Foundation. The first sale was held in 1980 at Timm Enterprises Limited in Oakville, and raised over \$2,000. The following year, at the same location, proceeds were \$3,581.

A questionnaire was sent out to members in late 1980 asking for opinions of the

1980

The Landscape Ontario Congress at the Sheraton Centre once again proved to be an outstanding success. Attendance increased 30 per cent to 3,400, and the 97 exhibitors were enthusiastic about the response they received.

An innovation in 1980 was the half-day orientation program in February, designed for chapter presidents and new directors. Held in the LO office, it combined presentations from members of the staff, now numbering five people on a full-time basis, on the functions of the association and its committees, with opportunities for those present to ask questions.

The March 1980 issue of *Landscape Ontario* contained the results of a survey conducted and tabulated during the previous year on the projections for labour demands over the next five years. Stating that "trade labour requirements are desperate," it concluded that overall the trade would need almost 10,000 persons, including 1,500 highly skilled persons to be trained as managers, supervisors, etc.,

850 equipment operators and mechanics, and 7,250 skilled labourers. To fill the wants, on-the-job training programs would have to be expanded, new courses set up with colleges



Executive Director Robert Cheesman.

1981

In an up-beat report in the January 1981 issue of *Landscape Ontario*, Bob Cheesman urged members to get involved in the many activities planned for the coming year. As well as regular chapter meetings and the annual Congress, for the second year the association was presenting the Professional Effectiveness Program (PEP) in February. The three-day program, which had been presented all over North America, won rave reviews from those who attended the previous program.

By this time, promotional activities to further advance the industry and especially the association and its members, was an ongoing part of Landscape Ontario's annual program across the province. In February, for instance, LO prepared a display in cooperation with the Ontario Swimming Pool Association and sponsored the lecture theatre at the Garden, Pool & Landscape Show at the CNE, where attendance was expected to be over 50,000. The London Chapter put in a display at the Whiteoaks Mall, the Waterloo Chapter set up displays at a spring flower show held in conjunction with



1982 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Peter Olsen, Bruce Norris, Barry Benjamin, Harold Deenen (President), Henry Darvell, Executive Director Robert Cheesman, Robert Allen, Doug Taylor; seated: James McCracken, staff member Rick Gregory, Monica van Maris, Rob Mori.



1983 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: J. C. (John) Bakker III, Bruce Norris, Peter Olsen, Robert Allen, Doug Taylor; seated: Harold Deenen, Monica van Maris, James McCracken (President), Val Kirschner.

association. While it received only about a 20 per cent response, the survey results did give an indication of what people liked best and least about Landscape Ontario, and identified those areas requiring attention. One positive result was the decision to send the *F.M.O. Newsletter* out monthly so members would receive information in a more timely fashion. Members also stressed the importance of public relations and promotion to the consuming public as well as the importance of having good meetings with qualified speakers. The need to upgrade membership quality by tighter screening and the ability to remove those members who were deemed to not be following the Code of Ethics was considered to be of particular importance.

Under the direction of 1981 president Barry Benjamin, promotion was very much at the forefront. He stressed the need to tell people about the products and services members had to offer. Along those lines, Landscape Ontario was participating in two programs in co-operation with the American Association of Nurserymen. The first one, called "Green Survival," had been around for several years and was receiving considerable publicity through press releases to all segments of the media, as well as to schools and other organizations.

The second was a radio advertising campaign, a program of the Nursery Marketing Council. NMC projects were funded through voluntary contributions of a quarter of one per cent on a wholesale bill, an amount which was matched by the participating vendor. Members were urged to take

advantage of both, as well as joining in promotional programs at the chapter level. Landscape Ontario's participation in the Canadian National Exhibition had been expanded as well, and now included a speaker program by association members. As Barry Benjamin put it, "promotion brings you customers - customers bring you business - business brings you profits."

1982

A significant event occurred in 1982, with the election of the first woman to the Landscape Ontario board of directors. Monica van Maris was already serving as President of the Toronto Chapter when she was elected Secretary at the provincial level. No stranger to either the business world or association work, she had written an article in the March 1978 issue of *Landscape Ontario*, asking women to encourage their husbands to get involved in the association. At the same time she urged women who were active in the business to go along with their husbands to the general meetings, where they could learn a lot and get to meet the people "at the other end of the phone," as she herself had been doing for some time. Admittedly some of her statements at that time would raise a few feminist hackles today. For example, "Our lives are composed of an everyday routine. We women can shop etc. as a form of relaxation, but men need more mental stimulation." But bear in mind this was 1978, and her remarks probably reflected the general attitude at the

time. As it turned out, Monica van Maris was one of the pioneers who paved the way for many more women to take their rightful place in the horticulture industry.

The Landscape Ontario Congress in 1982 set new records in attendance and trade show participation. During the first two weeks of September, 27 participants took advantage of Landscape Ontario's Professional Study Tour of Europe, visiting Holland, Belgium, Germany and France. Also in 1982, the Membership Services Committee offered a full 1983 Congress registration to each individual who sponsored at least five new members during the year. As a result, 58 new member applications were approved, bringing total membership to over 500.

1983

"Magicians, fortune tellers, strolling musicians and a 10 sq. ft. birthday cake... they were all part of Landscape Ontario's giant birthday bash held during Congress '83 to celebrate the association's 10th anniversary. Three hundred and fifty people vied for prizes of silver and gold in testing their skills at a cork gun shoot, baseball throw and other carnival-type games in keeping with the Klondike Night theme of the party. Members from all chapters manned the booths in straw hats and striped vests with proceeds from the games going to the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation." So reads an article in the March/April 1983 issue of *Landscape Ontario*. There was

free champagne for all those attending to toast the past and future of the association, and with records broken in both registrants (4,180) and exhibitors (130), there was indeed a lot to celebrate. The presence of members of the Canadian Nursery Trades Association brought delegates from as far away as Whitehorse, Yukon, and St. John's, Newfoundland.

One group who helped to make the 1983 Congress something special were the Past Presidents. In his first President's Message, Jim McCracken paid this tribute to them: "Without encouragement, without office or board help, and in spite of some hesitation by the audience at the first of their escapades, by day three of Congress (they) had changed the entire mood of the delegates, bringing a sense of laughter and frivolity and making Congress again an intimate gathering among friends."

The 10th Anniversary Issue of *Landscape Ontario* was published in May, and featured an article by Rick Gregory detailing the steps that went into the formation of the association. Executive Director Robert W. (Bob) Cheesman looked back on the accomplishments of the past 10 years, and President Jim McCracken wrote about some areas of concern he had for the future. They included the possibility of having to separate the educational program from the Congress trade show in order to expand the latter. The two magazines, *Landscape Ontario* and *Landscape Trades*, published on a bi-monthly basis by the Horticultural Publishing Division of LO, had come in for recent criticism, and steps were being taken to change them for the better. The magazines, along with the Congress and a planned Summer Trade Show, accounted for 65 per cent of the revenue, with the remaining 35 per cent coming from membership dues.

The need to increase membership was an on-going challenge. Although new firms continued to join, others dropped out each year - 60 Notices of Cancellation of Membership were sent out in July, 1983. "We must double our numbers, and double them again," said the President, "not only for the revenue in dues, but in order to maintain an effective voice for the trade." He also stressed the necessity to increase involvement in the annual Garden, Pool and Landscape Show in order to make an impact on the public.

All of these concerns, along with others, prompted the formation of a "Think Tank" made up of representatives from each chapter, plus Past Presidents of the association, who met throughout the spring and summer to

come up with a five-year plan. The results were published in the November/December issue of the magazine, and included many recommendations, among them the suggestion that LO purchase some property for future office facilities.

1983 saw the first summer trade show, named Summer Showdown, and the second European tour in September. The Green Survival Landscape Awards program was continuing, as was the annual golf tournament held each summer. Landscape Ontario also became the sponsor of the Canadian Garden Pool & Landscape Show, renamed the Flower & Garden Show, at which the association would receive a commission on sales, earmarked to promote the industry.

1984

Staff changes occurred early in 1984, when Jim Bradley replaced Rick Gregory as Communications Manager, editing both magazines and the *F.M.O. Newsletter*, as well as being Show Manager for the Congress, and Public Relations Coordinator. Paul Hetherington also joined the staff as Membership Services Representative, a new position. Betty Mattingly and Millie Bauer com-



LO staff member Paul Hetherington (right) demonstrates the new computerized member referral service at the 1984 Congress.

pleted the staff of five. Computerization of all procedures was well under way, including a referral service connecting members and potential customers. This service, along with the insurance package and the exposure gained through the Membership Services Booth at Congress, was credited with a large increase in membership applications.

Now into their second decade and with an increasing amount of membership participation, Landscape Ontario's office facilities were once again no longer adequate for



Perhaps in self-defence, Casey van Maris chose to wear this disguise when commenting on his wife's report as Treasurer at the 1984 Annual General Meeting.

the association's requirements. Rather than relocating to expanded rental facilities, however, it was felt by some members that the time had come for Landscape Ontario to own their office space. A Real Estate Committee was formed with Casey van Maris and Harold Deenen acting as co-chairs. It was this committee's responsibility to look at all of the available alternatives and their possible impact on the association. After considerable and often heated debate (and even a few dire predictions of gloom and doom) the committee recommended the purchase of an office facility at 1293 Matheson Blvd. E., in Mississauga. Although this issue had been the cause of intense debate, it was passed at the 1984 Annual General Meeting with very little discussion.

The new Matheson Road office met many of the association's criteria, including good accessibility to the airport, room for committee and board meetings, and, at 5,500 sq. ft., lots of room for expansion. In fact, when the LO staff first moved to Matheson Road, there was so much extra space there was even a proposal put forward to consider renting part of the facility as storage space.

By mid-year the Toronto Chapter had been split, with a new Toronto West Chapter formed to accommodate those members between Hwy. 400 to the east and Winston Churchill Blvd. to the west. The outdoor trade show was a two-day affair held at Bronte Creek Provincial Park in Burlington, and included the LO Growers' Group Auction and a barbecue supper.



1985 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Harry Bakker, Marc Thiebaud, William Hewick, Marjorie Hancock; seated: Jim Fidler, Peter Olsen, Robert Allen (President), Doug Taylor, Neil Vanderkruk. (Absent: Monica van Maris).



1986 Board of Directors (l. to r.) standing: Robert Allen, Harry Bakker, Marjorie Hancock, Joe Pepetone, Peter Smit; seated: Neil Vanderkruk, Vic Palmer, Peter Olsen (President), Monica van Maris, Jim Fidler.

In November of that year, Burke McNeill was once again the guest of honour, this time at a dinner hosted by the LO Growers' Group. The occasion marked his move from Nursery Specialist to Horticultural Crop Advisor - Fruit Crops, at Vineland Station, and was held to thank him for his many years of friendship and service to the industry.

1985

During 1985, the association continued its promotion campaign through exhibits, magazine articles and press releases. The Canadian Nursery Marketing Council was formed, allowing funds raised through this program to be used exclusively to promote the industry in Canada. Landscape Ontario became the first contributor, presenting a cheque representing 1/4 of one per cent of the association's annual dues income. The Green Survival Excellence in Landscape Award winners were featured in various displays, and a landscaping brochure was produced for distribution to the general public.

A new Planning & Priorities Committee was established in 1985. Under the Chairmanship of second vice president Monica van Maris, the committee's mandate was to chart a course for the future growth and development of Landscape Ontario.

The expertise gained over the past several years of managing the Landscape Ontario Congress paid off when LO staff members were retained to act as consultants for the Interior Landscape Association of Canada's conference. The study tour visited Britain that year. Also, a Discount Program was introduced giving members preferred rates on certain hotels and car rentals.

1986

Congress '86 was noteworthy for two reasons. For the first time it was being chaired by a woman, Anna van Maris Zalewski, and the Ladies Program, a feature of every convention since 1959, finally gave way to a Special Partners' Program. "Special partners," explained program coordinator Eileen Johnston Palmer, "are those spouses and companions who play a very important role in our lives and businesses. As both personal, and, in many cases, business partners, they are special indeed for the tasks they undertake and the qualities they donate." The change must not have been appreciated, because the following year the name reverted to Ladies' Day Program, and the description began with the sentence, "This year's program takes a page from tradition."

Speakers at Congress '86 came from as far away as the United Kingdom, Texas and Florida. The sold-out trade show continued with 19 new exhibitors, and once again, the event set a record attendance figure of nearly 4,970 over the three days.

Garden Festival '86, now produced by Southex in partnership with Landscape Ontario, was moved from the CNE to the International Centre, and featured a nine-day show, running over two week-ends in February.

The front cover of the March/April 1986 issue of *Landscape Ontario* featured one of the most unique publicity efforts to date. It showed an ice sculpture built by the Ottawa Chapter as their entry in the city's winter carnival. Their theme was "Green Survival," and had one person holding a shovel, another pushing a wheelbarrow and a third with a child being pushed in a wheelbarrow, all

working around a big tree. "Green Survival, It Depends On You" was carved out of blocks of ice and placed in the foreground. The enthusiastic participation of members, who logged approximately 235 man-hours in six days of work, paid off when the sculpture captured the \$300 second prize in the commercial category.

When Joe Pepetone was elected to the Board of Directors in 1986, he had as his main goal the formation of a Garden Centre Commodity Group. A special meeting brought out approximately 100 people, and before long the new group was a reality. Within the next couple of years a Landscape Commodity Group joined the seven Regional Chapters which, along with the Professional Growers' Group and Lawn Care Group (formerly Professional Sprayers Group), served the special interests of individual members.

The Growers' Group 7th Annual Research Auction in September raised more than \$10,000 to support research through the Plant Introduction Program at the Royal Botanical Gardens, ornamental research at Vineland Station (OMAF), and the Growers' Group Fund within the LO Horticultural Trades Foundation. Also in September, the 4th Annual Study Tour visited Scandinavia.

1987

Attendance at Congress '87 shot up again, reaching 5,717 visitors. Another big change occurred that year, with the amalgamation of *Landscape Ontario* and *Landscape Trades*. The two magazines had been produced on a bi-monthly basis by the LO staff since 1979. Rosemary Dexter was hired as Communications Co-ordinator. Her duties



included that of Assistant Editor, as well as being actively involved in advertising sales and assisting with Congress.

Over the years the magazines had gradually evolved from a folksy approach to a more professional and less personal format. The ultimate objective was to publish a profitable national magazine that, like Congress, could be a significant non-dues revenue generator for Landscape Ontario. A more valid, national perspective was therefore required. Those features identifying it as a provincial association magazine were to be discontinued, including the "President's Message," a regular column by the Executive Director and most association news. The new national magazine, under the name of *Landscape Trades*, was to be published 10 times per year. From a circulation of 1,200 copies for *Landscape Ontario* and 1,700 for *Landscape Trades*, the combined magazine was now sent out to more than 5,000 readers. They included not only members and subscribers, but also a rotating controlled mailing list across the country. It thus became the largest magazine of its kind in Canada.

That same year saw Monica van Maris become the 14th President of Landscape Ontario (remember the prophecy of Casey van Maris in September, 1976?). Actively involved with the association since its inception in 1973, Monica van Maris now had the distinction of being the first woman to hold the office of President. In an interview in the February issue of *Landscape Trades* she was asked what that meant to her. Her reply: "No more and no less than it did to any of my predecessors. That I am a woman makes no difference to me."

Further staff changes occurred late in 1987. Jo-Anne Willetts was appointed as Show Manager, replacing Jim Bradley who had moved to Ottawa. Geoffrey Smith became Membership Services Representative following Paul Hetherington's departure to join another association. Rosemary Dexter was promoted to the position of Managing Editor of *Landscape Trades*. A special Show Guide issue of the magazine was being prepared with a planned distribution of 10,000 copies. Colour was being used more extensively throughout the publication, and a Reader Service Card had been introduced.

1988

Over the years Landscape Ontario

had been instrumental in working with the government to establish a Qualified Journeyman's Horticultural Apprenticeship designation for the industry. This process suffered considerably from provincial government politics and bureaucracy but industry's persistence finally paid off. In spite of the hard work put into this process by a few very dedicated individuals and the general consensus on the overall shortage of qualified labour, the industry failed to show significant support for the Horticultural Apprenticeship Program offered at several community colleges. The poor response from industry to apply for journeyman's status under the two year grandfathering clause was a further indication of poor industry support.

These circumstances prompted a guest editorial in the April 1988 issue of *Landscape Trades* by Jim McCracken who had been one of industry's representatives on the Provincial Advisory Committee. He urged greater use of the apprenticeship training programs at Toronto's Humber College, Algonquin College in Ottawa, and the anticipated opening of one at Mohawk College in Hamilton. He described employer participation to date as "scandalous," averaging under 40 graduates per year over the past 20 years the program had been offered at Humber - this in an industry which at that time employed more than 50,000 people in Ontario. He also stressed the need for every eligible tradesperson in the horticultural industry to take advantage of the "grandfather clause" currently allowing anyone who had worked in the trade for three years prior to the November 1988 cut-off date to apply for a Certificate of Qualification as either a Nurseryman/Greenhouse/Garden Centre worker, or Landscaper/Greenskeeper. Again appealing to employers, McCracken stated, "If we do not apply, government investment in our industry will stop and our declining labour pool will be our own fault."

Once again, decisions made by the board of the Canadian Nursery Trades Association were to have an impact on Landscape Ontario. Since July of 1979 when they began sharing office facilities, the Canadian Nursery Trades Association also shared an executive director with Landscape Ontario. During the ensuing years the CNTA had worked to strengthen and regroup, and by 1988, they were able to once again support a full-time Executive Director. Chris Andrews was appointed to the position effective May 2, and the office continued to operate from the LO premises in Mississauga.

Bob Cheesman, who had been with the staff of Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association since 1977, resigned his position as Executive Director effective August of the same year. Over the next few months Steve Brown was appointed first as Advertising Sales Representative, and then as Editor and Advertising Manager of *Landscape Trades*. Kevin Press was hired as Managing Editor, and the positions of Membership Service Representative and Executive Director were advertised. Leslie Kerrigan was Accounts Supervisor, and Millie Bauer was Secretary.

Having been relieved of their responsibilities to the CNTA, Landscape Ontario's board of directors considered that perhaps now was the time for the provincial association to regroup also. Although it was her personal preference that her role as executive director be a temporary one, in the meanwhile, Jo-Anne Willetts assumed responsibility for the day-to-day operations of Landscape Ontario in her role as Office Manager, Trade Show Manager and Acting Executive Director. Neil Vanderkruk (Connon Nurseries, NVK Holdings) assumed particular responsibility for the direction of the association during that interval, and spent many hours away from his own company while overseeing association business.

1989

Virtually all areas of the association showed good promise, closely reflecting the buoyant state of the industry at that time. Attendance at the 1989 Congress had reached 7,500, with nearly 200 exhibitors. The Ontario Beautification Awards Program was announced, and a new logo for the association was introduced in February. Landscape Ontario's fifth annual Tommy Thompson Golf Tournament raised close to \$5,000 for Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. The October issue of the magazine contained the first annual *Buyer's Guide*. At their annual auction, the Growers Commodity Group raised over \$15,000 for LO's Horticultural Research Foundation. Warning bells rang, however, when the Ministry of Skills Development announced that the Horticultural Apprenticeship Program was in danger of folding due to a lack of enrolment.

For some time members had been complaining that the *F.M.O. Newsletter* was received only sporadically, and did not bring them association news in a timely fashion.



Executive Director Tony DiGiovanni

Negotiations for the production of a newsletter had been under way with *Horticulture Review*, published by Rita Weerdenburg, but these had been discontinued. By June of 1989, however, the Publishing

Committee (formerly the Magazine Committee) was able to report that an interim monthly newsletter, called *News Update*, had been developed, and plans were under way to acquire a desktop publishing system. Another name was added to the masthead of *Landscape Trades* in August, when Karen Lee became Circulation Co-Ordinator. In September, Carol Gordon became Landscape Ontario's accounts administrator.

Thanks to full cooperation from staff, office matters continued to run smoothly despite the lack of a full-time executive director. Association and membership matters were also well looked after, thanks largely to a great deal of behind-the-scenes input from Neil Vanderkruk.

Having spent some time regrouping and looking to the future, the time had finally come to appoint a full-time executive director. After an comprehensive interview process this position was filled in April by Kim Simpson. She had extensive experience in association management, and was also the first woman to be licensed as a captain on the Great Lakes. She did not remain in the job for long, however, resigning in August.

Although undaunted by this circumstance, the board decided a new approach was required in their search for an appropriate candidate. Rather than advertising the available position, they would search out and entice a suitable person to the job. And, for the first time, a good industry background would be more appropriate than association management experience.

Within weeks the board was pleased to announce the appointment of Tony DiGiovanni to this position. A respected member of the horticultural industry, Tony brought with him a wealth of experience. His last position had been as co-ordinator of the three-year landscape technology program at Humber College. In addition to teaching, he ran the college's horticultural night school programs, and their Industry-In-Service training

program. Prior to that he worked as a grower/horticulturist at the Etobicoke Centennial Park Conservatory. His duties there included growing a diverse variety of ornamental plants, public education and promotion, and plant identification and cataloguing. He was also a garden writer for several years for the *Etobicoke Guardian*, a freelance writer for *Canadian Press*, and a producer and host of horticultural programs for the Maclean-Hunter Television Network.

Tony wasted no time in getting down to work, and by November was able to report that he had attended meetings of most of the committees, chapters and commodity groups, as well as appearing on two television and one radio program on behalf of the association. He also identified two particular problem areas. Several of the commodity groups and committees felt they were not getting enough support from the office and Tony himself felt there was not enough communication between Landscape Ontario and other related industry associations. A meeting hosted by Landscape Ontario and chaired by Tony DiGiovanni involved the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, the International Society of Arboriculture, the Ontario Parks Association and the Landscape Ontario Contractors Commodity Group. It was held to talk about ways that major associations within the horticulture industry could work together for the benefit of the entire field. One positive outcome was an agreement in principle to set up an inter-association education committee that would work on putting together a week of seminars scheduled for 1991.

1990

Further staff changes continued into 1990. In February, following Steve Brown's departure, Kenneth Muir joined the staff as publisher and advertising manager for *Landscape Trades*. It was also announced that Sandy Poitras had started work as project manager, attending chapter meetings, writing for *News Update* and *Landscape Trades*, and working on a variety of other projects as they came along. Others who joined the staff during 1990 were Ann Lederer (later Granatier) and Sandra Brewster.

That year, a major effort went into addressing the industry's chronic labour shortage. This included the third annual Employment Fair put on by Toronto East chapter and participation at the Ontario Secondary

School Guidance Counsellors Association annual meeting. LO had also produced a new promotional career brochure and fact sheets to be distributed to all schools in Ontario in the hope of attracting more young people to the industry. The May 1990 issue of *Landscape Trades* carried a listing and description of the horticulture programs offered at different institutions across the country, and readers were urged to pass the information along to their summer employees.

Educational programs for members were also well under way, and included a landscape stone masonry course, a training program for foremen, and a workshop on landscape selling. The Growers' Group was continuing to offer its popular Short Course, and the Contractors Commodity Group presented its Landscape Clinic '90. LO was also working alongside the Ontario Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Ontario Ministry of Environment in producing Landscape Pesticide Symposiums in various locations.

Promotion of both horticulture and the industry continued to escalate. Home calendars of planting times were available to members for distribution to customers, as well as How to information leaflets developed by the Garden Centre Commodity Group. Landscape Ontario was actively involved in the promotion of Arbor Day, and had entered into a partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources to produce a booklet entitled *Landscaping for Wildlife* that would feature the LO logo on the front and inside cover. The Windsor Chapter held its sixth annual gardening and landscaping show, attracting about 10,000 people. The Ottawa Chapter was able to obtain 2,000 square feet of prime space for their exhibit that featured a Garden Walk at that city's Spring Home Show, and for the first time the Waterloo Chapter helped co-ordinate their local Garden, Pool and Patio Show. Landscape Ontario members were also well represented at the National Home Show at Exhibition Place in Toronto, as well as the Royal Winter Fair. The association co-operated with TVOntario to celebrate the latter's 20th anniversary, planting over 5,000 spruce trees at schools across the province, each bearing a plaque with the LO logo. Along with the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, Landscape Ontario coordinated the design and installation of landscaping at Advanced House, a model home in Brampton designed to promote energy efficiency through the use of landscaping.

A number of activities aimed at raising funds for the Foundation in order to support much needed research and educational programs were also successfully undertaken that year. The Ottawa Chapter raised \$5,000 for the Val Kirschner Scholarship Fund at their second annual golf tournament, and the sixth annual Landscape Ontario charity golf tournament raised over \$3,000 for Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. The annual Growers' Group auction, re-named the Landscape Ontario Research Auction, was moved from Timm Enterprises and would be held at a different nursery location every year. Cannon Nurseries/NVK Holdings Inc. outside Waterdown would be the first nursery to host this event. In its 11th year, and now for the first time designed for garden centre, lawn care, landscape contractor and landscape maintenance professionals, as well as nursery growers, the expanded auction raised over \$22,000 in 1990. That event, along with several others, brought the total 1990 contributions to the Foundation to \$42,000. Some of the projects that had recently benefited included \$10,000 to the Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario to support a new greenhouse; \$5,000 to Dr. Glen Lumis, University of Guelph, to support a pulse irrigation project; \$6,000 to Dr. Calvin Chong, HRIO, in support of caliper tree production research; and \$4,000 to HRIO in support of a graduate research assistant. The Foundation also approved a new scholarship plan, with the goal of disbursing \$20,000 a year in awards, bursaries and scholarships. The Education Committee of Landscape Ontario, which had previously overseen the awarding of scholarships, was now the Education Committee of the Foundation.

Landscape Trades magazine took on a new look with the September 1990 issue. Along with a complete redesign, Editor Kevin Press introduced a new feature called "The Green Pencil," and invited readers to contribute editorials, letters to the editor, or open letters to the industry. He also announced the expansion of the Industry News section, broken down by geographical region. In addition, provincial associations were invited to have their newsletters inserted into the magazine, to be sent to all readers in the appropriate province.

1991

Over the past few years it had become

increasingly apparent that Landscape Ontario Congress was outgrowing its Sheraton Hotel location. Despite finding some additional exhibitor spaces away from the two main halls, there was a growing waiting list. A number of alternative sites were considered and the decision was finally made to move Congress out of Toronto for the first time ever to Hamilton's Copsps

Coliseum. This decision was made with the proviso, however, that Congress move back to Toronto as soon as suitable convention facilities could be found. The move to Copsps Coliseum for the 18th Annual Landscape Ontario Congress allowed for expansion of the trade show to 300 exhibitors. A huge success, the show attracted 8,000 delegates.

In recognition of their dedication to the industry and especially the association, two new Honourary Life Members - Marc Thiebaud and Neil Vanderkruk - were welcomed.

A major membership drive implemented the previous year resulted in the addition of over 200 members, some returning after a lengthy absence, and by mid-1991 the total was over 1,000.

Landscape Trades magazine continued to enjoy success - the January 1990 Congress issue had carried a record 128 pages - with readership now approaching 10,000 nationwide. In April, a fifth Commodity Group was added to serve those involved in Grounds Management. For the first time, Landscape Ontario sponsored the Garden Festival at Toronto's 40th annual National Home Show, along with the Landscape Excellence Awards. LO Executive Director Tony DiGiovanni was now serving on the Canadian National Exhibition's Horticultural Advisory Committee, and in 1991, the CNE asked for Landscape Ontario's help in creating a large, attractive garden display in the horticulture building.

In October 1991, *Landscape Trades* Editor Kevin Press announced he was taking a leave of absence in order to, among other things, launch a new consumer magazine for Landscape Ontario. *Garden Age* was



In 1991, Landscape Ontario's annual trade show moved to Copsps Coliseum in Hamilton. This was the first time the event was held outside of Toronto, but the new location did not hamper the success of the show.

scheduled to be on the newsstand the following spring. Meanwhile, staff member Sandy Poitras would fill in as *Landscape Trades* editor. Plans for the consumer magazine had to be abandoned, however, when there was insufficient advertising to support it.

In 1991 Landscape Ontario once again resumed negotiations with *Horticulture Review* publisher Rita Weerdenburg to acquire "Hort Review" as it was commonly referred to, as an official Landscape Ontario publication. This time the negotiations were successfully completed and Rita and two of her staff members, Sarah Willis and Kim Best, joined the Landscape Ontario staff in October of 1991.

Pointing out that making *Landscape Trades* a national publication had created a void for provincial news that the membership newsletter could not completely fill, LO Executive Director Tony DiGiovanni stated that the latter had now ceased publication. Association news, along with more Ontario industry news and features, would be covered in *Horticulture Review*. Rita Weerdenburg took on the responsibility of editorial director for both that publication and *Landscape Trades*. "I am very excited about the future prospects (for both publications)," she said. "Combining the staff and resources of both can only make each one a better magazine."

1992

By now, the escalating level of activity within Landscape Ontario was becoming more and more obvious. There was a continued and increased level of membership focus around the key issues of professionalism,



education and promotion. In response to a \$10,000 challenge made the previous year by Unilock's Ed Bryant, Landscape Ontario set out to raise funds for the enhancement of its image and promotion of the products and services supplied by their members in an energetic program soon to be called "Operation Nurture."

In total, over \$100,000 was collected in the form of voluntary contributions from the association's active and associate members. In a bold move, Landscape Ontario's board of directors voted to contribute a further \$100,000 of association funds to further the objectives of Operation Nurture. A public relations firm, Marketing Plus was hired to help the Promotions Committee prepare a series of television commercials to promote home landscaping and the use of Landscape Ontario members. Marketing Plus was also instrumental in helping Landscape Ontario maximize their air time. The series of commercials were broadcast that spring during prime viewing time.

It was later estimated that the commercials generated millions of impressions. While it would be impossible to measure the actual promotional value of Operation Nurture, there were a number of additional side benefits, including increased membership applications from those firms wanting to take advantage of this promotion. An important lesson on the value of cooperative efforts was an equally significant benefit.

Now that they were in a "promotions mode," there was no stopping association efforts. Other exciting television programs were also to come LO's way. Members could participate in the "Let's Build" television series in exchange for donating related goods and/or services. A five-minute video on the benefits of landscaping was developed and made available to members for \$50.

Worthwhile commodity group and chapter efforts were also undertaken. The Garden Centre Commodity Group had published a 24-page full-colour catalogue that members could purchase and have personalized for their own company. The Hamilton Chapter had agreed to cooperatively landscape the local Ronald McDonald House. The Ottawa Chapter, in cooperation with the Dominion Arboretum's Friends of the Farm, was gaining a great deal of favourable publicity for their efforts in the construction of model wild-life backyard gardens at the Arboretum. And

the Waterloo Chapter was looking forward to landscaping the environmentally-friendly "Green Home" in 1993.

One of the best promotional opportunities to come along during 1992 was the offer of free advertising space along the north side of Hwy. 401, just west of Hwy. 427. With volunteer work using donated equipment and materials, the Landscape Ontario name was prominently displayed to the 250,000 people driving by every day.

The so-called "living-logo" generated some controversy with a number of heated commentaries appearing in issues of *Horticulture Review*. The debate centred primarily around the design of the advertisement itself rather than the actual concept of this form of promotion.



Landscape Ontario members were quick to take advantage of the opportunity which allowed them to be the first to install a "Living Logo" on Highway 401 at Highway 427. All materials, labour and equipment rentals were generously donated by member companies.

Education also continued to be a main focus of the association. A project that began with the OGMLA in 1966 was the annual Pesticide Symposium, and it had become a major source of funding for the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation. In 1991, funds generated by the symposium were used to make a \$20,000 donation to the building of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, and a similar sum was set aside to start work on a training program and accompanying video to teach seasonal employees how to use pesticides properly and safely. February 1992 was proclaimed Landscape Ontario's Education Month, and saw the introduction of a new three-day Education Clinic. In the same month, the Growers' Group held their increasingly popular one-day Short Course. In addition, members could sign up for seminars at various locations around the province that included Landscape Maintenance Sales/Estimating, Landscape Selling, Foremanship Training, Garden Centre Management, Retail Pricing, and Turfgrass Insects.

The Landscape Contractors Commodity Group (LCCG), in an effort to preserve the history of their industry, initiated a series of

lectures in 1992 featuring the work of distinguished landscape architects and design-build contractors. Each of the lecture series featured the work of both a prominent architect and a landscape contractor. The lecture series had the added benefit of promoting further dialogue and communications between these two distinct yet related groups.

Working with the Grounds Management Group, and under the chairmanship of Alder-shot Landscaping president Bill deLuca, the Landscape Contractors Group also developed and published a *Contractor's Rating System*. The primary objective of this document was to give clients, primarily municipalities and other government agencies, a method for determining the qualifications of companies bidding on construction projects.

An ongoing role of any trade association is the lobbying of governments at all levels to either implement new programs or legislations that would better serve their industry or to protect the industry they serve from unfavourable legislations. The year 1992 saw Landscape Ontario's participation in one of their largest and most urgent battles to date, when the current provincial NDP government introduced legislation that would give all sectors of agriculture and consequently horticulture, the right to unionize. As do most issues of this nature, the battle proved to take much longer than expected and required considerable staff input and membership resources.

Further staff changes also occurred during 1992, including the hiring of Denise Wright as Membership Services Co-ordinator and Assistant Trade Show Manager. Most of the changes, however, happened within the publishing department. Editorial director Rita Weerdenburg took on the added role of publisher, allowing Ken Muir to concentrate full time on sales as advertising manager. The acquisition of *Horticulture Review* had introduced Landscape Ontario to desktop publishing technology and it soon became preferable to have *Landscape Trades* produced in-house as well. Michelle Tait was hired as the art director and Linda Erskine's name appeared on the masthead of *Horticulture Review* in October, as editor and ad co-ordinator. By January 1993, Crispin Co was hired as the new Circulation Manager.

Although it was exciting to see the ever-increasing projects and issues being taken on by members and staff, it soon became



apparent that the association's growth needed focus and a clear direction from the membership. As a result a Strategic Planning Committee was formed. Made up of past presidents of Landscape Ontario, this committee's mandate was to work on a long range (five to 10 year) plan for the association.

The April 1992 issue of *Horticulture Review* carried a questionnaire from the Committee concerning the future of the Congress. Results were disappointing, with only six per cent of the general membership, and 38.5 per cent of the exhibitors bothering to respond. That didn't affect the outcome of the 1993 Congress, however, as once again record-breaking crowds attended the sold-out show at Copps Coliseum in Hamilton. Celebrating 20 years of growing together, the event featured Don Harron, better known as Charlie Farquharson, as the Keynote Breakfast speaker. It also marked the introduction of two new categories in the Awards of Excellence program, recognizing garden centres and nurseries for their outstanding signage, displays and growing techniques.

1993

This year saw the culmination of some initiatives started the previous year as well as the start of several new projects.

Of particular note this year were the recommendations set out by the Strategic Plan. In early 1993 all members received a copy of a preliminary draft of a Strategic Plan which aspired to address all areas of concern to the membership, both present and future. Recipients were invited to send their comments in writing to the LO office, or make them in person at local chapter meetings. Members of the Strategic Planning Committee were making arrangements to visit each chapter in order to receive feedback. Rita Weerdenburg wrote a series of articles in *Horticulture Review*, outlining the various aspects of the plan that were under consideration. A final meeting of the committee was set for November to review comments and make appropriate changes, so the finished document could be presented at the Annual General Meeting in January of 1994.

The document received unanimous approval from the membership at that time, and the members of the Strategic Planning Committee dedicated themselves to overseeing the actual implementation of the many recommendations contained in the report. Again,



Eleven of Landscape Ontario's Past Presidents were on hand at the Annual Banquet during Congress '93, and received rings inscribed with the LO logo for their dedicated service. From left to right are: Casey van Maris, Marc Thiebaud, Gordon Shuttleworth, Karl Stensson, Barry Benjamin, James McCracken, Robert Allen, Peter Olsen, Monica van Maris, Neil Vanderkruk and John Peets.

it was determined that the association's resources should be directed towards education, professionalism, and promotion.

One of the more tangible objectives set out by this document, however, concerned a more appropriate home for Landscape Ontario. If promotion of the industry was one of the association's main objectives, it was argued, should their office not be located in a setting which could more appropriately showcase the members' horticultural talents? And remember the "spacious" office facility with lots of room to spare? The staff had now grown to 10 full-time people, (plus the CNTA staff of three) and the board/meeting room was now located in the storage room!

The new facility, stated the Strategic Plan, should be at least 10 acres so that the industry could showcase their talents to the general public, have a good source of water, be close to the airport for easy accessibility to all members, and have adequate facilities for the office staff and other association functions. Eventually this new site should also be home to association-directed educational and research activities and possibly even become a nucleus for all related industry activities.

Of particular significance in 1993 was LO's continuing effort to fight proposed unionization legislation which would impact directly on horticultural and agricultural sectors.

Landscape Ontario joined a total of 21 other concerned organizations under the umbrella of the Labour Issues Coordinating Committee (LICC). By joining together as a large, unified group, not only would their voice be louder but the extensive legal costs would be shared by all. This issue was ongoing for many months before it was finally resolved with the introduction of a

separately written section of the act for agriculture and horticulture, which significantly softened the potential impact of this legislation.

Many changes were ongoing within the publishing department as well. After the resignation of Ken Muir, Steve Moyer joined the staff of Landscape Ontario in mid-1993. As advertising sales manager, he would handle all advertising accounts for both *Landscape Trades* and *Horticulture Review* magazines.

The April 15, 1993 issue of *Horticulture Review* carried the first *Nursery Stock Source Book for Ontario*, listing everything from *abies* to *zalkova* in an easy-to-read format. This format was dropped in subsequent years as advertiser and industry support was insufficient to offset the high organizational costs of a project of this nature. In the same issue, the Lawn Care Group of Landscape Ontario offered members a new *Lawn and Garden Guide* to be used as a client promotion and communications tool.

A major controversy erupted when the May 1993 issue of *Landscape Trades* carried a full-page ad from Loblaw's, complete with a picture of Dave Nichol, promoting their President's Choice lawn and garden products, and offering professionals a 10 per cent discount during May and June. Anticipating such a reaction, Chairman Harold Deenen of the LO Publishing Committee wrote a lengthy editorial defending the decision to accept the ad in question, along with others from outside the industry, or in some cases from outside Canada. He expressed the view that the N.I.M.B.Y syndrome was creeping into the thinking of some members. "In other words," he said, "free enterprise is OK, but Not In My Back Yard." The issue generated many heated discussions, and letters and



comments flowed back and forth through the magazine pages for some time.

On a more positive note, the first New Products issue of *Landscape Trades* appeared in the summer of 1993. It joined the *Source Book* published each October, and the new *Nursery Stock Source Book*, as valuable references for the industry.

1994

By 1994, Landscape Ontario members, along with their non-association counterparts



Marking the official opening of the new site with a tree planting are (l. to r.) Bob Seguin, Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy & Farm Financing Division, OMAFRA; Frans Peters, President of Landscape Ontario; Casey van Maris, Chair, LO Real Estate Committee; Ron Chatten, Councillor, Town of Halton Hills; and Gordon Krantz, Mayor of the Town of Milton.

and virtually every other industry sector in the province were fighting for economic survival as a result of a deep and unrelenting economic recession. Prices were being slashed within every sector of the industry. Standards of workmanship were suffering as a consequence and with them, the industry's reputation. In response, and based on the Strategic Plan's recommendation to promote professionalism within the industry and especially of the membership, a committee was formed to look at ways of stopping or at least slowing down this often vicious cycle. The recommendations of the Accreditation Committee, which outlined the adoption of a new Code of Ethics and guidelines for accreditation of membership were unanimously approved at the 1994 Annual



After a busy day of packing, LO staff took advantage of one last photo opportunity at the Matheson Road office. From left to right are: Linda Erskine, Crispin Co, Kim Best, Millie Bauer, Michelle Tait, Tony DiGiovanni, Carol Gordon, Sarah Willis and Rita Weerdenburg.

General Meeting.

The agenda item that drew the most interest, however, was the report from the Real Estate Committee which recommended the purchase of the former Shemin Nurseries site as the new home for Landscape Ontario. This location offered all of the recommendations, and more, of the newly-approved Strategic Plan. Following a lengthy discussion, the membership voted in favour of a motion to negotiate the purchase of the Shemin Nurseries property in partnership with a related group or company.

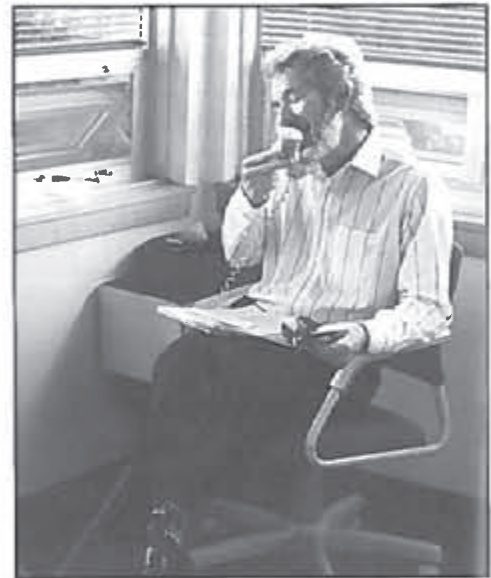
The year 1994 saw a new format for *Horticulture Review*, introduced in the January issue. Once per month readers would continue to receive the magazine-style format into which the magazine had evolved. Six more scaled-down newsletter-style issues would also be published throughout the year. The objective of this format change was to minimize the information overload some readers had complained about, while still keeping the trade up-to-date with industry and association news, coming events and classified ads.



This stone, supplied by Allstone Quarry and donated by the Toronto West Chapter, added a sense of permanence to the new facility. The installation crew is shown taking a well-deserved rest after a job well done. From left to right are Nelson Melo, José Melo, Jim Melo, Charles Wilson and Mark Tomlinson.

Meanwhile, the list of membership benefits was continuing to grow. Of particular note was the Preferred Landscape Financing Plan developed in cooperation with the Royal Bank. It would allow member firms to encourage consumers to landscape their home with the help of a Royal Bank loan.

The Garden Centre Commodity Group embarked upon an ambitious promotional program called the "Plant and Win" contest in their continuing effort to assist independent garden centres to compete effectively against the mass merchandisers. Unfortunately, lack of



CNTA Executive Director Chris Andrews started work right away in his new office.

industry cooperation and support did not see this program materialize to its full potential and it was dropped a short while later.

The Landscape Contractors Commodity Group, meanwhile, continued their semi-annual lecture series. By 1994 the series had evolved into a "history lesson" for attendees, prompting the LCCG to start their own Hall of Fame awards program, to be known as the Landscape Heritage Awards.

A Hall of Fame Award of a different type went that year to the Toronto East Chapter of Landscape Ontario, for the best overall exhibit in The Backyard Show at the Metro East Trade Centre. Chosen from over 60 displays, the LO group was recognized by both the show management and judges. Consumers attending the show also appreciated the well-informed people staffing the booth. At the other end of the city, the



Landscape Ontario's open house party brought together almost 500 industry people and was one of the most successful social functions ever hosted by the Association.

Toronto West Chapter and Landscape Ontario staff were out in full force trying to promote the benefits of using LO members, and also helping to raise enough money to save at least 25 acres of the rain forest in South America and the northern tundra. Further west, the Waterloo Chapter's annual trade and equipment show once again split the proceeds equally between the Kitchener/Waterloo Rotary Children's Centre and the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation.

The most exciting event of 1994 occurred when, after much negotiation and in spite of a number of setbacks, Landscape Ontario was able to purchase the former Shemin Nurseries site. On the strength of a membership vote at the January 1994 Annual General Meeting, the Real Estate Committee had been actively pursuing the purchase of this property in partnership with Flowers Canada. A purchase price was negotiated, but in May, after Flowers Canada withdrew from the deal, an emergency General Meeting was called. Members were asked to vote in favour of changing their original motion to allow for the purchase of the property without a partner. Given almost unanimous approval, the committee proceeded to close the deal effective June 30. The staff wasted no time in packing up furniture and files and by mid-July had made the move to the new Landscape Ontario Horticultural Centre. Besides the modern 5,600 square feet of office space, with lots of room for expansion on the second floor; the state-of-the-art 20,000 square-foot greenhouse (with even more office space) and the 15,000 square-foot warehouse with loading dock area, this facility also included a separate steel building slated for renovation as a training facility. Best of all, it was located on 46 acres of land with high visibility from Hwy. 401 and just minutes away from Pearson International Airport.

LO sought appropriate tenants to share space not required for their own use. The Canadian Nursery Trades Association, who had leased office facilities in the former location for some time, agreed to continue under the same arrangement. Vanden Bussche Irrigation, who had rented the site since Shemin's departure, agreed to stay on as tenants in the warehouse. Hofland's, a leading supplier to the floriculture industry rented the greenhouse facility and eventually

Flowers Canada joined Landscape Ontario as a tenant after the upper floor was renovated in order to accommodate the publishing department staff.

The official opening of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Centre took place on September 21. Supported by industry suppliers and coordinated by Paul Offierski, the open house attracted over 500 visitors who were treated to a delicious barbecue dinner after their opportunity to tour the site. Besides Congress, the open house was probably the largest and certainly



Millie Bauer retired in October, 1994 after 15 years with Landscape Ontario.

one of the most successful social gatherings ever of Landscape Ontario members. There was a strong feeling of goodwill and camaraderie and high expectations of what the future would bring.

Landscape Ontario took advantage of this gathering to officially say good-bye to secretary Millie Bauer who was planning to retire in October. Millie had served the association in numerous capacities for 15 years and many members were sad to see her go. She was replaced by Kathleen Pugliese.

Show Manager Jo-Anne Willetts, who had held the post since 1987, also announced she would be resigning following Congress '95. Initially hired as Trade Show Manager, she took on the role of office manager in 1988,

and filled in for several months in the absence of an Executive Director before Tony DiGiovanni was hired. She left to take on the job of coordinator of the International Garden Centre Congress slated for 1995, and being jointly hosted by Landscape Ontario and the Canadian Nursery Trades Association. Events co-ordinator and assistant show manager Diana-Lynn Hughes carried out the Congress duties on an interim basis during the search for a new manager.

1995

As expected, the acquisition of the Milton site was to have a huge impact on the association. With the new facilities available at the Horticultural Centre in Milton, the association was quick to take advantage of the provincial government's Ontario Horticultural Human Resource Council (OHHRC), to offer pre-apprenticeship training designed to equip young adults (18-24) with the basic skills necessary to work at a garden centre or as part of a landscape crew. Terry Murphy, former general manager of Shemin Nurseries (Toronto), was hired on a contract basis as the manager of the Landscape Ontario's Youth Initiatives Program and Landscape Ontario members, each well-qualified in their respective fields of expertise, were selected to teach the students. Many firms and organizations donated materials and equipment, hosted field trips, and otherwise generously supported the project.

Almost 100 applications were received for 50 positions available in the first-year 1995 course. After 12 weeks of instruction, most students were offered jobs in the industry. They were encouraged to consider



The acquisition of the Milton property made it possible for Landscape Ontario to greatly expand the educational opportunities to all sectors of the trade, from owners and managers to supervisory personnel and employees. Seen here is the graduating class of the 1995 Youth Initiatives Program.



Besides being a great way for their grower members to raise funds for the LOHTF research fund, the Research Auction is also one of Landscape Ontario's good networking opportunities, bringing together growers and their landscape and garden centre members.



Landscape Ontario's Charity Golf Tournament is an enormously successful annual event which also gives the members the opportunity to give back to the community, with all proceeds going to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children Foundation.

the full apprenticeship program, and to maintain full-time employment within the field of horticulture. The final phase was to seek evaluation and feedback from employers in order to fine tune the process and assist with any future programs. Terry Murphy was subsequently appointed Director of the OHHRC, with an office at the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Centre in Milton. The regional council operated under the national Horticultural Human Resource Council, funded through Human Resources Development Canada, with a mandate to be self-sufficient within three years of formation.

The LO Board of Directors was called upon to make another big decision in early 1995, this one involving the Congress location. Once again, Congress was outgrowing its facility and some members wished to follow the Strategic Plan's recommendation to move the show back to Toronto. However, when delegates were polled at Congress '95, the vote was almost equally split between staying in Hamilton and moving back to Toronto. Among exhibitors the vote was 54 per cent for Hamilton and 46 per cent for Toronto if facilities were of equal size. Based on expanded facilities available in Toronto in 1998, 59 per cent of the exhibitors were in favour of the move. After a good deal of discussion and controversy, on February 15 the directors finally approved the move to the Toronto Congress Centre, a converted department store warehouse located on Dixon Rd. near the airport, for Congress '96.

In March, Paul J. Day joined the staff as Trade Show Manager, bringing with him a wealth of experience, having produced over

50 trade and consumer shows across Canada since 1978. Jo-Anne Willets had managed the show from her home office, but with the hiring of a new manager, the time had come to move the show's management back to the Landscape Ontario office in order to take better advantage of staff resources.

1995 saw the formation of another commodity group under the umbrella of Landscape Ontario, this one to serve the needs of Hydroseeding & Erosion Control Specialists. At the inaugural meeting held on April 7, a number of goals were set, including the adoption of specification standards, and development of educational programs and a manual of practice. A general meeting and barbecue was planned for the summer to help spread the word about the new group. Due to lack of sufficient support from this particular sector, this commodity group was later discontinued.

Meanwhile, active membership in Landscape Ontario was becoming harder to obtain, thanks to the accreditation procedures for new members approved by the membership at the previous year's annual general meeting. The result was a drop in the number of applications accepted, from about 200 out of 220, to only 100 from the same number. Once accepted, members were expected to abide by the Code of Ethics, and any member who committed three verifiable infractions against it would lose their membership. There was some concern about the financial impact to the association due to declining numbers of companies approved as members of Landscape Ontario. Proponents of the accreditation system believed that increased standards of professionalism would

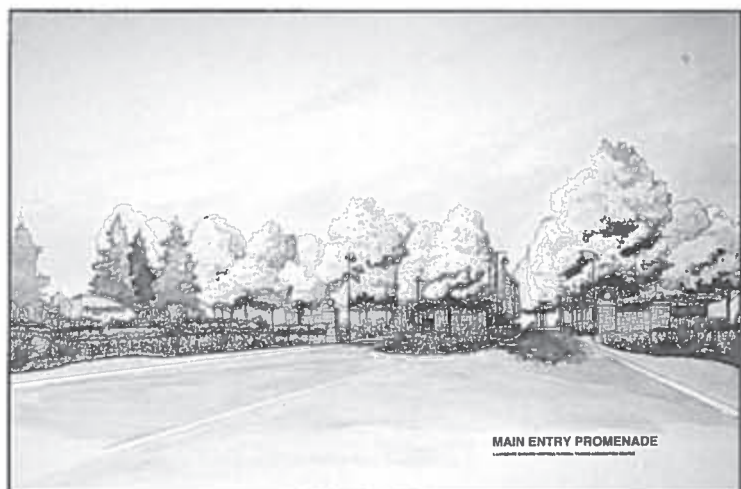
soon attract even more members, however, and stood firm in their resolution to maintain these high standards of acceptance.

In cases of a dispute between a client and a member over a finished project, LO offered an unbiased mediation service to help solve the problem. With increased promotion of both the membership and LO's professional standards, LO found an ever-increasing need for this service. The intention is not to offer a resolution, explained Ann Granatier in a subsequent *Horticulture Review* article, but rather to offer a mechanism for successful resolution between the parties concerned by offering an unbiased, professionally prepared report on the quality of the workmanship in question.

Further staff changes also took place in the publishing division. Robert Ellidge replaced Kim Best as production manager of *Horticulture Review* and later that year, Peter Wing was hired to replace Michelle Tait as art director of *Landscape Trades*. Both Kim and Michelle left to further their careers in other positions.

Also in 1995, Landscape Ontario continued their lobbying efforts to stop unfair competition from the public sector. One of the primary culprits was the Ministry of Natural Resources who had been growing and supplying seedlings for many years. Their practice of not only selling what were in effect tax-subsidized seedlings at far below market value but actively advertising these very low prices was seen by members as unfair competition and a blatant misuse of public funds.

According to Landscape Ontario Executive Director Tony DiGiovanni,



Under the guidance of the Building Management Committee, Landscape Ontario wasted no time in developing a long range master plan for their Milton site. With generous donations and assistance from members, the first phase of landscape construction was scheduled for the late summer of 1997.

Ministry of Natural Resources officials were always sensitive to the needs of private industry but, due in part to the mandate of the then NDP government, very little progress had been made in the last five years. However, with the newly-elected Progressive Conservatives, there was renewed hope that this issue could be resolved to the mutual benefit of the industry, the Ministry and ultimately, Ontario's taxpayers. A meeting was held in September 1995 to revive LO's lobbying efforts, and a proposal was sent to the Minister of Natural Resources that would save the government millions of dollars and at the same time nurture the growth of the horticultural industry. It called for a long-term (five-year) strategy for MNR's withdrawal from the growing of seedlings and liners, and LO officials were optimistic about a possible final solution to this ongoing problem.

That wasn't the only matter that concerned the powers-that-be at LO during 1995. A Commentary by Rita Weerdenburg in the August issue, headed "Tell us what we're doing wrong! Please!!!," spoke about the poor attendance at courses offered during "education months" in February and March. Some were even cancelled due to lack of interest. An opportunity to attend a one-day seminar by retail consultant John Stanley of New Zealand had up until that point brought forth only seven registrations representing four companies. Yet surveys conducted in 1994 had indicated that the one thing the membership felt was needed most was increased educational activity. "Landscape Ontario," concluded Rita, "has either been misinformed of, or has misinterpreted, the needs of the membership." The article must

have hit a responsive note with some readers, as 23 garden retailers eventually showed up for the John Stanley seminar in August.

Other activities continued apace, with the Growers' Group Annual Research Auction and Field Day attracting 65 donors and 164 attendees, raising a profit of over \$21,000. Also, after a two-year absence the Growers Group summer tour returned, visiting several nurseries in Pennsylvania.

Organizers of Congress '96, to be held for the first time at the Toronto Congress Centre, announced that the trade show had been sold out since June 30, the earliest ever, and a waiting list allowed the possibility of further expansion.

Plans were under way for another 12-week course in general horticulture, in cooperation with the Ontario Horticultural Human Resource Council. Scheduled to begin in January, 1996, it was to be offered to 25 aboriginal youths between the ages of 18 and 24.

In cooperation with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, a new Retail Finance Program was offered to members. A new optional instalment plan for the payment of dues was now available, and the property at 1293 Matheson

Bldv. E. in Mississauga which formerly housed the LO/CNTA offices, on the market for a year, was finally sold.

A sad item appeared in the September 15, 1995 issue of *Horticulture Review* with the announcement of the death of G. R. Dick Sale, a friend and tireless worker for the industry since the 1950s, when he became an Associate Member of the Ontario Nurserymen's Association. In 1976, he was presented with a special plaque in honour of his work in establishing the first Allied Horticultural Trades Congress. In 1968, he founded what later became known as the Landscape Ontario Charity Golf Tournament. As well as raising charitable funds, the tournament helped foster good relations between all industry sectors. In his memory, the event would be renamed the G. R. Sale Memorial Charity Tournament.

One of the most exciting events of the year was the visit by 287 registered delegates to the International Garden Centre Congress on their first-ever tour to Canada. Three years of planning by the joint Landscape Ontario/Canadian Nursery Trades Association committee paid off with the most successful and best attended garden centre tour in the history of the IGCC. Representatives from 20 countries were treated to a whirlwind tour of southern Ontario that included historic sites, tourist attractions, botanical gardens, as well as a look at commercial nurseries and garden centres, and some recent landscape work. By the end of the five days, attendees had nothing but praise for the country, the industry, and especially the organizing committee, for the work they had done. The event realized a profit of over



G. R. "Dick" Sale



In 1995, Landscape Ontario, in partnership with the CNTA, had the opportunity to play host to almost 300 garden centre representatives from 20 different countries as the International Garden Centre Congress visited Canada for the first time in what was arguably the most successful event of its kind ever.

The C.N.T.A./L.O. National Certification Program testing was held for the first time on the L.O. site in Milton in 1996. The goal of the program is to provide national standards for those in the industry.

\$34,000, shared equally by LO and the CNTA.

1996

The year 1996 was off to a great start thanks to a very, very successful Congress. Trade show manager Paul Day, conference coordinator Diana-Lynn Hughes and the Congress Committee had good reason to be pleased with the decision to move to the Toronto Congress Centre. Exhibitors were thrilled with the abundant move-in facilities and the trade was obviously happy to see the show move back to Toronto. Attendance increased by over 20 per cent with over 9,500 visitors on hand to view the 427 exhibits and choose from over 25 seminars during the three days. The response to Landscape Ontario's Membership Services booth was also an indication that the show was now attracting a whole new audience. There was also an increase in international exhibitors and delegates, prompting a change of name to Landscape Ontario's Congress - Canada's International Horticultural Trade Show and Conference.

By January 1996, Landscape Ontario had acquired a website presence, taking the first step toward the creation of an electronic marketing forum for members. In making the announcement, Executive Director Tony DiGiovanni explained the concept in general terms, pointing out the advantages to all members. One plan would link all growers together through LO's electronic address,

allowing them to advertise their products to customers across Canada and the US. Another project would generate a computer program linking all members' availability lists, not only plant material but hard goods and other items, making it in effect an electronic source book.

Coinciding with this development was the decision by the LO Publishing Committee to reduce the frequency of *Horticulture Review* from 18 to 12 issues per year. The move was prompted by several factors, including the substantial volume of reading material going across members' desks, increased printing costs, and diminishing advertising revenues. After some discussion it was finally agreed the needs of the association would be much better served by allocating extra staff resources to other projects.

New member benefits introduced in 1996 included low MasterCard rates available to all members of the association. LO members buying and selling products to other countries could also take advantage of preferred exchange rates with a new foreign exchange service offered by the Bank of America Canada.

During the winter, LO began offering one-day professional development seminars for all sectors of the industry. The intention was to offer the courses each year during the winter months. The Winter Workshop series was held at the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Centre in Milton. Each seminar was self-contained and independent of any other. Any Landscape Ontario member

employee completing fifteen courses of any type would be awarded a Professional Development Certificate, indicating a basic level of understanding and skills development in the various subjects. Some topics were more popular than others but on the whole, the workshop program was considered to be a great success with a total attendance for that winter's program of over 850 participants. This new format, better marketing and very competitive pricing were obviously the keys to fulfilling the membership's stated mandate for increased training and educational programs.

Many times during the winter months, with the youth initiatives program, the Winter Workshop Series and committee and commodity group meetings all ongoing at the same time, not only was the parking lot full but meeting and classroom space was at a premium. Already, predictions that the Landscape Ontario Centre would be the centre of activity in the horticultural industry were coming true.

For the past several years, work had been quietly on-going behind the scenes to produce a world-class consumer flower and garden show in partnership between Landscape Ontario and the Garden Club of Toronto. With the Toronto Congress Centre booked to host Canada Blooms, The Toronto Flower & Garden Show in early March of 1997, organizational activities were now moving into high gear. Landscape Ontario had been chosen to provide show management services for this event, although most of the work would still be done by volunteers from within



Landscape Ontario's membership services department takes advantage of the large crowds attending Congress each year to attract new members.



The 47 feature garden exhibitors put their best foot forward at the first ever Canada Blooms, the Toronto Flower and Garden Show with extravagant and colourful displays.

both organizations.

Loblaws once again caused some heated debate among LO members with their agreement to be the main presenting sponsor of this consumer show. In a Commentary in the January 1996 *Horticulture Review*, publisher Rita Weerdenburg reminded readers that "mass merchandisers are now firmly imbedded into our society's retail structure - ignoring them will not make them go away." After much soul-searching, especially among garden centre members, the Board of Directors and the Garden Centre Commodity Group agreed that although a non-competitive sponsor such as a bank would have been preferable, the considerable promotional benefits to the overall industry were too valuable to dismiss.

Several staff changes occurred during 1996. Joe Sabatino became Landscape Ontario's new controller, replacing accountant Carol Gordon, who left after six years with the association. Also, Verna Loewith was hired to share administrative assistant duties with Kathleen Pugliese. In the publishing department, Harvey Bodach replaced Peter Wing who left to take a position closer to home.

1997

Canada Blooms, the Toronto Flower and Garden Show, turned out to be Landscape Ontario's crowning achievement. With a total attendance of over 70,000 visitors to the five-day show, Canada Blooms was

successful beyond anyone's most optimistic expectations. Many factors could be attributed to this consumer show's success, but a few deserve special recognition. The first was the partnership between The Garden Club of Toronto and Landscape Ontario. "Flowers are beautiful and gardens are wonderful" noted the follow-up report in *Landscape Trades*, "but combine the two creatively and the end result becomes a literal traffic stopper!" And stop the traffic they did. In fact, the only things that marred the otherwise overwhelming success of this event were parking lot congestion and traffic jams that occasionally forced the closure of Highway 401 exit ramps.

The second factor contributing to the success of the show was the enormous effort of the trade and the generosity of their suppliers in their construction of the feature garden exhibits. "Our members exhibited a standard of excellence that is without question the equal of the best in the world," wrote current LO president Paul Olsen in the follow-up issue of *Horticulture Review*.

The association's objective in their support of Canada Blooms was the promotion of horticulture and consequently the industry, to the gardening public. Again, they could never have foreseen how successful their efforts would be, as besides an attendance of over 70,000 people, Canada Blooms generated an unprecedented amount of press coverage, including almost two hours of television time, much of it on the major networks and during prime time. Newspaper and magazine coverage was also substantial.

As LO enters its second quarter-century, exciting new developments are in the works. The acquisition of the present property has already allowed some elements of the Strategic Plan to get under way, and more will follow. Every association depends on its strength on the dedication and commitment of its members. Throughout the years many people have been willing to devote their time and talents toward the success of their trade organization. Some who are actively involved today are the daughters and sons, granddaughters and grandsons, of those who had the vision to start in a small way what would eventually become Landscape Ontario. They can be justly proud of their achievements.

Then . . . 

&

Now . . . 

Concerned that the combination of the Association's name and the trillium incorporated in the logo lead many people to believe Landscape Ontario was a government organization, the board of directors gave the Promotions Committee the challenge of redesigning the logo. The new logo was presented to and approved by the members at the 1989 Annual General Meeting.



Those who served as President during the first 25 years were:

Glenn B. Peister	McLean-Peister Ltd., Kitchener	1973
Casey van Maris	Parklane Nurseries Ltd., Agincourt	1974
Marc Thiebaud	Oshawa Garden Service Ltd., Brooklin	1975
Gordon Shuttleworth	Little Tree Farm Ltd., London	1976, 1978
John Van Staveren	H. Van Staveren & Son Ltd., Whitby	1977
Karl Stensson	Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., Oakville	1979
Frank Kearney	H. C. Downham Nursery Co. Ltd., Strathroy	1980
Barry Benjamin	Weall & Cullen Nurseries Ltd., Willowdale	1981
Harold Deenen	Hank Deenen Landscaping Ltd., Scarborough	1982
James McCracken	Hugh McCracken Ltd., Brantford	1983
Douglas Taylor	London Landscape Ltd., London	1984
Robert Allen	Horticultural Services, St. Thomas	1985
Peter Olsen	Royal City Nursery, Guelph	1986
Monica van Maris	Parklane Nurseries Ltd., Gormley	1987
Neil Vanderkruk	Connon Nurseries/NVK Holdings, Waterdown	1988, 1989
John Peets	Advance Landscape Co. Ltd., Hyde Park	1990, 1991, 1992
Linda Sheely	Mother Nature Landscape Design, Ottawa	1993 (part)
Frans Peters	Humber Nurseries Ltd., Brampton	1993 (part), 1994, 1995
Paul Olsen	Brookdale Treeland Nurseries Ltd., Schomberg	1996, 1997

The following people have served five years or more on the Board of Directors:

William DeLuca	Aldershot Landscape Contractors Ltd., Burlington	from 1973
Casey van Maris	Parklane Nurseries Ltd., Agincourt	" 1973
George Blyth	The McConnell Nursery Co. Ltd., Port Burwell	" 1974
Gordon Shuttleworth	Little Tree Farm Ltd., London	" 1974
John Van Staveren	H. Van Staveren & Son Ltd., Whitby	" 1974
Frank Kearney	H. C. Downham Nursery Co. Ltd., Strathroy	" 1977
Karl Stensson	Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., Oakville	" 1977
Barry Benjamin	Weall & Cullen Nurseries Ltd., Willowdale	" 1978
Harold Deenen	Hank Deenen Landscaping Ltd., Scarborough	" 1979
Neil Vanderkruk	Connon Nurseries/NVK Holdings, Waterdown	" 1979
James McCracken	Hugh McCracken Ltd., Brantford	" 1980
Douglas Taylor	London Landscape Ltd., London	" 1981
Robert Allen	Horticultural Services, St. Thomas	" 1982
Peter Olsen	Royal City Nursery, Guelph	" 1982
Monica van Maris	Parklane Nurseries Ltd., Gormley	" 1982
Vic Palmer	The Green Team, Brampton	" 1986
Joe PePETone	Holland Park Garden Centre, Burlington	" 1986
Roger Beaulieu	Jardins Boardwalk Gardens, Tilbury	" 1989
Jonathan Buller	Hubbell's Landscape, Windsor	" 1989
John Peets	Advance Landscape Co. Ltd., Hyde Park	" 1989
Linda Sheely	Mother Nature Landscape Design, Ottawa	" 1989
Todd Baker	Baker's Nursery, Bayfield	" 1990
Douglas Coote	Envirotech Maintenance Ltd., Thorold	" 1991
Frans Peters	Humber Nurseries Limited, Brampton	" 1991

Landscape Ontario has enjoyed excellent growth in its first 25 years. The speed of development has exceeded many of the hopes and dreams of the founding members. The reason for this success can be traced to a number of timeless principles which were true 25 years ago and will continue to be true 100 years from now. As long as these guiding principles are followed, the association will continue to play a major role in the development of our great industry.

Reading through the various chapters of this 25th anniversary book, it is striking to reflect on the immense impact the association has had on the areas of education, professional development, communications, promotion, government affairs and business enhancement. Every horticultural business today has been touched and influenced in some way by the past activities of Landscape Ontario.

What are the principles that guide the association?

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The association was founded by individuals who believe they have a responsibility to take positive action to advance the industry. Association members, through their annual support, demonstrate this same dedication to responsibility. The mission and the strategic plan are evidence of the members' commitment to the principle of responsibility and the direction of their future.

2. THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTRIBUTION

Thousands of hours are contributed by the membership in the service of the industry. Those unable to contribute time show their support by renewing their membership. The association was formed and continues to develop because of contribution.

3. THE PRINCIPLE OF SYNERGY

The association was formed to harness the collective energy of its members. It is based on the idea that many individuals working together for common goal can achieve many times more than individuals on their own. The power of this group of individuals working together is much greater than those accomplishments achieved individually.

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF SHARING

The free exchange of information, ideas and support is one of the most important results, and benefits, of association membership.

As long as these principles continue to be respected, the association will continue to grow and help shape the industry for

collective benefit. Landscape Ontario has become, and will continue to be, a vital component of the industry it serves.

In many respects, the future role of Landscape Ontario is the same as its past. Our mission is to be the leader in fostering a favourable environment for the growth of the horticultural industry. Specifically, this means we will continue to play a major role in education, promotion, communications, networking, problem solving, professionalism, research, and government representation. Each of these broad areas are discussed in detail in the strategic plan but some brief comments will be offered here.

1. EDUCATION

Education is an important issue and encompasses professional development, community colleges, universities, elementary and secondary schools, apprenticeship programs, employee training and public education.

The association will continue to play an important role in all areas of education. Professional development programs will be increased and held province-wide. Internet and computer-based training will become more important. Industry directed apprenticeship and certification programs will provide effective training and evaluation tools. All schools will seek to partner with industry to ensure relevance. Practical training will be emphasized utilizing high-tech teaching tools. Landscape Ontario's training centre will become a major centre for professional development and for public education. We will have our own full-time school where the students will learn their craft by building and maintaining the landscape at the horticultural centre. Employee training manuals will be developed, particularly in the area of safety and pesticide use. The association will become a labour exchange centre for the industry.

2. PROMOTION

Promotion of the membership and industry to the public will become more important. More people will recognize Landscape Ontario members as true professionals. Canada Blooms will truly become world class and therefore help promote the members and industry to the public. We will be involved in regional consumer shows to help promote local business. We will form a marketing and public relations department to continually remind the public about the joys and benefits of landscaping and gardening

and the value of utilizing Landscape Ontario members. We will be more involved in consumer magazine and television programs. We will form an export group to help promote Ontario Horticulture to world markets. Our website will become an important marketing tool for public and trade promotion. Group promotion will become an important growth tool.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

The magazines and trade show will continue to be the primary industry communication and network conduits. The Internet will become more important. Chapters will become better organized with their own staff helping to organize regional events. The association will continue to be "grass roots" driven.

4. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

As governments continue to downsize, the role of the association will increase as traditional government roles such as regulation, education and research are down-loaded to industry/government partnerships. We are entering an era where industry will become more independent, self sufficient and self regulating. The association will play a major role in this transition.

5. RESEARCH

The Association will play a greater role in research. Eventually a research centre will be built as part of the Horticultural Site.

6. L.O. HORTICULTURAL CENTRE

The L.O. Horticultural Centre will continue to polarize all the activity of the association. The site will develop into a major training centre for the trade and public. We will have our own full-time school. The demonstration gardens will attract the public and be a showcase for industry's talents. Our efforts in this area will be further enhanced through partnerships with related associations. The research centre will investigate those areas which will enhance the business of the membership. The government will use the horticultural centre as an example of what is possible when an industry knows what they want and where they want to be, and therefore, will be more receptive to nurturing the future.

Landscape Ontario has had a great 25 years. As long as its members continue to take responsibility, contribute ideas and resources, believe in the synergy possible through association and be willing to share, the association will continue to grow and prosper for many years to come.

AWARDS

- TRILLIUM AWARD • FRANK EWALD JUNIOR AWARD
- GARDEN COMMUNICATORS AWARD
- DUNINGTON-GRUBB AWARD • PAST PRESIDENTS' AWARD
- BEST EXHIBIT AWARD • MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE AWARD • ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD
- HUMBER COLLEGE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
- LANDSCAPE HERITAGE AWARD.



OVER THE YEARS MANY INDIVIDUALS AND organizations have been honoured by the various associations with the presentation of awards recognizing their particular achievements. Records are incomplete, so apologies to any of those whose names may have been omitted. Here are some of the recipients over the past 36 years.

The earliest such distinction was the Trillium Award, established by the Ontario Nurserymen's Association as described in this excerpt from the minutes of a combined meeting of the Board of Directors, Board of Governors and Presidents' Council held at Fitzsimmons Garden Centre on October 26, 1959:

"That a permanent award be established by the ONA with the purpose of giving recognition and appreciation to persons or firms who have made noteworthy and creative contributions to the betterment of horticulture in general, and especially of problems pertaining to the Ontario nursery industry, its service industries and its relation to the public; that a scroll be given to the person or firm chosen, and that the ONA sponsor a suitable prize in addition to the scroll, and that the award will be announced at the annual convention of the ONA."

The first Trillium Award was presented in January, 1960. In 1961, through the efforts of Dr. R. J. Hilton, the ONA was allowed to place a plaque in the main lobby of the Horticulture Building at the Ontario Agricultural College (now the University of Guelph) that would bear the names of each recipient, and the year the award was received. With the exception of 1970, it was given annually through 1974.

In 1977, Landscape Ontario reintroduced the Trillium Award, to be given only in exceptional circumstances to "an individual achieving an outstanding contribution in the field of horticulture, such as the development of a new plant or technique, or for design of an outstanding project or construction of an outstanding landscape project."



TRILLIUM AWARD

1960 - H. B. Dunington-Grubb, founder of Sheridan Nurseries, was the first recipient of the Trillium Award "for his unselfish efforts to create the Meadowvale Botanical Garden, thereby bringing the products of our industry closer to the public, and stimulating interest in plants and education." J. V. Stensson (right) is pictured here accepting the award from Herbert Neumann on Mr. Grubb's behalf.



1964 - Spencer D. McConnell (right) of McConnell Nursery Co. Ltd., Port Burwell, received his award from CNTA President Len Cullen "for his many years of devoted service to the furtherance of the nursery industry in Canada."



1961 - R. Warren Oliver (right) of the Research Branch of the Canada Department of Agriculture received the award, being presented here by Dr. R. J. Hilton of the University of Guelph, as ONA President Leno Mori looks on.



1965 - Constant DeGroot (right) of Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., Oakville, "in general recognition of a generation of devoted service to the horticultural industry; in particular recognition of his unending efforts toward the selection and development of new and improved plant varieties and methods of plant propagation." The



presenter was ONTA Past President Robert Nielsen.

1962 - Dr. E. Frank Palmer (left), a former head of the Department of Horticulture at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, and former Director of the Vineland Experimental Station, whose award was presented by then recently retired Ontario Deputy Minister of Agriculture Dr. C. D. Graham.



1963 - Leslie Hancock (left) of Woodland Nurseries, Cooksville, was given his award for his notable contribution to ornamental horticulture in the fields of plant propagation, plant development, teaching and writing, and for his genuine concern for the interests of the Canadian nurseryman. Dr. E. Frank Palmer was the presenter.



1967 - John A. Weall (left), a former professor at the University of Guelph, "for outstanding contribution to horticulture ... teaching university students to understand and enjoy landscape garden-



ing." Len Cullen once again presented the award.



1968 - Robert Calvert (left) receives his award from J. V. Stensson



1973 - Howard C. Downham (right) of H. C. Downham Nursery Co. Ltd., Strathroy, received his award from his long-time associate Frank Fidler, "for outstanding service to horticulture, and in

recognition of over 50 years of service to the nursery industry in Canada."

1969 - Knute M. (Matt) Broman (left) of Queenston, Ontario, received his award from ONTA Past President Hugh McCracken "for his work as first superintendent of the Niagara Parks Commission's Training School for Apprentice Gardeners, now known as the School of Horticulture."



1977 - Gerald Brouwer (right) of Brouwer Sod Farms Ltd., Keswick, was given his award by John Van Staveren, President of Landscape Ontario, "for his invention and development of one of the most effective labour-saving devices ever created specifically for our industry - the Brouwer Sod Harvester."

1971 - J. V. (Bill) Stensson (right) of Sheridan Nurseries Ltd., Oakville, "in recognition of over 25 years of service in the horticultural industry through countless hours of dedication to trade organization minutiae." Presenting the award was ONTA Past President Frank Fitzelle.



1985 - Len Cullen (right) received the plaque from Awards Chairman Jim McCracken "for his vision and determination as reflected in the design, construction and operation of Cullen Gardens, Whitby, Ontario."

1972 - Keith Laver (right) of Pinehaven Nurseries Ltd., Cooksville, received his award from Art Drysdale.



1987 - Casey van Maris (left) received the award from LO President Peter Olsen for Park Lane Model Gardens.



TRILLIUM AWARD WINNERS (NO PHOTOS AVAILABLE)

1966 - Minerva Castle of Rowancroft Gardens, Meadowvale, received the award "for her work in making available to the public some of the most beautiful flowering plants known to horticulture; for her plant breeding work, notably in hybrid lilac improvement, and for her lifelong devotion to horticulture for its own sake."

1974 - Robert Nielsen of Robert Nielsen & Son Nurseries, Oakville, "in recognition of his many years of service to the industry."

1988 - Harold Crawford and C. E. "Ted" McNinch, "for the development of the Ontario Diploma in Horticulture education program."

1991 - Edward Bryant, for broadening the scope of the landscape industry by introducing 'Unilock' paving stone for Canada, promoting and expanding its use, which encouraged the growth and advancement of our trade."

1992 - Leno Mori, "for his commitment of time and financial input to have Dygall[®] registered in Canada to combat crown gall."

1993 - Angelo and Tony Risi, Risi Stone Ltd., Gormley, "for their introduction, manufacture and promotion of concrete retaining wall systems."

1994 - Karl Stensson, "for his outstanding support of the horticulture industry and Landscape Ontario."

1996 - Garden Club of Toronto, "for their outstanding efforts toward the advancement of horticulture and creating and promoting interest in gardening."

FRANK EWALD JUNIOR AWARD

The Frank Ewald Junior Nurseryman's award, given by Frank Ewald of Ewald's Highway Nurseries, Branchton, a charter member of the ONA, was first given out in 1961. It was to be "presented annually to the son or employee, under 35 years of age, of a member of the Ontario Nurserymen's Association, voted by the Directors as having made the greatest contribution during the year to the growth or welfare of the Association." In his remarks, Mr. Ewald further stated: "It is hoped that the incentive of possible recognition will encourage many young men to lend their talents and energies to ensuring the continued growth of the Association. It is felt that ambitious young nurserymen will welcome the opportunity to serve their industry through the ONA, and that leaders of the future will be developed in this way."

By 1964, when making the presentation, Mr. Ewald explained that his purpose in giving the award was to honour the son or daughter of a member, because that year's "nurseryman" was a "nurserywoman." In 1965, it was suggested that he change the name from "Junior" to a more suitable title. This was also suggested again in 1967, however the name Frank Ewald Junior Award is still in use.



1961 - Peter Nielsen (right) of Robert Nielsen & Son Nurseries, Oakville, received the first annual Junior Nurseryman's Award from donor Frank Ewald, "for his enthusiastic efforts on behalf of the Association, and in particular for bringing so many new members into the ONA during the past year."



1965 - Art C. Drysdale, Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville, was presented with his award by Lynda Rundle.



1964 - Lynda Rundle, A. W. Rundle Garden Centre, Oshawa (shown above right, behind Mrs. Spencer McConnell) was the second recipient to receive the award from Frank Ewald.



1968 - Barry Benjamin (right), Roy A. Nicholson Ltd., Burlington, receives his award from Peter Nielsen.



1969 - E. J. "Bud" Hebel Jr. (right), York Nursery, Kitchener, was presented with the silver bowl by Barry Benjamin, "for his work with the association, as Treasurer."



1976 Marc Thiebaud (left), Oshawa Garden Service, Brooklin, was presented with his award by Gordon Shuttleworth "in recognition of his outstanding contributions to LO and the horticultural industry."



1970 - William D. Black Jr. (left), Braeheid Sod Supply, Waterdown, was the recipient, presented by previous winner E. J. "Bud" Hebel Jr.



1977 - Donald Ziraldo (right), of Ziraldo Farms & Nurseries, St. Catharines, was honoured to receive the award from the original donor, Frank Ewald.



1971 - Michael Laver (left) of Pinehaven Nurseries, Cooksville, received the award from William D. Black Jr.



1978 - Gordon Shuttleworth (left), Little Tree Farm, London, a two-time President of Landscape Ontario and the 1978 Congress Chairman, received his award from President John Van Staveren.



1972 - Knox M. Henry (left), Brookdale-Kingsway, Bowmanville, accepted his award from Michael Laver.



1980 - Frank Kearney (left), H. C. Downham Nursery, Strathroy, receives his award from Casey van Maris.



1973 - Keith Overbaugh (right), Plant Products, Bramalea, shown here with the previous year's winner, Knox Henry.



1981 - Karl Stenson (right), Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville, was presented with the award by then CNTA President Marc Thiebaud.





GARDEN COMMUNICATORS AWARD

The first Garden Writers Award was given by the Ontario Nursery Trades Association in 1968. In 1970, the award was transferred to the Allied Horticultural Trades Congress. With the amalgamation of the three associations it became the Landscape Ontario Garden Writers Award, and by 1991 had been re-named the Garden Communicators Award.



1982 - Harold Deenen (right), Hank Deenen Landscaping, Scarborough, accepts the award from Frank Kearney.



1986 - James McCracken (left), of Hugh McCracken Ltd., Brantford, was given his award by previous winner Harold Deenen.



1968 - John Bradshaw (left) was the recipient of the first annual Garden Writers Award. He is shown here with presenter Art Drysdale.



1972 - Robert Keith (left) garden writer and broadcaster, received his award from Congress Chairman John Midlane, "for outstanding contribution to ornamental horticulture through the medium of consumer journalism."



1969 A. Earl Cox (right), noted TV and radio garden commentator of the CBC, received his award from Spencer McConnell.



1976 - Casey van Maris received the award "in recognition of his contributions to the Landscape Ontario magazine through his "Casey's Corner." Monica van Maris (right) accepted the award on behalf of her husband, presented by LO Executive Director Tom Harkness.



1970 - W. E. "Bill" Hartnoll (left), was given the award by ONTA President Leonard Hoare "in recognition of his outstanding contribution to ornamental horticulture through the medium of consumer journalism."

FRANK EWALD JUNIOR AWARD (NO PHOTOS AVAILABLE)

1966 - Joseph Pokluda, Sheridan Nurseries, Georgetown, "an excellent nurseryman and plant propagator, and he has contributed much in his short time in the industry."

1974 - Paul Windover, Windover Nurseries, Petrolia.

1989 - Hank Gelderman, Jan Gelderman Landscaping, Burlington.

1992 - Anna van Maris Zalewski, Park Lane Nurseries, Gormley, "for her many hours of dedicated committee work to further the professionalism of the industry and the many causes of the association."

1993 - Gary Hebel, York Nursery, Kitchener, "for his outstanding effort in the promotion and betterment of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trade Association."

1994 - Rene Thiebaud, OGS Landscape Group, Brooklin, "who has served on the provincial Board of Directors and was instrumental in establishing the Landscape Contractors Commodity Group."

1996 - David Turnbull, Connon Nurseries/AVK Nursery Holdings, Rockton, "for his outstanding effort in the promotion and betterment of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association."



1977 - Ken Smith (right), garden columnist of the London Free Press, was presented with his award by London Chapter President David Watkins at a chapter meeting.



1979 - John Van Ast, instructor in the Landscape Technology Department, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Toronto, a regular contributor to Landscape Ontario, received the award in 1979 "for his series of articles on plant life."



1980 - Kenneth Reeves (left), author of "Plants, Answer That Work," then in its second printing. The book stemmed from a live weekly phone-in CBC radio show on which Mr. Reeves answered plant problems of listeners. He is pictured receiving the award from Dennis Souder, Executive Director of Landscape Ontario.



1981 - Art Joy (left), former consulting editor of Landscape Ontario, receives his award from Casey van Maris "for his invaluable contribution to Landscape Ontario's magazines over the years."



1986 - Mark Cullen (right) received the award from LO Communications Manager Jim Bradley "for his extensive work in both print and broadcast media."



1987 - Ross Hawthorne (left) receives the award from LO's Jim Bradley.



1993 - Brian Holley (right), of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, is pictured receiving the Garden Communicator's Award from LO Executive Director Tony DiGiovanni "for his outstanding effort in communications for the horticulture industry."



**GARDEN COMMUNICATORS AWARD
(NO PHOTOS AVAILABLE)**

1971 - Lois Wilson

1974 - Gwen Stupple, editor of *Landscape/Paysage Canada*, "in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the landscape industry through the medium of journalism."

1978 - Dr. Leslie Laking, Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, was honoured for his weekly series of Sunday morning broadcasts entitled "Growing Things."

1982 - Hugh Trueman, of Weall & Cullen Nurseries, "for his invaluable work in the area of "Green Survival" and Arbor Day.

1983 - Tom Thompson

1985 - George Dalby, Niagara Parks Commission, for his Saturday morning radio show on CKTB, St. Catharines, and his garden column for the *Niagara Falls Review* and *Kitchener Record*.

1988 - Art Drysdale

1989 - Ed Lawrence

1990 - Rita Weerdenburg

1991 - Marjorie Mason-Hogue, horticultural speaker and writer, who has also appeared on radio, television and through the various print media.

1994 - Hilary Weston and Nicole Eaton, "for heightening the awareness of gardening."

1995 - Kathy Renwald of the Gardener's Journal program on CHCH-TV, receives the award from Neil Vanderkruk "for her outstanding efforts in communications for the horticulture industry."

1996 - Janet Davis, "for her outstanding efforts in communications for the horticulture industry."



DUNINGTON-GRUBB AWARD

The Ontario Landscape Contractors Association began working on a plan in 1962 to give awards for various categories of landscape construction, and the first ones were presented at the convention banquet in January, 1963. In 1967, three special Centennial Awards were given out as well. In 1971, a new award was established honouring the late Howard Dunington-Grubb.

A program to promote public recognition was later developed through LO, to be known as the Landscape Ontario Awards for Excellence in Landscaping. The special annual Dunington-Grubb award would go to the entry chosen as the most outstanding, and the first presentations were given out at an Awards dinner in 1977.

The tradition of presenting the Dunington-Grubb Award at the January convention was carried on by the newly formed Landscape Ontario. This award is now presented at a special Awards of Excellence presentation held each year in conjunction with LO's Congress. The date of the award corresponds to the year in which the work was completed and judged, the year previous to the actual presentation ceremony.



Pictured is William Schreiber (left) of Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Mississauga, accepting the first Dunington-Grubb trophy from OLCA Awards Chairman Willy Huber in January, 1972. The company went on to win again in 1974 and 1975.

The only other three-time winner to date is Acme Environmental Landscape Design of Toronto.

DUNINGTON-GRUBB AWARD WINNERS SINCE 1977 (AS LISTED ON THE AWARD ITSELF)

- 1977 Aldershot Landscape Contractors Ltd.
- 1978 McLean Peister Ltd.
- 1982 Salivan Landscape Limited
- 1983 Laven Associates Ltd.
- 1984 Parklane Nurseries Ltd.
- 1985 Salivan Landscape Ltd.
- 1986 Oshawa Garden Service
- 1987 Acme Environmentals Landscape Design Ltd.
- 1988 Wright Landscape Maintenance Ltd.
- 1989 Oshawa Garden Service
- 1990 Shademaster Landscaping Ltd.
- 1991 Avalon Landscape Ltd.
- 1992 International Landscape Inc.
- 1993 Acme Environmentals Landscape Design Ltd.
- 1994 Acme Environmentals Landscape Design Ltd.
- 1995 Environmental Design Landscape Contractors Ltd.
- 1996 Environmental Design Landscape Contractors Ltd.
- 1996 Acme Environmentals Landscape Design Ltd.

PAST PRESIDENTS' AWARDS

Beginning in 1978, Past Presidents' Awards have been given for outstanding long-term contributions to Landscape Ontario, with three members being honoured that first year.



1980 - John Wright (left), of Wright Lawn Spray Services, Bloomingdale, receiving the Past Presidents' Award from Casey van Maris "for service to the Association."



1985 - G. R. "Dick" Sale, Hillview Farms, (the first Associate Member to receive this Award) "for dedicated service to Landscape Ontario."



1986 - Vic Palmer (right), Vic Palmer Enterprises, Bramalea, accepts the award from Immediate Past President Doug Taylor, "for his extensive efforts in building Toronto West Chapter."



1986 - Burke McNeill (right), of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, receiving an award from Doug Taylor "for his many years of dedicated service to the industry."



1992 - Audrey Partridge (left), Juergen Partridge Ltd., Brampton, "who has dedicated many years of service to the industry and association," was honoured with this presentation from Neil Vanderkruk.



1995 - David Turnbull, Connon Nurseries/AVK Nursery Holdings, Rockton, received his award from Past President John Peets "for his many years of service to the industry and association."

PAST PRESIDENTS' AWARD

(NO PHOTOS AVAILABLE)

1977 - Fred Grespan, McLean-Peister Ltd., Kitchener, "for his contribution to the Legislation and other committees."

1977 - Sydney Queripel, D. Queripel & Son Ltd., Thornhill, "for the organization of Chapters."

1977 - Jack Royle, Royle's Ornamental Trees & Shrubs, Palgrave, "for development of and improvements to the magazine."

1978 - David Watkins, Green Thumb Horticultural Services, Hyde Park, "for his presidency of, and other work for the London Chapter."

1979 - Joerg Leiss, Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville.

1980 - Jim Bauer, Landscaping & Garden Maintenance, Manotick.

1981 - Leo Bezaire, Malden Tree Farms, Windsor.

1982 - Don Klinck (posthumously), Orchard Farm Nursery, Windsor.

1982 - Bernie Bouwmeister, Modern Holland Landscaping, Unionville.

1983 - Don Salivan, D. Salivan Landscape,

Toronto, "for his many years of service to the industry and the association."

1984 - Peter Kamerman, Kamerman's Landscaping, Hamilton.

1984 - Horst Dickert, Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Mississauga.

1985 - Quint Slabbekoorn, Tritoma Nurseries, Ruthven, "for dedicated service to Landscape Ontario."

1985 - Paul Grobe, Grobe Nursery, Breslau, "for dedicated service to Landscape Ontario."

1987 - Ron Malkin.

1988 - John Peets, Advance Landscape Co. Ltd., Hyde Park.

1988 - Peter Smit, Peter Smit Landscaping, Ottawa.

1989 - Bill Stensson, Sheridan Nurseries, Oakville.

1989 - John Northwood, Lakeshore Landscape Associates, Mississauga.

1989 - Joan Johnston, Peter Knippel Nursery, Ottawa.

1990 - Ann Lederer.

1990 - Jim Wickware.

1991 - Peter Mansell, "for his contributions to the association."

1993 - Joe PePETone, Holland Park Garden Gallery, Burlington, "for dedicated service to the association and its members."

1993 - Andy DeGroot, Hensbergen & DeGroot, Markham, "for dedicated service to the association and its members."

1994 - Tom Intven, Canadale Nurseries Ltd., St. Thomas, "for his involvement in many different areas of Landscape Ontario."

1995 - Al Richards, Holland Valley Garden Centre, Newmarket, "for his many years of service to the industry and association."

1996 - Christoph Kessel, OMAF Nursery Specialist, Dept. of Horticultural Science, University of Guelph, "for his many years of service to the industry and association."

1996 - Dan Passmore, Frechete Lawn Care, Scarborough, "for his many year of service to the industry and association."

1996 - John Van Wissen, John Van Wissen Nursery & Garden Centre Inc., Norval, "for his many years of service to the industry and association."



BEST EXHIBIT AWARD

Among the first awards to be initiated by the newly-formed Landscape Ontario was one for the best exhibit at the annual Congress, starting in 1976.

Don Gillespie (right), general manager of Greendale Agents and Distributors, received the 1st Annual Landscape Ontario Best Exhibit Award at the 1976 Congress, presented by show manager David Courtin.



Alfred Knecht (centre) and John Berchtold (right) of Knecht & Berchtold Limited, Brampton, were four-time winners of the Best Exhibit award. They are seen here in 1980 being congratulated by LO's Bob Cheesman.



MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE AWARD

In 1979 a Membership Challenge Award was first established. It was to be awarded annually to the chapter with the greatest net growth in membership over the year.

Howard Gallup, President of Waterloo Chapter, accepts the first Membership Challenge Award for the greatest net growth in 1979. Presenting the award is Executive Director Dennis Souder as John Wright, also of Waterloo Chapter, looks on.



In an interesting sidelight, Howard Gallup's presidency of the Waterloo Chapter caused some controversy at the provincial level, owing to the fact that he was an associate, rather than active member of the association.

The Membership Challenge Award for 1980 went to the Toronto Chapter. Accepting on their behalf from Executive Director Robert Cheesman is Ed Eggengoor (centre), as Membership Services Chairman David Watkins holds the silver tray.



Some of the other winning chapters over the years have been:

- London Chapter - 1981, 1986, 1991
- Ottawa Chapter - 1982, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1995
- Hamilton Chapter - 1985
- Toronto East Chapter - 1988
- Windsor Chapter - 1992

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

1991 saw the beginning of the L.O. Environmental Award.

1992 - Henry Koch, of the Arboretum at the University of Guelph, received the Environmental Award from Neil Vander-kruk in 1992 "for his outstanding achievement in research on native plant material."



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD (NO PHOTOS AVAILABLE)

1991 - Union Gas Ltd., "for its commitment to encouraging the planting of trees with their promotion of Arbor Week programs throughout southwestern Ontario."

1992 - TV Ontario "for its commitment and leadership in promoting the planting of over 5000 trees at schools throughout Ontario."

1993 - Forestry Canada, "for their visionary promotion and organization of community tree-planting programs in Canada."

1994 - Horst Dickert, "for advancement of the principles of site development - 'returning the soil to its agricultural potential.'"

1995 - The Elgin/St. Thomas Arbor Week Committee, "for their outstanding efforts in coordinating the promotion of public awareness of Arbor Week in Elgin County."



HUMBER COLLEGE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The Humber College Achievement Award was offered for the first time in 1992 to a former Humber graduate working in the industry. In 1993 this was expanded to include former graduates of any Ontario community college working in the industry for a minimum of two and maximum of four years.

In 1995, Pierre Parent (right), International Landscaping Inc., a graduate of the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture, received the Humber College Achievement award from LO Executive Director Tony DiGiovanni.



HUMBER COLLEGE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD (NO PHOTOS AVAILABLE)

1992 - Paul Howard, a top Humber College student served as president of the Humber Horticultural Alumni and on the Toronto East Chapter board of Directors.

1993 - Charles Wilson, Bruce Wilson Landscaping, Kleinburg, recognized for the integral role he played in the revival of the ailing Toronto West Chapter.

1994 - Margaret Mastromatteo, a professional hard-working graduate of Humber College in 1992, skilled in both landscape maintenance and construction.

LANDSCAPE HERITAGE AWARD

The Landscape Contractors Commodity Group started their Landscape Heritage Awards in 1994, "to honour those individuals who, through their commitment, dedication and hard work have left a legacy of excellence which has positively influenced the development of our profession."

1994 - Joseph DeLuca (right), Aldershot Landscape Contractors Ltd., Burlington, one of the first recipients of the Landscape Heritage Award.



1994 - Leslie Solty Jr., seen here in 1964, was the recipient of a Landscape Heritage award in memoriam.

The award to Leslie Solty Jr. was accepted by his wife Elizabeth and sons Nick and Frank (below).



1994 - John Putzer (right), M. Putzer Hornby Nurseries, Hornby, is seen receiving the award from Landscape Contractors' Commodity Group Chair Bill Hewick.



1994 - Frank Braun, of Braun Nursery Ltd., Mount Hope, was unable to attend the award presentation. He is pictured here as he appeared in a 1962 photo of the ONTA Board of Directors.





HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

To date, only four Honorary Life Memberships have been granted in Landscape Ontario. They are described as "distinguished individuals of outstanding accomplishment or contribution to the horticultural industry or the Corporation." Nomination in writing must be made by five active members, and approved by the Board of Directors. Honorary members have all the obligations and privileges of active members, but membership dues are waived and traditionally, they receive full Congress registration.



Burke McNeill (left) was presented with his plaque by LO President Harold Deenen in 1982, nine years after becoming the first Honorary Life Member of Landscape Ontario.

At the first general meeting on March 28, 1973, D. Burke McNeill, at that time Extension Horticulturist (Nursery) with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, became the first recipient in recognition of his work as Chairman of the Unity Committee. At that time he was presented with a pair of cufflinks bearing the LO logo. In November of 1987 he was once again the guest of honour, this time at a dinner hosted by the LO Growers' Group to thank him for his many years of friendship and service to the industry. The occasion marked his move from Nursery Specialist to Horticultural Crop Advisor - Fruit Crops. He retired from his position with the Plant Industry Branch on April 30, 1993. In typical fashion, he requested that "no big deal be made" of the occasion. Nevertheless, over 100 friends, family members and industry acquaintances gathered to extend their best wishes at a reception held in his honour at the Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario at Vineland Station.

In 1982, during the banquet at the



Casey van Maris (left) receives the Honorary Life Membership plaque from LO President Harold Deenen at the Congress banquet in 1982.

Landscape Ontario Congress, a second Honorary Life Membership was presented, this time to Casey van Maris. Instrumental in the original formation of LO, it was his unity proposal presented to the Ontario Horticultural Landscape Council on April 6, 1972, that served as the basis for the final outcome. In 1973 he was named the first Editor and Chairman of the Magazine Committee for *Landscape Ontario*. Elected President of LO in 1974, he reluctantly gave up his post as volunteer editor to devote time to his new position, and the office remained vacant. For a number of years he had written a column called "Casey's Corner," where he expressed his views on any number of topics concerning the industry. Now he found himself writing the "President's Message" each month, and guest writers were invited to contribute articles to "Casey's Corner" until he took up the task once again in 1975. That year he also chaired the committee that constructed the first Landscape Ontario display booth at the Canadian National Exhibition. In 1979, he and Horst Dickert conducted and tabulated a survey on the projections for labour demands over the next five years. At the time of receiving his Honorary Life Membership he was serving as a member of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation Advisory Committee, and continued to write "Casey's Corner." The following year he designed the feature area for the LO Congress. He was the Chairman of the Real Estate Committee that in 1994 recommended the purchase of the property that is now the home of Landscape Ontario, and remains active at the committee level.

Two new Honorary Life Members, Marc E. Thiebaud and Neil Vanderkruk, were welcomed in 1991.

Marc Thiebaud had been a Director in the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscape Association, and was President of the Toronto Chapter in 1974. He was also the first Treasurer of Landscape Ontario. In 1974, he became 1st Vice President, and served as President the following year. In 1976, he was the recipient of the Frank Ewald Junior Nurseryman's Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to LO and the horticultural industry. At the national level he was President of the Canadian Nursery Trades Association from 1980 until 1983. At the time he was given an Honorary Life Membership he had been Chairman of Garden Centres Canada for three years, and



Marc E. Thiebaud Neil Vanderkruk

was also a Governor of the American Association of Nurserymen and a Director of the U.S. Garden Council. In addition he was currently Chairman of the Legislation Committee for Landscape Ontario. Over the years he has continued to work in many different capacities, and in spite of health problems, remains active to this day.

Neil Vanderkruk holds the distinction of having served, to date, the most number of years on the Board of Directors. In 1979 he was elected a Director, followed by two terms as 2nd Vice President. After a four-year hiatus he returned as Treasurer in 1985, and remained on the Board until 1993. As President during 1988 and 1989, he is largely credited with steering the association through a difficult time, and setting it on a successful course for the future. Neil Vanderkruk continues to be a tireless contributor, having served on the Accreditation, Legislation, Awards and Long-Range Planning Committees. He presently sits on the Foundation & Building Management Committee.

About the Author



Gwen Stuppel's introduction to the horticulture industry began with a half-day assignment from a temporary agency, that developed into a 30-year association. Hired by the Ontario Nurserymen's Association in 1959 as assistant to Arthur Fitzsimmons, she later became Executive Secretary. During that period she also edited the association's publication, taking it from the *ONA Newsletter* to a national magazine called the *Canadian Nurseryman*.

After leaving the association in 1964, she spent six years as a sales secretary and customer service representative for a greenhouse supply firm. It was her previous experience in both the nursery and floriculture industries that led to her appointment, in 1971, as Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation, a position she held for the next six years. At the same time she once again took on the job of editing the *Canadian Nurseryman* (later *Landscape/Paysage Canada*), for which she received the 1974 Landscape Ontario Garden Writers Award.

In January of 1975, following a decision by the Canadian Nursery Trades Association to begin publishing the magazine out of their office in Ottawa, Gwen launched her own independent publication for the environmental industry. Initially called *Landscape*, it was renamed *Gardenland* to coincide with the opening of a family-owned garden centre in 1978. When the garden centre closed in 1984, Gwen was asked to carry out a one-year pilot project for the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation, doing public relations work. From 1984 to 1989, she also did some freelance writing for another greenhouse supply firm, including sales letters, magazine articles, press releases and catalogues. In December of 1988, the final edition of *Gardenland* was published.

Gwen and her husband, Jack, have five children, 10 grandchildren and to date, five great-grandchildren. They celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1996. Both retired, they now spend their summers in the Millgrove area and their winters in Florida.

Gwen was responsible for writing the history section of the 25th anniversary yearbook, approximately all of the pages preceding this biography.

Our Passport to the Future



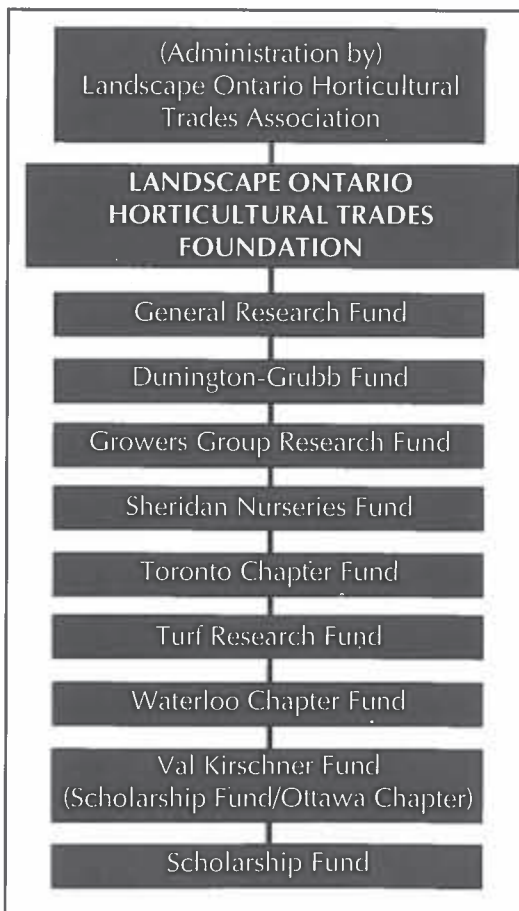
Landscape Ontario was started 25 years ago with a vision of providing our growing industry with a sense of professionalism, pride, and concrete plans for future advancement. Our three founding associations and their many dedicated volunteers saw potential in Landscape Ontario to lead, serve and protect the industry's future that still has a long journey ahead of it, and have armed us with the necessary tools to get there safely.

The Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation is our "passport to the future." Donations to the Foundation from commodity groups, chapters, events and companies ensure a continual source of funds to carry out those activities which are deemed necessary for the industry's future health and well-being. The purchase of the 48-acre horticultural centre which now houses Landscape Ontario, the Canadian Nursery Trades Association and other related associations was funded, in part by the Foundation and provides the means to promote the benefits of landscaping and gardening to the public through planned public display gardens, education centres and parks. Although the proposed horticultural centre is far from completion, improved classroom facilities, a horticultural school and a landscaped entranceway are goals, which are now within reach.

Since 1995, Landscape Ontario has held a horticultural apprenticeship program to introduce students to a potential career in horticulture. Through scholarships and an expanded horticultural school, Landscape Ontario hopes to ensure a constant supply of dedicated, hard working and knowledgeable employees to the work force.

Scholarships, research funding and the building of Landscape Ontario's horticultural centre are just some of the areas which have received funding, and thanks to an all-industry "think tank" organized in 1993, the Foundation has a clear indication of which areas need further assistance. Market research, promotion of the benefits of landscaping, as well as the need for professionalism and industry standards were all identified.

The Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation was established in 1979 to arm the association with the right tools to make their place in the industry's future. As we now approach the year 2000, it is apparent that the futuristic thinking of our forefathers have equipped us to take an even greater role than we could ever have anticipated.



25

YEARS OF CHANGE: THE NURSERY SECTOR

Both a part of, as well as suppliers to our industry, wholesale nursery growers hold a distinctive position within the ornamental horticulture industry. They are also unique in that they are expected to make huge investments in land, labour, equipment and supplies for the privilege of spending anywhere from two to 14 years in the growing of product before it is actually saleable. And, to top it all off, growers must also have the ability to look into their crystal balls to predict what landscape designers and consumers will be demanding within the same two-to 14-year period.

While no one has yet come up with any viable solutions to these particular long-standing challenges, the nursery industry has undergone numerous changes over the past 25 years. There have been significant advancements in all areas from propagation to harvesting, as growers have sought to remain competitive by improving their businesses.

Each separate facet of the growing industry has experienced their own specific changes, linked through several commonalities. Probably the most important aspect to have affected the industry as a whole has been a very distinct change in attitude. Up until 25 years ago, a nursery grower would tackle a chore to be completed with the resources at hand. This is in sharp contrast to more modern attitudes, which sees each operation being continually analysed and evaluated to determine the most cost-effective way of getting the job done. Occasionally, notable innovations have had a significant and immediate impact on growing operations. Most often, however, these improvements are small but continual contributions to an evolutionary process of change. It takes a longer term retrospective look at the whole to really judge the rate and impact of these changes.

The single most important contributing factor to this change in attitude has been the need to reduce labour costs. Long plagued by problems associated with seasonality, especially because they must compete with

industries such as construction and paving for good seasonal help, the nursery industry has been forced to attract and keep qualified staff with higher rates of pay. As a consequence, the search for practical innovations to reduce labour costs is ongoing.

The other significant change to growers'



Many innovations developed by other industries were often tested by the landscape and nursery trades for their potential in our industry. This trailer-mounted crane, which travelled the length of the trailer, was developed by the brick manufacturing industry. Today, most nurseries find there is more flexibility and ease of operation with tractor (truck) mounted cranes.

business practices has been to reduce the impact of the seasonal nature of the growing industry. Whether it is in controlling the growing environment or analyzing how to best utilize available human resources on a year-round basis, every aspect of the growing operation is governed by the need to more effectively deal with the seasonal nature of the business.

This is particularly evident in the changes witnessed over the past 25 years in the methods of propagation. Today, the spring sales season is immediately followed by the production of summer cuttings. Due

primarily to the increased understanding and use of mist propagation methods, summer cuttings, which used to be "stuck" in rows in beds of rooting media are now directly stuck in 2-1/4 to 4-inch pots in order to save the labour of potting bare root cuttings. Many growers continue to rely on stationary mist emitters, but newer and more modern greenhouses are outfitted with overhead travelling mist booms.

Taken in the winter, hardwood cuttings are usually treated with a rooting hormone and simply stored in a temperature and humidity controlled environment, allowing the cuttings to develop the callous necessary prior to root development. After appropriate cold storage treatment, cuttings can be stuck into flats or planted directly into pots and, in some instances, directly into the field in early spring.

Both methods help growers to spread the work load more evenly over the year and at the same time reduce labour costs. The increased cost of production facilities were soon offset by fewer losses and increased rates of growth. And, as nurseries are becoming larger and more sophisticated in their growing methods, it has become increasingly important to have complete control of propagation rates in this all-important first step of the production chain.

In the mid to late 1970s, it appeared as if propagation was ready to undergo a complete revolution with the introduction of *in-vitro* or tissue culture propagation.

This high-tech method, growers were told by enthusiastic proponents, could see the laboratory reproduction of thousands of true-to-variety liners from just a few leaves of a parent plant. On-going technical difficulties, however, especially the control of diseases, eventually deemed tissue culture as a less-than-practical propagation alternative. Although a few Ontario nurseries made some small, tentative experimental steps in this direction, they were soon abandoned in favour of more traditional methods. Tissue culture propagation is practised today, but only in very specialized facilities for very specialized purposes, such as the



reproduction of otherwise difficult to propagate varieties such as *Syringa* (lilac). It is considered to be cost-effective only in the "bulking-up" of new varieties. Once sufficient breeding stock is available, growers prefer to use traditional methods.

The past 25 years has seen an almost complete reversal in grower attitudes to their seed sources. At one time, most nurseries collected their own seed but, as labour costs rose, they found it more economical to purchase their seed requirements from specialized seed houses. More recently, however, growers have found that seed source plays a more important role in the plant's hardiness than originally thought. As a consequence, most have gone back to collecting their own seed. There is a future for a seed certification program in the growing industry, but past experiences have made growers very cautious.

For growers and retailers alike, the 1970s will be remembered for the introduction of container growing. There was simply no future for an industry that realized 75 per cent or more of their sales volume in only two months of the year. This was clearly too seasonal to be able to afford full-time employees or decent rates of pay. The obvious solution was to extend the sales season. Customer buying habits needed to be changed, but the first step was to have product available throughout the season. Initial attempts at container growing were experimental and very small scale. Plants responded differently to being grown above ground in pots rather than in-ground and the first real successes came only after the development of different growing media. Growers began experimenting with sand, peat and stone combinations. Today, each has their own "recipe," and as much as possible, incorporate locally-available and therefore reasonably-priced ingredients.

The type of containers plants were grown in also underwent changes. Injection molding technology was eventually replaced by the lighter weight product that was available through the newer blow-molding process. It soon became apparent that the lighter weight and lower prices of these pots were costing in other areas. Pots blew and tipped over more readily and, made without lips, were too difficult to pick up. By the 1990s, most growers had gone full circle and now prefer the more expensive but sturdier injection-molded pots.

Being grown in pots meant plants could be planted and sold throughout the season. The downside was their now above-ground roots needed winter protection. The preferred storage method soon became the plastic covered polyhouses. These hoop houses, as they are also known, were originally covered with clear plastic. To eliminate winterburn problems, earlier polyhouses were sprayed with a film of whitewash. Fortunately, the plastics'

brought pots to the machine and removed them again when they were filled. The use of self-tracking wagons, where each wagon in a train follows precisely in the tracks of the tractor which pulls it (an invention adapted from airport baggage handling wagons), has eliminated much of the costs associated with run over and damaged pots.

Other advancements such as specialized growing beds and computer-controlled irrigation and feeding systems also helped to reduce labour costs. Moving pots from the potting area to the growing area, however, continues to be a very labour-intensive operation.

Although smaller deciduous shrubs and evergreens were the first most obvious choices for container growing, by the mid-1980s, growers began experimenting with methods of adapting this technology to the growing of deciduous trees. Once again, mechanization was able to go only so far in the reduction of labour costs. Winter storage methods varied from grower to grower but essentially consisted of consolidating trees and tipping them so they could be covered with straw and/or plastic. A more recent variation has been the introduction of pot-in-pot growing technologies which eliminated the need for special winter storage techniques by keeping the roots below ground. Pots permanently installed in the ground accommodated grower pots which could easily be lifted at harvest time. Although initial research into pot-in-pot growing has yielded positive results, at present, its use in the industry is limited, due primarily to the upfront costs involved.

Another method of growing trees which evolved from container growing in the early 1980s came to be known as the gro-bag method. This growing method involved lining out trees into special fabric bags which were pre-installed in the ground. By confining the root growth into a more defined space, gro-bag trees required a smaller root ball and could be harvested at any time of the year. This method was the subject of a great deal of research in both the U.S. and Canada, and is still considered to be a viable tree production method. However, the lack of available mechanization to support this system meant that upfront labour costs were very high. Several Ontario nurseries participated in earlier experiments but today, the gro-bag method has been abandoned by all but one Ontario nursery grower.



Especially in its earlier years of development, many improvements were made to tree spade designs. Today's tree spades range from smaller three-blade designs, suitable for digging a 24- or 28-inch root ball, to larger four-spade models digging up to a 60-inch root ball. Larger truck-mounted spades are generally used as digging and transplanting machines, rather than as production harvesting equipment.

industry soon introduced a white poly-film which eliminated at least one of the labour costs associated with polyhouse storage.

Beginning in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, mechanization, especially the introduction of potting machines, made production faster, more consistent and easier on the work crews. After pots were filled with custom-blended growing media from the hopper, holes were automatically drilled in the centre to easily facilitate the planting of the liner. Turntables and conveyor belts



The most significant changes to field production technology are primarily related to advancements in mechanization. Prior to the invention of the tree planter for instance, trees were lined out in the field by hand. Although not particularly sophisticated, today's mechanized tree planters saved labour costs, made the work easier for the workers and, as the technology was refined, produced better results. Weeding was another chore that, 25 years ago, required a great deal of hand labour. Today, a complete series of innovations, from tractor-mounted cultivators to side mounted "weed badgers" complete these same chores in only a fraction of the time and with only a single person and one tractor. Mechanical weeding equipment has — and continues — to vary from operation to operation, but today, field growing techniques are carefully integrated systems which best utilize all available labour-savings devices.

Growers' attitudes towards chemical weed control have undergone an almost complete reversal over the past 25 years. First seen as *the* ultimate labour-savings solution to weed control, growers soon began to realize that the toxic soil drenches first used in the growing industry also had a long-term impact on their soils and consequently, the vitality of nursery stock. And, although the chemical industry was not long in introducing less-toxic alternatives, changing regulations as well as changing attitudes towards the environment have been responsible for an overall reduction in the use of herbicides.

It has been mainly in the area of harvesting that field production has seen the greatest advancements in the past 25 years. Various equipment companies had been experimenting with mechanical digging methods for some time, including the infamous "scoop" digger for caliper trees. This method worked well for actually digging and moving individual large trees, but as there was no way of handling them once out of the ground, the scoop digger had no real application as a production harvester. Most growers, therefore, did not invest in this technology. Individual efforts at moving larger trees might have consisted of using tractor-mounted blades or chains or a combination thereof as an "under cutter."

However, the hand-digging and drum-lacing of trees, usually on a piece-work basis, was the only effective pre-tree spade method of harvesting caliper trees.

It was not until the 1970s that the three- and four-spade diggers were first incorporated in Ontario nurseries. The spade itself mechanized the actual harvesting of the tree and the burlap-lined wire basket root containment system made the tree easy to handle and ship. It was not long before most Ontario nurseries had invested in a least one or two of these wonderful inventions. Initially, both the tree spades as well as the wire baskets were imported into Canada from



Even relatively simple innovations, such as these steel pallets with raised sides and mesh bottoms, made a big impact in the cost and effectiveness of materials handling.

U.S. manufacturers. It was not long before the wire baskets were manufactured in Ontario, first by a wire manufacturing company and eventually by a few Ontario nurseries who saw them as an ideal winter-work opportunity. The same philosophy was behind the domestic manufacture of tree spades and today, most Ontario nurseries involved in caliper tree growing and harvesting own at least one locally manufactured tree spade. And, thanks to local ingenuity, as well as a low-cost Canadian dollar, by the 1990s, nursery grower/manufacturers of both wire baskets and tree spades have been able to expand their markets into the U.S.

The harvesting of bare root trees underwent the same evolutionary process of change. Hand digging was first replaced by dozer-mounted side diggers. Eventually, this function was upgraded to include having dirt shaken off the roots at the same time. Today, U-blades mounted on high clearance tractors make digging so fast even the most experienced and best-manned crews have a

difficult time keeping up to their equipment's productivity.

The one area that has seen little in the way of mechanization over the past 25 years has been the harvesting of ornamental evergreens. Probably due to the fact that ever-increasing numbers of this crop are being produced in containers, the need to develop specialized equipment has been less urgent. Several innovations have been imported into Canada from the U.S. but as they tend to be very soil-specific, most nurseries prefer the old-fashioned hand digging method. There was a noteworthy change in this area, however, with the switch from balled and burlapped digging of ornamental evergreens to potting in fibre pots. Both nursery growers and garden centres benefited from a product that required less skill to dig, was easier to handle, was more efficient in retaining water and was more appreciated by the consumer. In order to minimize winter burn and expedite spring shipping, the bulk of field-grown evergreens are fall-dug and polyhouse stored.

Another change worthy of mention has been the move away from packaged materials beginning in the 1970s. Previously, many different varieties of shrubs and especially roses destined primarily for department store sales, were packaged in peat and plastic, with colourful wrappers depicting the plant in full bloom. This practice is still in use today, but on a greatly reduced scale.

Prior to the advent of container growing, irrigation in the nursery was often limited primarily to that which was provided by Mother Nature. Roots sitting above the ground and especially the use of soilless mixtures, however, necessitated more consistent sources of water. When water supplies are ample, overhead irrigation was, and continues to be, the most cost-effective way of watering. Drip irrigation methods, first developed for agricultural use in those countries with severely restricted water supplies, was first developed for nursery use in the U.S. where water supplies were typically more limited. The practice of "fertigation," applying fertilizers to plants through the watering system, was used by nurseries for a relatively few short years in the 1980s. Although efficient, fertigation also resulted in high rates of chemical and



especially nitrate run-off and by the late 1980s, concern for the environment saw this practice replaced by the use of slow release fertilizers.

In field production, nurseries no longer had to rely on unreliable, natural sources of irrigation thanks to the development of irrigation "guns." First developed for use by the agricultural and then the sod industry, these large, slowly travelling irrigation devices were capable of applying water to areas 90 to 100 m in circumference. Although these guns continue to be used into the 1990s, they require a huge and consistent source of water and today are used by nurseries primarily to assist in the establishment of newly lined-out trees. Requiring significantly less water, drip irrigation technologies are increasingly being used in the production of container-grown trees, both above- and in-ground. And, as the technology becomes more and more affordable, beginning in the 1990s, many nurseries have begun to invest in drip irrigation systems for their in-field caliper tree production, finding the costs are more than justified by consistent and reliable rates of growth.

Sometimes change is made possible by improvements in other related areas; transportation methods are good examples. The early 1970s saw the final decline of railways as a commonly-used means of transportation. The use of rail cars to receive loads of incoming material, especially trees for lining-out purposes, meant a great deal of extra handling as trees had to be picked up at the rail siding, loaded on the company's truck and taken back to the nursery. The same in reverse was true for out-going orders. Improved road transportation systems, allowing all orders to be shipped from, or received at, the grower's yard, helped considerably in the reduction of labour costs.

Materials' handling equipment is another good example. Although experienced labourers were relatively efficient at hand-digging caliper trees, moving the tree from the nursery to the job site was quite a different story. Trees were lifted with the use of I-beams outfitted with block and tackles and mounted to trucks or trailers. What if those labourers could have looked into their crystal balls to see the remote-operated hydraulic cranes of the 1990s?

When looked at in retrospect, changes

which may today seem insignificant, were at the time huge improvements. The switch to plastic netting as a substitute for canvas as a tarping material is a classic example. Lighter and much easier to handle, plastic netting was far superior to canvas. Trees benefited as well since plastic netting was efficient at reducing wind damage while also providing sufficient air circulation. The use of canvas tarps often caused serious damage to trees, especially when being transported over long distances during the hot summer months.

By the 1970s, large-wheeled forklifts and pallets were already in widespread use, greatly expediting the loading of potted materials into trailers. In the "good old days"



A trailer load of heavier fibre pots being stacked in layers. Customers readily accepted a few broken pots in return for greatly reduced per unit shipping charges. Today's lighter container-grown pots and the consequent development of trailer racking systems, requires less skill and less back breaking work with no damage to pots or plants.

of field-potted shrubs and evergreens, labourers who could stack pots three or even five layers deep in trailers with a minimum of damage to the pots or plants were valuable. Customers readily accepted a few squished pots or broken branches in exchange for the considerably reduced transportation costs per unit.

Nursery grower ingenuity played a large part in the development of better materials handling and shipping systems when the lighter weight of container-grown plants made it much more difficult to stack these pots. Fortunately, these lighter pots were also much more conducive to being loaded on racking systems. The design of these systems evolved over the years and varied somewhat

from nursery to nursery. Some were as simple as boards laid on ledges as the load was "built" from the front to the back of the trailer. Occasionally conveyor belts were used to more efficiently move material into the front of the trailer. Other nurseries adapted systems being used by the floriculture industry which saw racks being transported through, and loaded right in, the growing area, thereby saving on double handling of pots. By standing these racks on small, self-tracking trailers, long trains could be efficiently moved through the nursery by a single small tractor.

Although each container nursery developed a system that best met their individual needs, they all had one thing in common — the ability to cost-effectively deliver plants to their customers in excellent condition.

The need to mechanize to reduce increasing labour costs — a direct result of the need to pay higher wages in order to attract and keep key employees — is a self-perpetuating spiral that never stops. Mechanization has resulted in increasingly sophisticated growing operations which require an increasingly skilled labour force. For the most part, Ontario's community college system struggles to keep pace with the demands of the industry which tend to fluctuate with the state of the economy. At the same time, the European immigrant labour force that the entire horticultural industry once relied upon so heavily, is in a state of decline as these workers retire from the workforce. Some nurseries depend on off-shore labour to meet their very seasonal demands, while others look to Canada's new third-world

immigrant population. For the most part, upper management positions continue to be filled from within the family structure that makes up the ownership of virtually all of Ontario's nursery industry; the continued lack is for qualified help at the middle-management level.

Computer technology has also played an important, if often unacknowledged role, in the progression of the nursery industry. In the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, nurseries began computerizing both their administrative functions as well as their inventory tracking and management. (Prior to the use of computers, inventory control systems were either manual or existed solely in the minds of the owner.) At that time, a great deal of



discussion and controversy centred around the need and advisability of standardizing certain procedures and especially a nursery stock numbering system. A standardized system was eventually developed by the American Association of Nurserymen (AAN) and either adopted or adapted by some U.S. nurseries in the expectation that this would eventually be made necessary by new bar coding technologies, especially for the purpose of supplying mass merchandisers. The fact that, by and large, Ontario's nursery growers resisted these attempts did not in the long run affect their ability to supply this important marketplace sector. Bar coding itself is a prerequisite; consistency in numbering systems from nursery to nursery is not.

At least part of the nursery industry's hesitation to adopt a common numbering system could probably be attributed to the Canadian government's 1976/77 initiative to "go metric." This change had a huge impact on all businesses, and especially those involved in importing or exporting activities with our American neighbours. Inventories had to be converted to new size ranges and wholesale catalogues listed metric and imperial sizes side-by-side for many years. The large amount of trading that goes on between Canada and the U.S. resulted in many inconsistencies and today we pretty much take for granted the interchangeability between the two systems that exists in virtually all industries.

Despite the maturing of information technology, the ever-fluctuating state of nursery stock that grows, dies, freezes back, gets substituted, etc. continues to plague even the best-managed inventory control systems. Growers still find it necessary to visually check their computer printouts against actual, existing inventories to be sure they are not missing sales or acknowledging orders which they can not fill.

The Ontario nursery industry is unique in the North American marketplace as it is largely self-sufficient in terms of supply and demand. Virtually every other region of Canada and our trading partners south of the border, either can not support a growing industry and therefore become importers of nursery stock, or conversely, produce nursery stock far in excess of their means to consume their own product and as a consequence, rely on export sales to support their industry.



While many areas of nursery work have been mechanized over the past 25 years, field evergreens continue to be dug by hand. Once dug balled and burlapped, most nurseries — and their customers — now prefer the use of fibre pots.

Within Ontario however, exists a vital, increasingly sophisticated production industry which is largely supported by a major, influential population. With a few very notable exceptions, if trading outside our provincial borders were to be suspended for any reason, there would be only a nominal impact on either our supply or demand for nursery stock.

One of the main contributing factors to the growing industry's self-sufficiency lies with the increasing trend towards specialization. Increasingly, products which were once considered to be difficult and uneconomical to grow here, such as lining-out sizes of *Acer platanoides* varieties, are now being produced, in both good quantity and quality, within our provincial borders. It is particularly interesting to note that the businesses, both large and small, being taken over by the second, third and even fourth generations tend to be fairly traditional operations growing a wide assortment of nursery stock. The "new breed" of more specialized growers, however, are primarily first generation businesses started within the past 15 years or so.

Although the gardening trend continues to exceed our expectations, there is also a

general consensus among most nursery growers that we are really only seeing the tip of the iceberg of the potential demand. Attempts at coordinated marketing efforts have so far eluded the Ontario nursery industry. U.S. initiatives such as Nursery Marketing Council and Garden Council, which invited Canadian and therefore Ontario's support, were voluntary in nature and received only lukewarm support from growers on both sides of the border. Over 25 year's worth of on-again, off-again discussions about a marketing program financially supported through the sale of plant tags finally resulted in the formation of "Ontario's Gardens." Supported by most of Ontario's major growers, this marketing initiative sought to increase the sale of Ontario-grown nursery stock through the development of marketing materials for use by the retail sector. The passing of federal legislation which was to allow for the formation of a mandatory marketing agency funded through a production levy gave growers the "kick-start" they needed to get this program off the ground. Ontario's Garden was intended primarily as an interim measure while the proper legislations were put into place and the bugs worked out of this mandatory system. However, when bureaucratic bungling greatly reduced the scope of what a provincial industry agency would be able to accomplish, and it became obvious that once again a few nurseries would be voluntarily supporting the interests of the entire industry, the Ontario's Garden program lost much of its support. Neither the proposed provincial marketing agency or Ontario's Garden were officially abandoned, but both were "shelved" — until next time.

Their reluctance to support a mandatory, cooperative marketing program is the one area where the Ontario nursery industry has not undergone significant changes over the past 25 years. In all other areas, however, from propagation to harvesting, the last 25 years have indeed been a time of change. Only time will tell what the future will bring, but as we now acknowledge that, paradoxically, change is the one constant we can count on, and as the pace of change accelerates with each passing year, the next 25 years is certain to bring many new and exciting innovations as growers across the province continue to meet the many challenges of growing in the 21st century.

25 YEARS OF CHANGE: THE RETAIL SECTOR

On the surface at least, the retail garden centre industry would appear to have undergone fewer changes over the past 25 years than their counterparts in the landscape or nursery sectors. Having long since abandoned the door-to-door sales marketing methods common in the 1920s and 1930s, the structure of garden centre retailing in the early 1970s was very similar to that of the 1990s. The industry in major urban areas across Southern Ontario was dominated by larger, independent garden centres but the market was — and still is — large enough to support numerous smaller operations as well. Rural communities across the province also continue to be well-served by smaller garden centres. The relatively small concentrations of population served by this latter group has meant sales from retailing alone are not sufficient to support even a small company and most are involved in at least one or two other sectors of the industry, primarily growing and residential landscape construction.

One of the most significant changes to the structure of garden centre retailing has been the extended sales period due primarily to the advent of container growing. The achievement of this objective was well-supported by the grower industry who also found it increasingly difficult to operate financially viable companies with sales seasons limited to the months of April and May.

In the past, most deciduous shrubs and trees were sold bare root. They were dug in the fall by the grower and “heeled-in” to special holding beds by the retailer. A typical scenario would see a customer come into the retail garden centre in search of plant material for a specific purpose. After consultation with a sales person, the material to be purchased would be pulled from the heel-in, the roots wrapped with moist shingle tow or excelsior and newspaper and then loaded in

the customer’s car. The purchase might be a single rose bush or a quantity of trees and shrubs but the sales person’s time devoted to this transaction often varied little between the two.

The need to make garden centres cash-and-carry was therefore self-evident. Many began potting their deciduous trees and smaller shrubs in the early spring so they could be displayed in lath houses alongside evergreens, which were typically field potted



In the 1970s, annuals and perennials displayed on the ground (rather than at the more convenient waist height) was a common sight in many retail garden centres.

by the grower. The cost of the pot and labour was well-worth the savings realized in other areas. And while this forerunner to container growing meant that, practically speaking, nursery stock could be planted throughout summer and fall as well as in the spring, the consumer’s mind-set, based on many years of more traditional thinking, continued to impact on summer sales of nursery stock.

The growing of nursery stock in containers meant that growers could supply retailers with sufficient quantities of already-potted, competitively-priced nursery stock. It would take many years of persistent education, however, before consumer expectations were compatible with the realities — and abundant supply — of new grower technologies.

While consumers were slowly gaining

acceptance of the extended planting season concept, garden centres were increasingly anxious to increase sales at other times of the year. 25 years ago, garden centres sold only plant material; some sold related supplies such as tools, chemicals and fertilizers. In the 1970s, many garden centres greatly expanded their definition of “related supplies” and many also began adding complete new product lines such as giftware, pottery, lawn furniture and small equipment.

The need for year round sales was generated more by the need to keep key people employed full-time than the expectation of reasonable profits. For many, the sale of Christmas trees and firewood soon evolved into the sale of ornaments and accessories. Fledgling efforts eventually evolved into more sophisticated event marketing strategies and for many garden centres, Christmas has become an important — and profitable — sales season.

The most significant change, however, to the retail garden centre industry in the past 25 years has been primarily as a result of distinct changes to our consumer-oriented society as a whole. The demog-

raphics of the baby-boom generation, described by at least one well-known garden centre consultant as “a pig slowly moving through the snake that had swallowed it,” showed a maturing population with increasing amounts of disposable income, committed to their homes and above all, their gardens. With the benefit of hindsight, it is now apparent the first tentative indicators of this important trend had already begun to manifest themselves as early as the 1970s. By the mid-1990s, statistic after statistic proved what previous generations dared not even dream of: gardening had become North America’s number one leisure activity.

Related to this first change only by the fact that it was beyond the control of the industry was the stress put on the overall retail industry by the coming of the mass



merchandisers. Largely specialized, high-volume retailers, the box stores were very aggressive about capturing market share. They, too, were following the demographics; the gardening trend and the high mark-ups (not to be confused with profit margins) enjoyed by garden centres retailers soon caught their attention.

Within a very few years the pie had gotten substantially larger, but there were also a lot more companies looking for a piece of that pie.

Prior to the aggressive presence of Walmart and especially Home Depot, (after their acquisition of the wholly Canadian-owned Aikenheads), the independents were only mildly irritated by department store presence in an industry of which they had almost exclusive ownership. One of their first reactions was to lash out at the supplier industry. How dare a manufacturer of fertilizers or chemicals or nursery stock sell to the mass merchandisers, when clearly it was the efforts of the independents that had made these products and labels household names in the first place?

After a suitable length of time to vent their frustrations, the garden centre industry settled down to dealing with the realities of doing business in this new retail climate. It was futile, they soon realized, to compete on price. Garden centres soon began to focus instead on establishing their own niche in the marketplace through company and product differentiation.

Although it was true the independents could not compete on price, prices did come under scrutiny and retailers were no longer able to realize the 100 to 150 per cent mark-ups they were used to charging, especially on plant material. If gross profits were to withstand the effect of reduced mark-ups, however, it was imperative that other business strategies also be implemented.

With the proverbial "winds of change" already in the air, many retail businesses were already gearing up to face these new challenges. One of the more significant changes to have occurred within the retail sector throughout the 1970s and 1980s was the advent of the cooperative buying and marketing groups, and the consequent decline of the distributor industry which had serviced

the retail industry for so many years.

There was increasing dissatisfaction within the industry at both the manufacturer/supplier level as well as the garden centre/customer level about the role played by distributors. Both felt that distributors were merely order takers who did little to advance the interests of the supplier or the sales of the retailer. Garden centres especially felt their mark-ups on the already marked-up prices of the distributors were threatening their ability to stay competitively priced.

Through the buying power of cooperative groups, garden centres were able to negotiate better prices with their suppliers while at the same time eliminating distributor mark-ups. Initially, these group efforts sometimes worked better in theory than in reality, often to the chagrin of suppliers who

today's garden centres rely on both co-op group purchases as well as the relationships they have developed with favoured nursery growers.

Some buying groups also extended their group buying power to obtain more "bang for the buck" in their advertising and marketing efforts. It was through their pursuit of this objective that owners and managers soon found buying group memberships had an even greater advantage: that of the sharing of information and ideas. Although the buying groups were structured so that members were from different geographical areas, overall their regional differences were minor and marketing and business strategies and ideas were adaptable and of benefit to all.

The presence of the buying groups also made it possible for the independents to enjoy



Thanks to the trend in water gardening which began in the 1980s, garden centres were able to add a whole new line of products to their inventory, including water plants, prefabricated ponds and pond kits, chemicals and even fish.

occasionally complained they were being "blackmailed." These bugs were eventually worked out as the buying group industry matured and by the 1990s, most independent retail garden centres, both large and small, belonged to one of the three or four primary groups in existence in Ontario.

The purchase of nursery stock through the co-op buying structure was the one area which took a little longer to gain industry acceptance. The grower/garden centre relationship was equally important to both parties, and within both sectors, it was felt the bulk buying practices which worked well for the purchase of tools or fertilizers was not always suitable for the selective needs of each individual garden centre. Buying through their groups was not an exclusive requirement, however, and by and large,

the benefits of private label packaging. Product differentiation, the industry was told by the retail gurus (who really profited from dispensing advice in the transitional years of the mass merchandiser invasion) was key to survival in this new retail era. Most manufacturers of fertilizers and soils carried different brands for each sector. A chemical manufacturer even went so far as to develop entirely new packaging and merchandising strategies as a means of appeasing the irate independent retail garden centre industry. But would the consumer really be counted upon to recognize the difference between

Brand A and Brand B if the manufacturer's name and logo still appeared on the package?

Private label packaging turned out to be the solution to a number of problems. Not having to carry a brand name made the product — usually fertilizer, although packaged soils and mulches were also good candidates — completely different from that carried by any of the competition, mass merchandiser or otherwise. The creation of the private label package was especially well-received by those consumers who had come to trust the independents as "the gardening experts." And finally, by eliminating the need to carry a selection of products, the retail garden centre reduced their inventory requirements as well as the need to educate employees, who would inevitably be asked the question "which fertilizer should I buy."



Thanks to private label packaging, the volume and profit margins of fertilizer sales has almost been restored to the previous profitable status enjoyed by retail garden centres prior to the aggressive marketing strategies on the part of a major grocery chain in the 1970s.

The presence of the mass merchandiser, most garden centre managers soon had to concede, had made the smart retailers even smarter. It was not enough to have inventory that was different from the competition, but the management of that inventory was also crucial to economic survival. Even into the 1980s, garden centres placed their nursery stock order the previous summer or fall for spring shipment. Starting with Windsor and moving along the Highway 401 corridor to Oshawa, Kingston and eventually Ottawa, early each spring growers shipped an entire season's order to each of their garden centre customers. After the Victoria Day weekend, if the weather, and consequently business, was good, growers could expect smaller repeat orders. The inventorying, sale and care of nursery stock was the sole responsibility of the retailer. This routine had originated at a time when early ordering and delivery was necessary to ensure an adequate supply of nursery stock throughout the season. It persisted over the years primarily out of habit; it was just the way things were done.

Beginning in the mid 1980s, the economy was clearly being dominated by the retail sector and this shift was soon felt in the horticultural industry as well. Rather than being dictated to by the supplier, retailers began to understand the importance of inventory management and made their demands clear to the grower industry. Orders would be smaller and more frequent. More of the responsibility for maintenance would be on the shoulders of growers who were better equipped anyway. Retailers would be better able to manage their all-important cash flow. And valuable retail sales space would be exactly that — sales space — rather than warehouse space for growers' and manufacturers' products.

The past 25 years have been noteworthy for the development of a number of distinct

yet related trends, especially the popularity of perennials and colour in the garden. In spite of predictions by retail consultants that perennials were a growing trend and here to stay, in the late 1970s and even into the early 1980s, most garden centres were shrugging off perennials as a fad that would decline in popularity almost overnight. All but a few were reluctant to make the commitment to inventory selection and, above all, staff training. It was many years before most were ready to acknowledge perennials as a significant trend and treat them as an important part of their business.

Initially, some garden centres attributed



In an attempt to smooth out the seasonal peaks and valleys, retail garden centres have evolved into multi-faceted companies carrying a diverse range of inventory. For many garden centres, these additional product or seasonal lines, such as Christmas, are more than a way of keeping key staff employed on a year-round basis; they have become important profit centres.

the popularity of perennials to their cost-savings benefits as, unlike annuals, they did not need to be replaced every year. They eventually began to realize, however, that the main motivator behind this trend was simply that the consumer was hooked. With literally thousands of varieties to choose from and dozens of new selections being introduced every year, the breeding and grower industry was well-prepared to help retailers feed this healthy addiction.

The trend to colour in the garden can best be attributed to changing consumer demographics. While it was true that more people than ever before were gardening, gardening for the baby boom generation would not be what it was for their parents and grandparents. For most, their gardens were meant to be an extension of their homes and gardening might more accurately be described as "outdoor decorating." Growers

of bedding plants were just as helpful in fulfilling this need with an ongoing supply of new varieties. Although most annuals were (and continue to be) sold in cell-packs, the 1980s also saw the successful introduction of oversized annuals in four-inch and even one-gallon containers to cater to the demand for instant everything, including gardens.

Perennials and annuals were getting bigger, but practically everything else was getting smaller. Home lots were smaller and as a result, the demand for larger growing materials, from trees to shrubs to evergreens declined. The once popular Mountbatten and Skyrocket junipers were suddenly out of favour. Home lots could no longer support foundation plantings that included golden pfitzer or Blue Danube junipers. Maples, lindens and locust were simply too big for the average backyard. Instead the homeowner was looking for smaller and slower growing dwarf evergreens and shrubs. "Unusual" materials such spiral and pom-pom pruned evergreens were the rage of the 1990s.

Instead of the traditional cedar hedging, privacy (even more important in view of the ultra-small lot sizes) was obtained with the use of wooden fences which enclosed virtually every backyard. It was only a matter of time before the consumer found they could add colour and interest

to their gardens with vines, especially clematis.

Besides just buying plants, beginning in the 1980s consumers began accessorizing their gardens as well. Statues, fountains and particularly water gardening were suddenly important trends. As with the trend to perennials, the water gardening trend presented retailers with a number of challenges in inventory management and especially product knowledge.

It is quite possible that retail garden centres were reluctant to wholeheartedly embrace the trend to perennials and colour in the garden because of their previous, unfavourable experience with tropical plants. In the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, interior plantscaping was a hot new industry trend and the consumer demand for tropicals appeared to be insatiable. Truckload after truckload of benjamins, palms, ferns and

assorted hanging plants made their way from Florida and into the homes of the consumer via every conceivable type of retailer, from the corner variety store to the grocery and department chains as well as the independent garden centre. It soon became apparent that the market was saturated, but those consumers committed to the idea of tropicals as part of their indoor decor were continually replacing dead or dying plants. To some, the idea of being a supplier of a perishable product in a heavy-demand marketplace was a golden opportunity.

Unfortunately, this golden opportunity soon turned into a golden headache. Almost overnight, consumers decided they had had enough — there was simply not enough of a reward for the care, maintenance and replacement costs involved. Furthermore, the selection was limited and there was very little in the way of new or exciting introductions. Consumers were both discouraged and bored and they just stopped buying tropicals.

It would be fair to say that the garden centre industry was less affected by mechanization than their counterparts in the landscape and growing sectors, although the past 25 years has seen a number of notable changes in this area. The handling of bulk goods such as peat moss was made considerably easier with the introduction of forklifts, for instance. The presence of equipment also made it possible to fulfill the consumer's demand for instant landscapes and larger trees. On the whole, however, container growing had made pots lighter and easier to handle. Although the garden centres were increasingly multi-seasonal, the inevitable spring rush still made it difficult, if not impossible to adequately staff for this short period of time and the need to make customers as self-sufficient as possible was, and is, an economic necessity.

Technological changes, however, did have a significant impact on the retail industry. Most garden centres resisted the "cashless society" concept and were one of the last of the retail sectors to embrace the use of credit cards. Today, of course, credit card sales account for the majority of every garden centre's annual transactions. Based on their credit card experience, garden centre managers may have been sceptical but

nonetheless readily accepted the debit card payment system. Most have been surprised at how popular this form of payment has become with the consumer.

Although bar coding has been in wide spread use by the retail industry as a whole since the mid-1980s, very few garden centres have even considered taking this expensive technological plunge. Because of their relatively small businesses sizes and diversity of product and less-sophisticated suppliers, they have not yet been convinced there is a cost-savings benefit associated with this form of inventory management.

Any look at the past, present or future of

formation of industry standards. This has always been an emotional subject, however, and it is likely that the setting of guarantee policies will remain the prerogative of each garden centre (or buying group) for many years to come.

What are industry's predictions for its own future? As we head towards the year 2000, the changing retail climate has generated many gloomy predictions about the continued economic viability of the smaller independents. Most garden centre owners feel optimistic, however, that changing consumer expectations will, in fact, help them to stay viable in spite of the very aggressive presence of the mass merchandisers. Some believe that, in retrospect, the mass merchandisers have actually had a positive impact on our industry. Those consumers they have introduced to the concept of gardening will eventually become the customers of the independents as they gain in confidence. Niche marketing, providing value through improved service, knowledge, quality and selection will entice the professional and amateur alike to shop with the independents.

The presence of the mass merchandiser has forced the independents to not only be more sophisticated in their retailing and marketing efforts, but has also

ensured that the garden centres no longer take for granted the industry they once "owned." As the independents and box stores continue to fight for market share, each within their own territory, the consumer continues to be kept both informed and motivated. To maintain their market niches, the independents will find it necessary to be creative in their efforts to provide even more education and service.

There is a new school of thought that says we will no longer be able to rely on history in helping us predict the future. While this may be true of economic and business trends (ironically, only time will tell), there can be no disputing the retail garden centre industry has proven itself over the years to be remarkably resilient. This single characteristic alone is sure to help the industry not just survive, but prosper, as they face the new challenges of the next 25 years.



Display techniques have evolved considerably over the past 25 years and are now considered to be an important component of a retail garden centre's marketing strategy.

retail garden centres would not be complete without a discussion about guarantee policies. This has always been a hotly contested topic and has raised the ire of many owners and managers. Most retail garden centres have always had some sort of a warranty, ranging from 50 to 100 per cent replacement policies. Many have been very complicated as well, qualifying certain categories of plants as being eligible for a guarantee for different lengths of time and times of the year.

Some garden centres started making their guarantee policy a central component of their advertising strategy. Suddenly there were boasts of two- and three-year and even life-time policies. One large garden centre chain even offered to replace their competition's dead stock! Although most of the more liberal policies did not stay in effect for more than a year or two, they did have long term impacts on consumer expectations. Over the years, there has been sporadic discussion about the

25 YEARS OF CHANGE: THE LANDSCAPE SECTOR

As we struggle to keep pace with the rapid pace of change that is a reality in today's world, we are often tempted to mourn the passing of the "good old days." And, while it may be true that life was simpler and less hectic "back then," taking off the rose-coloured glasses before we begin reminiscing will often reveal that most of us wouldn't go back even if we could. Because the real truth is that, not only have we managed to adapt to or even embrace our modern world, many of us, especially those who have owned and managed their own businesses have, in fact, been active contributors to this process of change.

The landscape industry, including the construction, maintenance and lawn care sectors, witnessed many changes over the past 25 years. A look at the industry's history, however, also reveals the truism that all too often, "the more things change, the more they remain the same."

Without question, increased mechanization over the past 25 years drove many of the changes that took place in the landscape sector of the industry. Many of the chores previously done by hand in past years are today accomplished in a fraction of the time and at less cost using power equipment.

In the maintenance industry, rotary mowers have, for the most part, replaced the previously preferred reel mower of 25 years ago, due in no small measure to their simplicity of servicing and operating, as well as the higher equipment maintenance costs associated with reel mowing. Much of the hand push cutting that existed 25 years ago is now done using self-propelled walk-behind and riding mowers. With the introduction of hydrostatic transmissions and zero-turn radius cutting equipment, riding mowers are now used on lawns once considered to be too small for this type of equipment. These changes and similar innovations have minimized much of the mind-numbing, back-breaking work once associated with mowing, and it is not uncommon today to see many smaller contractors using equipment with cutting widths of 70 to 120 inches — cutting

widths once considered exclusive to golf course maintenance.

Similarly, air rakes and back pack blowers have replaced much of the work done 25 years ago using brooms and fan rakes. Thanks to the introduction of reliable, light-weight gas engines, hedge and shrub trimming, once completed using hand and electric shears, is now accomplished with gas powered hedge shears. Hand clippers, once used to trim bed edges adjacent to building walls and other vertical surfaces, have long since been replaced by the nylon filament trimmer.

The latter probably represents the most significant change to occur in the grounds maintenance industry during the past 25 years, and while it was, and continues to be, a blessing as a labour-savings device, in untrained hands it has been a curse as witnessed by the scarring and damage found at the base of many trees. At the same time, it should be remembered that it is careless people, not the nylon trimmer itself, that has wreaked this havoc. Regrettably, the negative effects of this one major innovation will be with us for many years to come.

The introduction of these and similar tools and innovations over the past 25 years allowed grounds maintenance contractors to significantly increase their business volume using less labour and physical effort than at any other time in the industry's history. Generally, these changes did not translate to increased profitability as margins shrank or remained static while the stresses and strains imposed by intermittent economic and climatic cycles continued to take their toll. Increasingly, the industry was able to do more with less, but they also realized relatively fewer financial rewards. The upside to this phenomenon, particularly in the residential market, was an overall broadening of the customer base, as services offered by contractors increasingly became more affordable to a wider range of potential clients.

On occasion during this 25-year time frame, maintenance contractors were also forced to confront and resolve problems

originating in other sectors of the industry. There were long-term repercussions resulting from the use of nylon and plastic fabrics and ropes and galvanized wire baskets as root balling materials. There were also serious consequences as a result of over-specifying and over planting of single species. An early 1990s outbreak of *Diplodia* affecting Austrian pine, for instance, showed all too clearly the problems associated with the planting of monocultures. The negative effects of improperly designed or overactive irrigation, etc. and the removal from the maintenance contractor's arsenal of many of the most effective chemicals to control insect damage, all added to the maintenance contractor's challenge.

In the construction sector, the character of the landscape industry was changed forever with the introduction of the skid-steer loader. In much the same way as tissues have invariably become "Kleenex" and snowmobiles are almost always referred to as "Skidoo's," the skid steer soon took on a leading manufacturer's brand name and continues to be referred to within the industry as "Bobcats." Small, versatile, highly manoeuvrable and affordable, skid steer loaders soon became the workhorses of the small- to medium-sized landscape contractors.

The introduction of, and improvements to larger types of equipment have also played an important role in the progress made by the landscape industry. Equipment such as hydraulic cranes, for instance, eliminated the backbreaking work of caliper tree planting. From forklifts to backhoes and trenchers, refinements made by the various equipment manufacturers reduced labour costs, made life easier for general labourers and generally increased the scope of work which could be accomplished by the landscape contractor.

Besides the skid steer loader, two other pieces of equipment introduced within the past 25 years which had a major impact on the industry throughout North America were developed right here in Ontario by, and for, the sod industry. A mechanized sod harvester, invented some years earlier but not put into production until 1972, completely



revolutionized the sod growing industry. The second was a tag-along trailer, appropriately named The Hitch-Hiker. Attached to the back of a flat-bed trailer, sod growers could now easily and efficiently deliver pallet loads of sod to any job site without having to be concerned about whether or not the contractor had a forklift and/or a qualified operator on site.

A number of products which the contracting industry of the 1990s takes for granted are, in fact, relatively new introductions. The interlocking paving stone first made its debut in Ontario in the early 1970s at the Shaw Festival (Niagara-on-the-Lake.) Manufactured in Milton, this four-sided stone was delivered "green" or uncured to the job site. Contractors recall that its square shape was very unforgiving and an improper alignment of even one-eighth inch at the beginning of a row usually meant starting over again.

Interlocking stone gained almost overnight industry acceptance and many different shapes, sizes and colours were soon introduced by a number of manufacturers within the province. The popularity of this product also led to the development of better handling and installation equipment, such as tampers. Most appreciated by today's contractors, however, were the improvements made to cutting equipment, which evolved from a Carborundum blade saw to the much more efficient diamond-blade saws with dust and heat-reducing water attachments.

Pressure treated timber is another product which was introduced within the past 25 years. For many years prior, the industry used railway ties. It was not long before these creosote-treated culls and throwaways were almost completely replaced with uniform, generally defect-free, easy-to-use and therefore labour-saving timbers. The first timbers were treated with pentachlorophenol which was soon discovered to be very toxic to both the people handling them as well as the environment in which they were installed. Government standards soon upgraded treatment standards and by the mid-70s, the industry was using the green CCA pressure-treated timbers still used today. Neater in appearance, available in a diverse

range of sizes and easy to work with, industry soon found numerous applications for this product.

More recently, the use of pressure treated timbers as a retaining wall construction material was replaced with precast stone products. Originally introduced in the early 1980s by a single manufacturer, industry was at first reluctant to use precast stone retaining walls. Although generally considered to be an attractive alternative with definite marketplace potential, contractors were at first intimidated by the weight and inflexibility of stone compared to timber. With increased competition in the interlocking stone marketplace however, the manufacturing industry was anxious to further develop this marketplace niche and soon introduced smaller and easier-to-use units.

The introduction of low voltage lighting products allowed the contracting industry to develop entirely new marketplace niches. Relatively safe and easy to install, night lighting could be designed into both new and existing projects. Although these features were heavily promoted by the manufacturing

protecting the client's landscape investment. Irrigation also became affordable enough to gain acceptance in the residential marketplace. However, despite the relative ease of design and installation features of these new and improved technologies, irrigation installation was a marketplace niche that generally was also left up to the specialized, sub-contractor industry.

It soon became apparent, however, that irrigation systems were presenting the trade, especially maintenance contractors, with a whole new set of problems. Lawns were now lush and green, but trees, especially those planted in the compacted clay and fill which characterizes most commercial and industrial sites, were drowning. And, as overwatering symptoms very closely resemble those of drought, often the problems were being compounded before a closer look revealed the true cause of stress. The cause may not have been of his making, but the diagnosis and resolution of this problem became the maintenance contractor's responsibility.

Marketplace size and trends over the past 25 years have been largely influenced by a number of outside factors. Within the commercial sector, the construction industry reaped the benefits of new legislations implemented at the municipal level. The Landscape Approvals Process, introduced by the City of Mississauga in the early 1970s, called for all new construction development, including multi-family residential, institutional and commercial, to set aside — and commit to landscaping — a significant portion of green space. Construction drawings were to be accompanied by appropriate landscape drawings, bearing an OALA (Ontario Association of Landscape Architects) stamp, before a building permit could be issued. Seeing the success of this

program, especially the impact of its aesthetic value to the municipality as well as obvious environmental benefits, with the help of cooperative lobbying between the OALA and Landscape Ontario, this policy was soon adopted by virtually all of the province's major municipalities.

Although the size of the market went up and down according to the economic conditions of the time, several factors contributed to an overall increase in residential



A large crane greatly facilitated the job of planting caliper trees on the steeply sloped roadsides of the newly constructed Highway 403.

industry, this product category received broader acceptance from a specialized sub-contractor industry which soon evolved to take advantage of marketplace demand, rather than by the general landscape contractor industry as a whole.

The same generally holds true for landscape irrigation systems. Changes to materials and technologies made the installation of irrigation systems desirable on most commercial sites as a means of



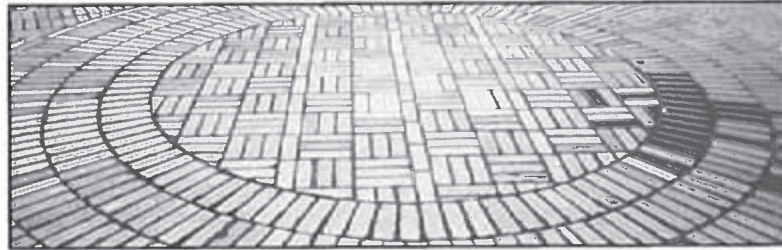
landscaping. New technologies made products and services generally more affordable. Consumers overall were enjoying an increase in their disposable income, and gardening was proving to be an increasingly significant marketplace trend.

These factors also played an important role in the development of the lawn care industry as we know it today. The original focus of spray companies was primarily large scale vegetation control for government institutions such as Ontario Hydro, the railways, etc. In the 1960s, a corporate attempt at residential lawn spray services ended with the bankruptcy of the parent company. There continued to be a modest niche, however, for smaller, locally-operated companies to offer a variety of spraying services. Subsequent endeavours into specialized lawn spray services were much more successful, and today, residential lawn care is a large, thriving, if competitive part of the industry.

The lawn care industry of the 1990s is conspicuously different from their counterparts in the maintenance and construction sectors in almost every area. While there are still many successful independents, the marketplace is largely dominated by multi-national (U.S. and Canada) corporations and large franchise operations. Especially within the franchise domain, business is first assessed for its profit potential. This is in sharp contrast to the attitude of business owners in other sectors where the focus is on making a profit on a business of choice. Servicing hundreds or even thousands of customers with small contracts, in the lawn care industry, volume counts and as a consequence, marketing is everything. From flyers to telemarketing, programs are both sophisticated and comprehensive.

By comparison, advertising and marketing efforts by the landscape and maintenance sectors are much more limited. There has been a general upward trend, however, especially since the early to mid-1980s. Once confined solely to yellow page advertising, larger companies especially are opting for a more professional look through expertly created brochures and portfolios. Smaller companies continue to rely on word-of-mouth as the old standby.

The public's concern for the environment quickly passed through its fledgling stage of the 1970s and early 1980s to a full-scale movement by the mid-1980s. Unfortunately, this movement did not, as some predicted, translate itself into extra sales for the industry. While adamant that they, and not the large corporations (who



Even before the introduction of the many different shapes and sizes of paving stones which would be introduced later, landscape contractors, especially those wishing to set themselves apart from the competition, were quick to realize the aesthetic and artistic potential of interlocking paving stones.

were obviously buying environmental respectability), were the green industry, the horticultural industry was continually frustrated in their attempts to turn the environmental movement into a business opportunity.

This movement did, however, have a significant impact on the way in which companies in all sectors were able to conduct their business. The highly visible lawn care sector came under a great deal of public scrutiny and, as a consequence, had to deal with numerous and ongoing changes to government regulations. It is particularly interesting to note that although lawn care companies had to deal with a great deal of unfavourable press, generated primarily by small but vocal activist groups, at the same time both the size of the industry and overall pesticide use by consumers continued to grow at a noticeable rate.

Environmental pressures affected the construction and maintenance sectors as well. At a time when an increasing number of companies were being handed over to the next generation, it was becoming more and more apparent that business just wasn't the way it was for dad. By the late 1980s, getting rid of garbage became a huge, often costly process. Consumers had to be convinced to keep clippings on their lawns. And, as municipalities refined the art of compost-making, all sectors of the horticultural industry were targeted as end users of this product.

Noise pollution issues began to trouble the maintenance sector when small but vocal homeowners in a number of municipalities

began their crusades to ban leaf blowers. Fortunately, this very valuable maintenance tool was also particularly important to municipal parks departments, especially in view of ongoing cutbacks. Through cooperative lobbying with valuable assistance from the manufacturer industry and a commitment to better educate their own about the responsible use of leaf blowers, proposed bans never went into effect. Leaf blower noise and air pollution caused by two-cycle engines are on-going issues which have yet to be fully resolved.

Not to be overlooked is the impact of computer technology on the landscape industry. Because of the cost of available mainframe technology, in the 1970s, only the largest corporations used computers as a business tool. By the 1980s, the personal computer was finding its way into the offices of many smaller companies, primarily as a tool to assist in administrative functions. By the 1990s, computers had revolutionized virtually all aspects of business. Besides accounting and other database functions such as organizing customer lists, computers had become important design and estimating tools as well. Today, design programs range from the very simple consumer-oriented graphics programs to the more complex CAD programs used primarily by the design industry. However, because of the high learning curve associated with those software programs considered to be suitable for industry's purposes, the industry has been relatively slow to embrace computer design technology. In the design sector, companies have coped with the rapid pace of changing technology by demanding their new employees have excellent computer skills in much the same way they used to look for people with good drafting and drawing skills. Similarly, because of the proportionately small numbers of consumers using it as a purchasing tool, the industry has also been reluctant to invest in the Internet as a sales and marketing vehicle.

Having taken advantage of new technologies and products and responded to outside influences, the landscape industry of today is significantly different than it was 25 years ago. In many ways, however, industry often complains that not enough has changed. The effect of the seasonal nature of the



industry on labour issues, for example, continues to be an ongoing concern.

Heavily dependent on a reliable labour force, despite the advances of mechanization, the landscape sector continues to face issues very similar to those of the nursery industry. The European labour force which predominated since the 1950s has since retired. The new immigrants who make up a large part of today's labour pool represent a wide diversity of backgrounds. Upper management positions are being filled from within the family structure and there is an ongoing demand for trained middle-management and supervisory labour. The availability of trained labour from the province's educational system continues to be sporadic; when the economy peaks, students are financially enticed to retain their positions. When the economy slows down, however, the lack of available positions is responsible for increased enrolments at post secondary institutions.

There also continues to be a glaring lack of industry support for government organized apprenticeship programs. This is despite the fact that industry lobbied long and hard for the official journeyman's status awarded to horticultural apprenticeship programs in the



The use of stone and water have become important trends in the landscape industry and to a large extent are a measure of how much the industry has matured over the years. Previously, only those companies employing skilled European craftsmen were able to construct landscapes which included these features.

early 1980s. From a minimum of 5,000 landscape companies registered with the Worker's Compensation Board at any given time, the number of students enrolled in apprenticeship programs in any year rarely exceeds 125.

Keeping ahead of unionization issues also remains an ongoing concern for the landscape industry. Thanks to ongoing association lobbying efforts, however, which have allowed the landscape construction

industry to maintain their horticultural status, the industry has largely been able to avoid unionization.

Professionalism issues have long troubled the landscape industry as well. Although these concerns have been somewhat addressed at the association level through the adoption of a policy to pre-qualify members, debate around the need for trade licensing has been ongoing for much more than 25 years, with very little expectation of a satisfactory resolution, one way or the other, within the near future.

Notwithstanding their concern over the public's perception of, or even their own anxiety about their own status as a professional trade, the landscape industry has made great strides over the past 25 years. A number of factors, including increased competition, more efficient materials and methods and ever-increasing public awareness have been responsible for considerable expansion of the marketplace. By global standards, the landscape construction and maintenance trades in Ontario are relatively young and, if current trends continue, the future holds a great deal of promise for the people and companies who choose to make a career in these industries.

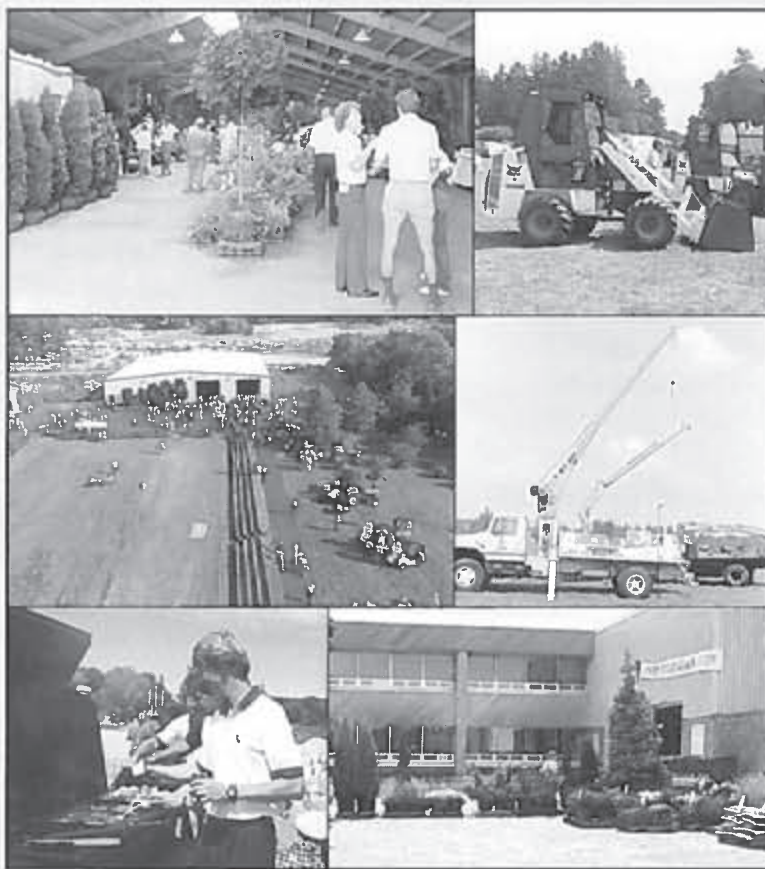
In "the good old summer time..."

Although Landscape Ontario's annual Congress was — and continues to be — the ideal opportunity for trade networking, in the summer months this role was filled by several private industry functions. Sheridan Nurseries' Annual Field Day evolved from being an annual two-day event — the first day for municipal parks departments and landscape architects and the second day to host private industry customers, to a one-day event, held every year on the third Thursday of August. This event ran from the early 1960s and was discontinued in the early 90s.

Each summer, G.C. Duke Equipment's Lawn-a-Rama attracted parks department, golf course and landscape/grounds maintenance personnel from across the province. Started in the early 1960s, the first Lawn-a-Rama attracted 40 people, a number which grew to over 2,000 visitors at this equipment show's peak. Lawn-a-Rama was discontinued in the late 1980s.

Landscape Ontario's outdoor equipment show, provided the trade with the ideal opportunity to field test equipment. Although well-supported by equipment manufacturers and dealers, poor turnout and poor weather (a record heat wave the first year and downpours of rain the year following) prompted the cancellation of "Showdown" as this two-day event was called, after its second year. Showdown was held at Bronte Creek Provincial Park, between Oakville and Burlington.

Landscape Ontario's Annual Research Auction also provided networking opportunities for the trade. Held for a number of years at Timm Enterprises, of Oakville, the auction was eventually moved to be held at a different nursery location each year. In 1995, the auction was held at the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Centre in Milton.





COMPANY PROFILES

A & T Industries Inc.
Allan Block Retaining Walls
Best Way Stone Ltd.
Braun Nursery Ltd.
Brookdale Treeland Nurseries
Limited
Canadale Nurseries Ltd.
Connon Nurseries /
NVK Holdings
Deenen Landscaping
Draglam Developments Inc.
Dutchmaster Nurseries Ltd.
Gro-Bark (Ontario) Ltd.
Heritage Green Landscape
Contractor
Humber Nurseries Ltd.
IMC Vigoro Canada Inc.
Jan Gelderman Landscaping Ltd.
Jardins Boardwalk Gardens
Kord Products
V. Kraus Nurseries Limited
McLean Peister Ltd.
Mori Nurseries
The Nu-Gro Corporation
Nutrite LP
PAO Horticultural
Parklane Nurseries
Pavestone Plus Inc.
Pickseed Canada Inc.
Premier Horticulture
Pro-Power Canada Inc.
Ritchie Feed & Seed (1982) Ltd.
Sheridan Nurseries
Soltly & Sons Ltd.
Somerville Nurseries Inc.
Specialties Robert Legault
Unilock Ltd.
United Horticultural Supply
Vanden Bussche Irrigation &
Equipment Limited
Winkelmolen Nurseries Ltd.
Wright Lawn Care and
Landscape Services

No association is greater than the sum of its parts. Although this statement was not originally directed to Landscape Ontario or the horticulture industry, it bears a ring of truth for all organizations, which depend on the strength, ideas, and ingenuity of its volunteer membership. This ingenuity and dedication to an industry is no more apparent than in the individual history of the companies, which strive to keep the industry viable, competitive and unique in this ever-expanding global marketplace.

You will hear how individuals, armed with knowledge and the realization that they could no longer provide properly for their family or their business, left their home country to start over in a yet uncharted Canadian horticulture industry. You will learn about companies which had to continually change and evolve as markets expanded and closed, due to marketplace demand and economic change. And, among these changes you will also experience their success and their joy in creating new varieties, equipment and techniques to perform faster, better and more efficiently.

It is this same membership on which Landscape Ontario relies for inspiration, dedication and expertise in every activity they undertake, whether it be to promote the industry to the consumer or to develop industry standards for growing, planting or bidding. No one needs a crystal ball to predict Landscape Ontario's place in the industry's future. A look at these impressive histories tells us that we have quite the journey ahead.

McLean-Piester Ltd.

Extending best wishes

Congratulations to Landscape Ontario on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary. Certainly a quarter of a century is a lot shorter than it used to be! However, during this period of time, Landscape Ontario has grown and expanded beyond our most optimistic expectations. Credit is due to many individuals who have contributed time, energy and leadership to achieve the degree of success and stability enjoyed by the Association today. May it continue to be a positive and necessary voice representing the horticultural trades industry throughout Ontario and beyond.

While McLean-Piester Ltd. is no longer involved in the landscape contracting business, nevertheless, we are still closely allied to the Green Industry in the operation of two "Public Play" golf courses in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. McLean-Piester Ltd., with myself and two sons, Al and Brad, and son-in-law Don Stalkie, continues to own and operate Merry-Hill Golf Course, a 27-hole, mid-length course between Kitchener and Guelph, and Innerkip Highlands Golf Course near Woodstock. Innerkip Highlands Golf Course is a longer, picturesque 18-hole layout with many trees and water hazards.

As all of our families are avid golfers, the "new" vocation, while being different from landscape contracting, is fun, challenging and most fulfilling. Since acquiring these courses, we have made and continue to make major changes and improvements to both courses.

To be honest, while we do not miss the "tender deadlines," the "deficiency lists," the tough-to-collect receivables, and rising fuel and equipment costs, etc., we have to admit that the landscape business was kind to us over many years. It was the fruit of this labour which made it possible to alter our way of life to what we now immensely enjoy.

I will always retain many fond memories of people, places and occasions experienced through many years of association with "horticulturalists" throughout Ontario and across Canada.

A significant number of Landscape Ontario members have emigrated to Canada during the last generation or so, and with them, they brought not only their fine, ethnic traditions, but also their indepth knowledge of the trade, strong work ethic and unquenchable entrepreneurial spirit. These invaluable characteristics have greatly helped the Green Industry to grow and prosper. Great strides have been made, and with the calibre of people striving to improve all aspects of the industry, our future is in good hands.

To our many friends and business associates throughout Landscape Ontario and the Canadian Nursery Trades Association/Landscape Canada, we applaud the accomplishments achieved during these last 25 years and extend our best wishes for a continuance of success in the days and years to come.

Sincerely,
Glenn B. Peister

Connon Nurseries, Neil Vanderkruk H

Although the history of Connon Nurseries, NVK Nursery Holdings Inc., dates back only as far as 1986, the company's roots are firmly established in the original parent company, Connon Nurseries Limited, which was established in 1904. Much has changed since that time, and a retrospective look at the history of Connon Nurseries reveals four very distinct phases in the company's growth and development.

Phase one begins with Major John Connon, and the gradual development of a multi-faceted horticultural company in the early 1900s. Old records clearly indicate that business for a young company in a very young industry was difficult even at the best of times and often real estate assets provided more profits than the sale of nursery stock. An original 126-acre farm located in Stoney Creek became too valuable to keep after the construction of a major highway, and by 1931/32, the business was moved to a location on Highway 5 in Waterdown. Even today this company bears the Connon name as the home of the retail garden centre.

The few available early records indicate the company was involved in many aspects of horticulture in an effort to remain financially viable, but the focus was clearly on growing and retail sales.

The second phase of the company's history begins in 1952 with the arrival of Cornelius Vanderkruk Sr. and his family. Although Mr. Vanderkruk had his own successful landscape and maintenance business in his native Holland, at that time it was generally accepted that there was a better future for himself and his family in Canada. A series of circumstances caused the family to miss the train that was to have taken them from Halifax to a waiting house and job in Windsor, Ontario. Instead, two weeks later they boarded a train for Hamilton and an uncertain future.

The family, which at that time consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Vanderkruk, five sons and two daughters, took up residence at the Old King George Hotel in Hamilton. Each day, Mr. Vanderkruk went out with a field agent in search of a job. By week's end, with only enough money left for one week's groceries, he found a position at Connon Nurseries and a nearby house on Robson Road in Waterdown.

As Major Connon by that time was 80 years of age, it must have been a great relief to him to discover he had acquired an employee

with considerable horticultural as well as management skills. It was not long before Mr. Vanderkruk was appointed general manager of the company. In 1956, Mr. Vanderkruk became a minority shareholder in the company, and bought the company outright in 1959. Major Connon continued to take an active role until he passed away in 1961.

With the help of his four sons Neil, Art, Cor and Bill, who were at that time involved in the business, each assuming responsibility for a separate aspect of the business, the company expanded rapidly. Expo

'67 is generally accepted as the industry's single most important turning point and was responsible for a considerable improvement to the marketplace. By the 1970s Connon's was experiencing close to 100 per cent increases in their volume every year.

Although less defined, the death of Mr. Vanderkruk in 1977 and the resulting takeover of operations by the three remaining sons (Bill had left earlier to start his own nursery), marks the beginning of phase three. Building on a very strong foundation, the time had come for a planned, even more aggressive expansion program, especially into the area of container growing. In less than 10 years, the company had 100 acres of containers and 400 acres of field production.

The expansion of the growing program put continued stress on the Waterdown location as well as the company's shipping facilities. A wholesale pick-up yard, the wholesale offices and improved shipping facilities were added to Connon's Hwy. #5, Peters Corner location.

The same 10-year period also saw the introduction of the third generation of Vanderkruks to the business, as each of the brothers had one or more children taking an active role in the running of the company. Very clearly, the time had come to enter into the next, most dramatic change yet, to the company's structure. In 1986, the three



What is significant is how well you work as a team, how adeptly employees who have self motivation, and the ability to take the initiative, trustworthiness and above all friendship, Connon Nurseries Neil Vanderkruk

brothers worked towards facilitating an equitable three-way split-up of the company, with Cor taking over the retail division and Neil and Art each taking over one half of the wholesale growing division. Each however, would retain the right to continue using the Connon name.

In spite of starting with roughly one-third of the sales volume of their original company, in their very first year of operations, Connon Nurseries, NVK Nursery Holdings managed to virtually match the previous year's sales of the original company. From a practical standpoint, this was achieved through the rewholesaling of nursery stock. The economy was good and demand was high and in that first year, Connon NVK's sales from their own production amounted to only 20 per cent, with the balance being purchased from suppliers across Canada and the U.S.

More importantly, however, according to president Neil Vanderkruk, was the fact that his own employees were ultimately responsible for the company taking such an aggressive stance on sales that first year. With a good infrastructure and a good

oldings Inc.



Employees interact with each other and the spirit of well being that is achieved. This is the first key to success. Without their dedication, loyalty, and hard work, Connon NVK Holdings Inc. would not exist as it is today.

management team already in place, they saw no reason why the new company could not achieve at least the same sales volume in that first year. This feat reinforced the company's long-held philosophy that a company's success lies with its employees — management's role is simply to make sure the ship is steered in the right direction.

Connon NVK's sales soared throughout the next few years, as the economy continued to improve. A real emphasis was put on increasing their own production. A preliminary propagating greenhouse was immediately outgrown and an additional facility, complete with rolling benches was constructed.

The next several years saw the addition of a large growing-on facility, constructed in three separate phases to over 50,000 sq. ft., allowing Connon NVK to achieve their target of growing at least 95 per cent of their own lining-out requirements.

All areas of Connon NVK's production have been expanded. The 30 acres of container production have more than tripled to

almost 100 acres and the 220 acres of field production have more than doubled to a current total of 450 acres in the production of caliper trees, evergreens and deciduous shrubs. There are also 10 acres devoted to a landscape pick-up yard.

Their aggressive sales program during those first few years, combined with their commitment to an expanded growing program, were to realize some significant benefits for the company when the inevitable economic recession hit in the early 1990s. Although they, along with most companies,

experienced a significant decrease in sales, Connon NVK was able to retain all of their full-time labour force and, on a reduced scale, continue their expansion program. The formula, says Neil, was easy; they simply made a huge reduction in their buying program in favour of their own nursery stock.

The company is now organized into separate departments, which, in the growing end are determined primarily by size and basic category of nursery stock. Each has their own supervisor and staff allocation. Propagation and growing-on to the one-gallon size are the responsibility of the propagation department. Another department is in charge of two- and three-gallon flowering shrubs. One looks after the two- and three-gallon coniferous production and yet another department is in charge of the three- to 20-gallon stock, which varies from euonymus to upright evergreens. There is also a separate department looking after field production and one responsible for shipping and the wholesale pick-up yard. A full-time service department keeps equipment in good condition and helps to significantly reduce down-time.

The number of full-time and full-time seasonal employees has risen every year since 1987, even during the recession. In 1997, they employed 123 full-time and full-time seasonal and an additional 43 part-time

employees. Connon NVK does not employ any off-shore labour. They do, however, ensure a consistent and reliable supply of immigrant labour in season by providing bus and van transportation from designated pick-up spots in the Hamilton area.

The list of individual employees to which the company owes its tremendous success is simply too numerous to mention here, but a few deserve special mention. Arie Van Spronsen, who took charge of Connon NVK's propagation expansion from zero to its current capacity of over one million units per year, has worked for a Connon company since 1970. Ralph Groen has kept the shipping department functioning at peak capacity for 18 years. Peter Vanschepen, who passed away in 1997, helped the company weather its roller coaster of financial affairs from 1976 until his retirement in 1996. And finally, Jan Laurin, the friendly voice answering the phone, who knows practically every customer (and most of their birthdays as well!) and has just generally been "the glue that has held the office together," has worked for Connon's since 1975.

Special thanks are also in order to the following people who have served Connon Nurseries for 15 years or more: Bob Stratford (1980), sales and service; Ed Elzinga (1976), service; Roelf Vanderlaan (1970), field production; John Benevides (1975), field supervisor; Anna Francella (1976), field production; Gerry Van Varik (1982), field production; Tony Silva (1987), service; and Maximino Batista (1986), field production.

Neil Vanderkruk saw the formation of the new Connon NVK as the ideal opportunity to immediately implement his own successful succession strategy. At the outset, he became equal 1/3 partners with his two sons, Case, who at that time had been with the company on a full-time basis for 10 years in the capacity of production manager, and Rick, in charge of sales and administration on a full-time basis for the past eight years. Although he still retains financial control of the company, by December 31, 1995, Neil had handed over the balance of company ownership to Case and Rick as equal 50/50 partners. His objective has been to not only avoid any unnecessary tax burdens on the company in future years, but also to provide the company with that winning combination of stability and the energy and new ideas of the younger generation.



Winkelmolen Nursery Ltd.



The Canadian horticultural industry has benefited tremendously from the wealth of knowledge and expertise that has been "imported" over the years by immigrants from other, primarily European countries. While the greatest influx was experienced during the post-war years of the late 1940s and early 1950s, a number of more recent arrivals have also made significant contributions.

Jan Winkelmolen and his wife Ans Mertens left Holland to start their own nursery in Canada as a result of a visit made in 1973 while Jan was still a horticultural student. He recognized immediately the potential of our relatively young industry and identified the growing of bare root trees as a large void in the Ontario marketplace.

Jan and Ans went to B.C. for two years before moving to Ontario in 1978. Here, Jan worked for a wholesale grower for six years while at the same time preparing their first 15-acre farm near the town of Lynden. Within four years the farm was filled to capacity and the search was on for more land.

Winkelmolen's quick establishment in the Ontario marketplace as suppliers of quality bare root stock is verified by the company's rapid and continual expansion. The 1984 rental of an additional 10 acres was followed two years later with the purchase of the neighbouring 75-acre Smyth farm. Although quite hilly, this farm's convenient location made it worth some extra investment in its preparation. Some of the bigger hills were graded, a pond was dug and tile drainage was installed as required. Four years later, an additional 75 acres was added with the purchase of the nearby Troy farm. Again, an irrigation pond and tile drainage were installed. The purchase, in 1996, of the 90-acre Hanes farm brought the nursery's production area to a total of 240 acres.

Although Winkelmolen Nursery has expanded rapidly, they continue to be committed to their specialty, namely the production of bare root trees, from whips for growing on by other wholesale nurseries, to finished-size trees (250 cm to 50mm) and grafted standards for the garden centre and to a lesser degree, the landscape contractor market. Early on, they realized the necessity of educating their customers, especially

those in the garden centre sector. In an era where more and more nursery stock is being produced in containers or field dug into fibre pots, there is usually some initial reluctance from garden centre owners about having to pot their own bare root trees. However, once customers come to understand the cost benefits of greatly reduced transportation expenses, the advantages of using their own custom-blended soils and especially the quality benefits of using trees with healthy, compact root systems grown especially for this purpose, they are easily converted.

By not allowing themselves to become distracted by different product lines, Winkelmolen's has been able to implement those growing procedures which afford them both efficiency and quality. After being root-pruned, seedlings are transplanted into the field in narrow spacings. After two years they are dug, root pruned, and planted out in wide rows. One to four years later, depending on the variety and finished size required, trees are harvested in the fall for shipping the following spring. The 30,000 sq. ft. of cold storage facilities are used primarily for grading and shipping. Most trees are stored outdoors in special sawdust and soil heel-in areas where they are easily accessed for the following spring's shipping. Over the years, Winkelmolen's has found this method to be consistently better than overwintering plants in cold storage barns. There is also 4,000 linear feet of poly house, used for propagation, and some winter storage.

Aware that staying successful means keeping in touch with current marketplace demands, Winkelmolen's has continually added new varieties to their inventory lineup. Many varieties of grafted standards are now produced to meet the consumer demand for "smaller trees for smaller spaces." Winkelmolen's has also responded aggressively to the demand by landscape architects and municipalities for a better selection of native varieties. Regardless of what the current trends call for, however, Winkelmolen's takes the view that satisfied customers are repeat customers and consequently grow only those varieties that are hardy in the Southern Ontario climate.

Winkelmolen's market area is primarily Ontario and Quebec, with some sales into the maritimes, the prairies and the U.S.

PARKLANE NURSERIES

Parklane Nurseries was started in 1958 with the arrival of two ambitious young men from Holland, Casey van Maris and John van Roode. Although started with only one small truck, the company soon accumulated over 100 clients. From the outset, Casey and John recognized their inexperience in pricing landscape projects was a problem. By keeping good records of their costs, however, they were soon able to price jobs more accurately. The following year a 300 per cent price increase and only half the customer base resulted in a much better bottom line.

In spite of their improved profitability, the seasonal nature of their young company forced the two to take on practically any kind of work they could to make ends meet during the off-season. These winter jobs were as diverse as cleaning and waxing turnips and selling cabbage from their basement, to delivering fuel oil and snow ploughing.

The business continued to grow and prosper and in 1967, Parklane Nurseries expanded to add a retail garden centre to their landscape design, construction and maintenance services. Then in 1972, John van Roode sold his shares of the business to Monica van Maris.

By 1975 the business was thriving, but so was the area around the Finch Ave. location of the garden centre. Parklane Nurseries chose to accept an offer for their property and relocated to a 50-acre property near Gormley. At that time the company made the decision to refocus their efforts on landscape design and construction, and, as they now had available land, the growing of caliper trees. They would not re-open a new retail centre.

It was to fulfil a lifetime dream of Casey's that, in 1982, the company began the construction of a series of model gardens. Their objective was to showcase the design talents of the company while at the same time



Monica and Casey van Maris.

making customers aware of the different landscape styles and materials available. These model gardens were opened in 1984 and in 1987, Parklane's model gardens received a Trillium Award for their contribution to horticulture.

With the cooperation of the University of Guelph in 1986, Parklane Nurseries began research into a root control growing system which allowed for smaller root balls with a maximum root structure. Today, Parklane Nurseries is noted for their "Root King" trees

construction franchising system, although the award-winning designs continued to be executed by Parklane's own design team.

When Casey resigned as president of Parklane, it was to focus on the tree growing operation under the name of van Maris Holdings. Anna van Maris took on the daunting task of filling her father's shoes as president of the company. With a new president comes new philosophies, and the franchise system was successfully reorganized into an authorized sub-contractor structure. In 1996, Anna passed the presidency over to her brother Roger in order to start yet another venture, the processing and marketing of herbs. Roger has worked in all aspects of the business and holds a degree in Business Administration. It is his personal mandate to keep Parklane in the forefront of an ever-changing landscape industry.

The van Maris' have also applied their active, hands-on approach to business to the their trade association. Both Casey and Monica were involved in the formation and running of the Ontario Garden Maintenance and Landscape Association and Casey was an integral part of the unity meetings which brought the OGMLA under the Landscape Ontario umbrella with the OLCA and the ONA. Casey was the first vice-president of

the newly formed Landscape Ontario and served as president the following year in 1974. In 1976, he was awarded the Garden Writer's Award for his contributions to the magazine through the controversial "Casey's Corner"



The Parklane employees, pictured with the fleet of company vehicles.

and is the sole distributor of the root control bags.

By 1985, Parklane's client base was equally divided between commercial and residential customers. At that time Parklane decided to refocus once again into the residential sector. At the same time, the company incorporated a landscape

column. For her part, Monica was president of the Toronto East Chapter and, in 1987 became the first woman president of L.O. The Honorary Life Member Award was bestowed upon Casey in 1985. Both Casey and Monica continue to be actively involved in many aspects of the association, including the Strategic Planning Committee.



Leslie L. Solty and Sons

Leslie L. Solty & Sons Limited has worn many hats since it opened in 1951 as a design/build and contract landscape business. The ability to change and evolve as the industry's popularity continues to grow is perhaps the driving force behind the company's success to date.

A third generation business, Leslie L. Solty & Sons Limited was started by Leslie L. Solty Sr., a landscape architect and horticulturist originally from Budapest. A house on Washington Avenue in Toronto was the company's first location, with only one pick-up truck to service a growing client base. The business soon moved to Kingston Road after they purchased 10 acres of land in Scarborough. Nine of those 10 acres were quickly sold off to finance the growth of the business which then employed 120 people during the spring and summer months.

Much of the growth the business experienced was in the residential sector. At one time, Solty's employed as many as 12 stone mason crews to work on various residential jobs. Commercial jobs were also going well with Solty's involved in hard and soft landscaping of large institutional buildings, such as the stone facing at the University of Toronto (U of T).

Still riding on the wave of growth the industry was experiencing, Solty's expanded further both in terms of personnel as well as in the business's area of expertise. In 1956, Leslie L. Solty, Jr. came to Canada to join his father in the business. Two years later, the purchase of 335 acres in Cookstown allowed for a horizontal expansion into sod production and nursery stock. 300 acres was reserved for sod production, while 35 was used for nursery stock, most of which was used by the landscape division. In 1961, a small retail division was opened at both the Scarborough and Cookstown locations.

By the early to mid-60s, all of Solty's divisions were growing. Retail sales were soon expanded when the owners realized the future growth potential. The landscape maintenance division grew steadily, and the landscape construction division was now working on residential, commercial and institutional jobs, including the construction of the Expo '67 site in Montreal in 1964 and 1965.

In 1965, Leslie L. Solty Sr. passed away, leaving the business in the capable hands of Leslie Jr. His mother Margaret helped through the transition as she was still actively involved



in the administration side of the business. She retired in 1977.

In 1967, a new retail centre and office was opened on Kingston Rd. Under the leadership of Leslie Jr., Solty's expanded further in the 70s in all areas of the business. Landhold increased to 1000 acres in the Cookstown area to handle an increase in sod production. Nursery production was increased to 80 acres, and landscape construction and maintenance continued to increase their hold on the residential, institutional and commercial sectors. Retail sales were still fairly strong from Solty's Scarborough location. An

additional eight acres were rented to house the ever-expanding wholesale departments and construction materials.

The decision to slowly withdraw from sod production came when, in 1973, the industry received a double whammy: an energy crisis and a recession, causing an over supply of sod in Ontario. Nursery stock production was then increased, mainly to supply the landscape department which was using up to 90 per cent of nursery stock, but also to add to the wholesale and retail trade that Solty's was gradually picking up.

Solty's underwent further changes in the

Limited



- A - Leslie J. Solty Sr.
- B - Leslie J. Solty Jr.
- C - The Solty operation in Budapest, circa 1920.
- D - An early sod harvester.
- E - City Hall, Toronto.
- F - Left to Right: Leslie Solty, Eric Peterson, Tomas, Otto J. Mueller.
- G - Cookstown operation, 1997.



next seven years. The maintenance department was downsized to include only a few key customers, and the Cookstown sales office moved from its location on Victoria St. E. to its present location on Hwy 27. This provided the company with an expanded retail/wholesale loading yard.

By the end of the 70s, nursery production had increased to 600 acres and sod production was occupying approximately 350 acres.

Internal employee changes also took place with a number of key employees leaving to start their own landscape businesses. The third generation was welcomed in 1981 when

Nick Solty joined the company as a full-time carpenter on the construction crew. One year later, Frank Solty, after finishing his studies at the University of Guelph and training at Foothills Nursery in Calgary, Alberta, started a full-time position on Solty's nursery farm. Nick was soon promoted to general manager of the construction department, while Frank took on the management of the nursery farm.

As sod production was slowly being decreased, the commercial landscape division was kept continually busy in the late 80s, sometimes at the expense of the residential landscape division. As time, staff, and

machinery had to be continually "borrowed" from this division, it was decided to refocus energy away from residential projects instead of providing substandard work.

Nursery stock production was also affected by this surge of commercial work. More nursery stock was planted with the highest demand for caliper trees from this department.

Another recession hit in 1990. It was then that Solty's considered another change in focus, this time concentrating on the wholesale and retail nursery operations. Sod production (seeding) had ceased in the early 90s leaving time and money to concentrate on the commercial landscape division and the wholesale/retail business. In 1994, as the last crop of sod was harvested, a further shift in focus resulted in the downsizing of the construction division and a more concentrated effort on the wholesale and retail divisions. 1994 also saw the death of Leslie Solty Jr.

The wholesale and retail operations in Scarborough and Cookstown were consolidated to one location on Hwy 27 in 1995 where a new office and retail garden centre had been built. To further boost its presence in the trade as a wholesale and retail nursery grower, Solty's appeared as an exhibitor in Congress '95, a first since the 1970s.

A member of Landscape Ontario since 1973, Solty's has always participated at the association level. Leslie Sr. was intimately involved in the Ontario Landscape Contractors Association as its president in 1963. As president of the Ontario Landscape Contractor Association in 1970-71, Leslie Jr. knew of the importance of a landscape trade association to promote professionalism within the industry. It was only natural then that the third generation be just as involved. Nick Solty's involvement in Landscape Ontario spans over three years, first as a representative for the Toronto West chapter and then as Provincial Board Rep. In 1997, Nick was instrumental in creating the Georgian Lakelands Chapter, representing those members north of Toronto.

When Leslie L. Solty & Sons Limited first opened its doors in 1951 as a design/build landscape company, it was with the hope that Leslie L. Solty Sr. would be able to support his family and provide Solty's customers with quality landscapes. A change in focus over the last 47 years ensured that the quality Solty's provides is still there, but this time can extend to all sectors of the horticulture industry.

Heritage Green Landscape Contractors



Herman Schutten, Teri Ewart, administrator and Carol Quantrill, the company's bookkeeper.



Herman and Bernie Schutten, principal owners of Heritage Green Grounds Keepers and Landscape Contractors.

For many years, business administration was an integral part of Herman Schutten's life. After obtaining his degree from Wilfred Laurier University he taught business administration at a private Christian high school for 13 years, and spent part of his tenure as the head of the school's business department. While he very much enjoyed his career he eventually began to feel there was more to be achieved before he retired. In essence, says Herman, he was looking for a chance to apply his theoretical knowledge to a real life application.

The opportunity Herman was looking for came his way in 1985. A friend who was operating a small, part-time maintenance business mentioned he would have to let his accounts go due to an impending move. A keen gardener, Herman knew his horticultural talents combined with his business expertise, these starting accounts and above all, the five years of practical training he had received working weekends and summers for Nick's Garden Service (Burlington) as a student, were the ingredients for a successful new venture.

A maintenance business requires more equipment than the typical family home and yard can accommodate, and to meet the needs of both his family and the new business, another new home with a two-acre property was purchased on Hwy. 53 in the Ancaster area. Although Herman was soon able to add to this small client base, initially it was necessary to run the fledgling business on a part time basis. As the business grew, the workload was too much to handle on a part-time basis but was still not profitable enough

to warrant leaving his teaching job and so Herman convinced his brother Bernie to join him, also on a part-time basis. Within the next two years, Bernie was employed full-time by the company while Herman continued teaching half-days for another two years before he too joined the company on a full-time basis.

Although the company first operated as a single proprietorship and then as a partnership under the name of Herman & Sons, Grounds Keepers and Landscape Contractors, in 1989



This landscaped rear yard was originally constructed by Heritage Green which now maintains the property.

the full-time business was incorporated as Schutten Bros. Holdings Ltd., operating as Heritage Green Landscape Contractors.

The first priority for Heritage Green was the expansion of the company. It soon became apparent that reaching this objective would be very difficult in the maintenance sector, as the competitive nature of the industry was very much at odds with management's commitment to provide a quality service and to pay a fair wage to their

employees. Realizing their best alternative was to focus on the landscape construction sector, the first step was to delegate more responsibility for the running of the maintenance department to their full-time employees, thereby freeing up more time to focus on the construction sector.

Their efforts more than paid off and Heritage Green is now a full service landscape and maintenance company employing a staff of 25 to 30 people and operating a fleet of 13 trucks and five skid steer loaders. The numbers vary somewhat from year to year, but the breakdown of the construction department is usually about 80 per cent residential work with the balance coming from the commercial sector. The maintenance department employs one single family residential crew and two crews devoted to multi-residential and commercial work. Heritage Green has found the best way to provide their customers with the quality they have come to expect and still remain price-competitive is to have what they call a "border crew." These crews follow behind the regular crews who "cut, trim, blow and go," to provide all of the finished pruning and trimming work which give projects the professional, polished look that has become one of the company's trademarks.

Heritage Green is also involved in snow removal and this division provides the company with an important 20 per cent of their annual volume in what would otherwise be an "off" season. Although they go to great lengths to monitor the weather, the snow removal season is nonetheless a very stressful



Sandwich boards are positioned at every job site to enhance the company's image and create word-of-mouth advertising.



The entrance at the Heritage Green yard on Highway 53 hosts a dry stream bed.

time of year, admits Herman, as crews must be prepared to move on a very short notice. "Anyone involved in snow clearing knows there just isn't the same degree of control as there is in the maintenance or the construction divisions," says Herman, adding that, contrary to popular public perception, these pressures combined with catching up on general administrative functions can make winter one of the busiest times of the year.

With their main office and yard located on Highway 53 in Ancaster and a second yard in Brantford, Heritage Green services clients primarily in Burlington, Ancaster, Dundas, Hamilton, Stoney Creek and Caledonia. A 3,000-square-foot shop was added to the Ancaster location in 1988 to accommodate the company's ever growing equipment requirements.

The company's success to date is in large measure attributable to their ability to find and keep qualified staff. Maintenance foreman John Ferguson, employed by Heritage Green since 1989 also looks after the company's small engine repairs. John Bos coordinates Heritage Green's construction work and has over 10 years experience in the industry. Jeff Lowartz is a licensed turf technician who has been with Heritage Green since 1989. And the office administration is looked after by Teri and Carol.

In today's world, only those who are prepared to keep up can expect to remain successful, and Heritage Green takes full advantage of any industry venues available to them. Management and staff take advantage

of community college as well as association-sponsored educational seminars and programs. Herman is particularly enthusiastic about the new CNTA Certification Program being introduced to the green industry as this will provide a standard of measurement to our largely unregulated industry. They are also firm believers in the collective power of associations and as such, are members of Landscape Ontario, the Hamilton Construction Association and the Better Business Bureau.



The Heritage Green field staff.

Heritage Green takes a multi-faceted approach to their advertising and promotion program. Although customers often tell them they choose the company from their Yellow Pages' listing, Herman firmly believes that a call generated through the Yellow Pages™ is, in fact, the end result of Heritage Green's dedicated and comprehensive approach which includes print ads in lifestyle magazines and radio advertisements. These forms of media also introduce and familiarize the consumer with the company name. Home show displays, colour brochures, job site sandwich boards and company logos displayed on their equipment fleet further

reinforce the name and message and at the same time, communicate the idea of quality and professionalism. The last and most important element is the company's all-out efforts to encourage customer referrals and word-of-mouth advertising as this is ultimately the most effective venue.

Now that the business has been operating on a full-time basis for 10 years, Herman is finding it somewhat ironic that his objective to get out of the indoors environment of the classroom has increasingly placed him in the indoors environment of his office to tend to increasing administrative demands. He does admit, however, that "it's different," and certainly much more satisfying when these demands are for one's own business.

Particularly rewarding to both Herman and Bernie is the opportunity the business has given them to provide employment for their children. "It's

not always easy in today's society to impart to the next generation the importance of the work ethic that was such a big part of our own upbringing," says Herman, adding that it was a big part of the decision to actually start the business. Each of Herman's seven children and Bernie's four children have taken an active role or look forward to being able to work in the business once they are old enough.

The management of Heritage Green believe the key to their future success is simply to continue to live up to their company slogan: "We look after our customers, otherwise someone else will."



Humber Nurseries

G R O W I N G • S I N C E • 1 9 4 8

Humber Nurseries was founded by Frans and Sibylla Peters in 1948. Operating on rented land near Scarlet Road and Eglinton Avenue, Toronto (in an area then known as Mt. Dennis), this young Dutch husband and wife team started out with very little. Their intelligence, stamina and an awesome capacity for hard work has seen their business grow and prosper to become, as they advertise, "Ontario's Largest Garden Centre."

Humber's first location on "flats" was located beside the Humber River. Devastated by Hurricane Hazel in 1954, Humber Nurseries lost most of their investment in plants and equipment, providing the impetus for the move in 1960 to the nursery's present location on a 21-acre property on Highway 50 in the City of Brampton.

Humber has survived for a number of reasons. By weathering out the poor business years and reinvesting during the good years, the company has evolved to become perhaps the country's leading garden centre. The purchase of a 100-acre farm in Caledon East in 1954 also assured them of a dependable source of hardy plant material and a competitive advantage over other nurseries. This strategic move equipped them with the means to respond quickly to the growing demands of the gardening public for new plant material, especially in perennials and in perennial plant specialties such as water plants, hosta and ornamental grasses. Plant material, plant products and

landscape services make up Humber's repertoire, and all can be obtained at its sole location in Brampton. The plant material alone numbers well over 10,000 varieties with most described in their impressive 180-page catalogue. Their industrial, commercial and residential landscape installations have also won many industry awards.

Another part of Humber's success is their focus on customer service, education



and promotion. They believe in their own slogan of "Buy from a Grower, Buy the Best" and are always alert to gardening trends and the best plants and plant products. "The gardening public today is well read and remarkably knowledgeable. The general interest in gardening has never been higher. The momentum increases constantly with new magazines, books and television gardening shows all becoming popular," explain the owners.

Now under the capable management of Frans and Guy Peters, Humber celebrates its 50th anniversary. Frans and Guy were born

into the job of managing "Ontario's largest garden centre." Both are graduates of the University of Guelph and form a unique partnership as they share the task of running this vast and complex enterprise. No recruited manager could ever hope to match their lifelong intimate knowledge of the business. What speaks well for the Peters' management style is the number of employees who have been with the company for 15, 25 and even 30 years. Humber now employs 30 full-time staff and over 125 during their peak spring season.

Humber Nurseries' history with Landscape Ontario spans 25 years, since the association's inception. Frans Peters served three terms as president, and Guy continues to serve on the board of the Garden Centre Commodity Group.

Mr. and Mrs. Frans Peters Sr. now both in their late seventies, are well and still very active in the nursery. They can take deserved pride in their life's work and in the accomplishments of their children. We salute their 50 years of hard won success in 1998.

The future of gardening and the horticulture industry looks bright indeed. Success is assured to anyone in horticulture, if they follow the work initiative of Frans and Sibylla Peters.

As Humber Nurseries celebrates its 50th anniversary, their mission statement remains the same as it was in 1948 -- to provide the gardening public with consistently innovative and high-quality horticulturally-based products, services and information to enhance their life and assist them in creating rewarding landscapes.

Back in the summer of 1951, Eva and Bratislav (Victor) Kraus were a childless young couple who acquired their first 5-1/2 acre parcel of land in the farming community of Carlisle, located in southern Ontario. Having left their native Czechoslovakia to avoid the sweep of communism after World War II, they were simply following tradition by starting their nursery in Canada. Victor's father Joseph had operated a nursery in their home country since 1922.

Like many young couples trying to build a life in a new country they operated "in the red" for several years, cultivating the land by horse and plough until they had saved enough money to purchase their first tractor in 1954. Roses and fruit trees were the first crops harvested by V. Kraus Nurseries. News spread rapidly about Kraus' beautiful rose gardens and soon people from miles around visited the nursery.



Victor Kraus -- 1952

As the crops and the size of the nursery grew, so did the Kraus family. By 1961, there were five children, all daughters, and 28 acres of land. The children received hands on training as all were expected to help out in any way possible.

A master nurseryman, Victor Kraus is still actively involved in daily operations. As a young man, he studied horticulture and apprenticed at various nurseries in France, Germany, Switzerland and England. His extensive knowledge of plants is surpassed by few, and it is no doubt that this, combined with years of field work and a passionate interest in horticulture has contributed greatly to the company's success.

As original office administrator, Eva Kraus, with a penchant for organizational wizardry, single-handedly managed all office duties until 1975 when daughter Irene stepped into become Eva's first full-time assistant. Eva was responsible for creating

and maintaining a thorough and concise inventory control/sales tracking system which is still in use today. Kraus Nurseries has since the implementation of computer technology in 1980, searched in vain to find an inventory software program comparable to Eva's system. She now enjoys a much deserved retirement yet retains a controlling interest in the business and still helps out during the hectic spring rush.

Mother Nature, more than any recession, has proven without question to be the greatest challenge facing the nursery sector. Dealing with the short spring she affords often leaves ones' sanity in question by the end of the season. It is the ability of the field management division and their crews to adjust to nature's variables, along with the diligent pruning regiment of ornamental trees on which Kraus prides

itself. The European pruning method practiced results in trees with superior form, structure and longevity.

V. Kraus Nurseries, from its humble beginnings, has grown into a major competitive force. Approximately 1000 acres of land are presently cultivated into ornamental trees, shrubs, roses, vines and fruit. The plant material which was once sold only in "bare root" form is now available in containers and wire baskets. Sales to the commercial trade now extend from Canada and the U.S. into Europe.

A family-owned and operated business, Kraus now employs a seasonal staff of 70, including four of their daughters. Their two son-in-laws co-manage field operations.

Upon a visit to the nursery, you will find a few sleepy dogs, a handsome collection of quality plants, and an exceptional team of

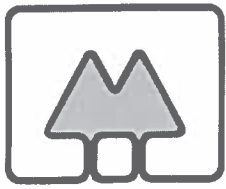


Irene, Eva Sr., Linda and Eva Jr. in the rose field -- 1957.



Linda, Eva Jr., Eva Sr. with Olga, Irene, Sylvia and Rex at the main yard -- 1967.

individuals (from all corners of the globe) who are the reason behind the company's continued success.



MORI NURSERIES

Choosing horticulture as a career option “because it sounded interesting” doesn’t sound like an auspicious beginning for a business. However, being “interesting” was more than enough for the energetic Leno Mori to get started on the road to creating a horticultural enterprise.

Instead of joining his father, Vittorio, on the family fruit farm, Leno began knocking on doors in new housing developments in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls designing and selling landscapes to homeowners.

After using other nurseries’ plant material for several years, Leno thought it would be “interesting” to grow his own plants and in 1950 began lining out nursery stock on a seven-acre fruit farm in the Niagara Peninsula.

From those seven acres, Mori Nurseries Ltd. has grown to include over 1,000 acres of Ontario farmland, as well as holdings in New York, Michigan and a partnership in Mexico.

During the idyllic economic climate of the 50s and 60s, Mori Nurseries grew, while continuing to service both wholesale and retail customers from their farm in Niagara-on-the-Lake,

Ontario. Clinging to their roots, in a sense, the Mori’s continued to keep in touch with fruit farmers through their large-scale production and sale of fruit trees to commercial growers.

As the family business grew, so did Leno and Phil’s children, and in 1978, son Robert started working in the shipping department.

There, the importance of excellence in customer service was instilled, which Rob took one step further the following year when he transferred to the office, taking over wholesale sales and shipping administration, while his father

continued to expand their production of nursery stock. Their ability to see a gap in customer service – and fill it – is one of the reasons Mori Nurseries has



Upright evergreens - one of Mori’s specialties.

been so successful over the years.

In 1978, very few nurseries had sales staff traveling to garden centres actively selling plants, so Rob took to the road and began visiting retail stores and building a loyal customer base.

At the same time, son Bill and son-in-law Jim Garrett started working for the nursery. Bill is the Operations Manager and is responsible for land preparation, and for construction and maintenance of all buildings, equipment and land assets, as well as all of the many new projects Mori



Designer three-tier poodle junipers.

undertakes each year. Jim assists in managing the administrative part of the business, along with the commercial fruit division, handling sales to commercial growers.

Several other pioneering efforts have helped cement the company’s relationship with garden centres. When other nurseries

were persuading garden centres to take fall shipment of plants and protect them overwinter, Mori’s constructed miles of polyhouses to hold their plants over the winter and devised an efficient shipping system to deliver orders in the spring when the customer actually wanted them.

Also tailored for garden centres, Mori’s Next-Day Delivery Service was first offered in 1988. Garden centres in the Toronto Triangle needing to restock their sales yard could call their order in before nine a.m. and receive shipment the following day. A three-day shipping policy applied to those orders placed by garden centres outside of this area (i.e. Ottawa to Montreal). To

support this fast-paced “Express Service” the company developed a comprehensive computer software program to streamline their multifaceted operation.

As the business grew, Leno no longer had time to service the many homeowners that came to his nursery looking for landscaping advice. In 1972, Steve Patterson was hired to start and run a garden centre, Mr. Gardener Inc. (Mori Gardens), which was established on land adjacent to the nursery office.

Eventually Steve became Sales Manager for Mori Nurseries and was a key member of their staff. Steve was well known in the trade for his sense of humour and concern for others. The horticulture industry was stunned when he passed away suddenly in December, 1995.

Today, Mori Gardens services clients from across the Niagara Peninsula and is also used as a testing ground for new marketing ideas.

Marketing their product is something Mori Nurseries has always taken seriously. Because their nursery sells mainly to garden centres, many of Mori’s innovations and company developments have catered to the retailers they serve. Today, Mori’s takes a partnership approach in marketing their plants and will work with their customers, supplying banners, picture tags and full colour flyers to promote their plants -- anything to help the garden centre sell more nursery stock.

Their line of “Designer Plants by Leno

Mori” has received national media coverage in gardening publications, prompting homeowners across the country to ask for these products. The Designer Plants are another first for Ontario. In the early 80s, spiral and pom pom evergreens were shipped in from the western U.S. These were (and still are) light and lush container grown plants. A talented field worker who mentioned to Leno that he could produce a better plant in Ontario was given the go-ahead to try and today Mori Nurseries cannot keep up with the demand for their larger stronger, field grown, potted topiaries.

Even while the nursery was propagating and growing a complete line of ornamental nursery stock, the propagation and sale of fruit trees for commercial growers kept equal pace. Although the potential market for their trees south of the border was immense, Mori’s recognized the loyalty of the U.S. fruit growers who preferred to buy their trees from growers in their own country. When the Gerber company in New York state sold off some orchard land, Mori Nurseries expanded in to the U.S. and planted their first crop of understock at Greenlane Nurseries in 1988. Today, the majority of production at Greenlane

is caliper trees. In 1989, the Mori’s opened Newark Nurseries in Michigan from the remains of the financially troubled Hilltop Nurseries, which was the largest fruit tree nursery in the U.S. The Mori’s restructured and updated the entire nursery, allowing them to access sales throughout the U.S. and exports worldwide. It was so successful that, in 1995, it was sold to U.S. investors. The nursery is once again renamed Hilltop Nurseries, with Leno still involved on a consulting basis.

Having gradually acquired nurseries in four distinct locations throughout southern Ontario enables Leno to utilize the various soil and climatic conditions to produce specific crops suited to a particular area. For example, their farms in Fonthill produce primarily shade trees and yews, whereas the Harrow Operation near Windsor is more

suited to grow grapes, boxwood and cedars.

The recession of the early 90s was a difficult time for all members of the horticulture industry. Prices were dropping and competition for business was fierce. When Downham Nurseries, a large and well-established operation in Strathroy went into receivership, Mori Nurseries stepped in and bought the floundering operation rather than see a large amount of plant material be dumped on the market by the receivers at hopelessly low prices. In a feat only possible

families at Hilltop de Mexico, utilizing 250 acres of land to grow fruit trees for Mexican fruit growers.

Mori Vines Inc., yet another division of this horticultural enterprise, is run by Leno’s son Albert and supplies commercial grape growers with hardy Canadian-grown grape vines.

Mori’s most recent project unveiled in the spring of 1997, was their venture into perennial production and marketing. Reflecting both Leno’s love of innovation and Rob’s interest in marketing, MoriStar Perennials was launched with the full support of promotional banners, large colour picture tags and marketing materials.

MoriStar Perennials are offered in one, three, and five-gallon sizes and in attractive colour-coded pots to facilitate pricing for retailers. The first year of sales saw over 600 varieties offered to customers, with another 150 varieties anticipated the second year. The careful planning and preparation for this

launch paid off as both retailers and perennial-hungry customers responded with enthusiasm to the line of MoriStar Perennials.

Now at the helm of one of the largest nursery in Canada, Leno and the Mori family have certainly found horticulture to be an “interesting,” yet challenging career. Their enthusiasm for new ideas and constant search for a better way to serve customers has provided the direction for Mori Nurseries Ltd. and their many other nursery operations, and the impetus for its leading role in the industry.



Office, shipping docks and container yard in Niagara-on-the-lake, with over 10 miles of polyhouses.

in the face of extreme pressure, Mori’s took over the Downham office in March, 1993. With no prebooked orders, they had only a few weeks in which to hire staff and set up a new shipping system and Mori’s own computer system in order to meet their spring shipping requirements (with their trademark “Express Service” delivery). Today, Downham Nurseries 1993 Inc. produces a complete line of nursery stock, while serving a slightly different market and geographic area, thereby complimenting the Niagara-on-the-Lake operation.

As testament to the quality and reliability of Mori-grown fruit trees, several years ago the Armendariz family in Mexico approached Leno with a business proposition: Mori’s expertise and the Armendariz land. Never one to back away from a new idea, the result is a flourishing partnership between the two

Through their affiliation with Brookdale Kingsway Nursery, BTN is proud to boast a long and prestigious -- and very diversified -- history in the industry which dates back to the 1920s. Brookdale Kingsway Nursery was started by the late J.H.H. Jury, a prominent pharmacist by trade and avid hobby horticulturist. The pursuit of his hobby took Mr. Jury around the world to learn the latest propagating and growing techniques of ornamental nursery stock.

When, in 1939, the hobby business grew too large to be managed alone, Norman Scott was hired as a general manager. After the death of Mr. Jury the business was managed for a short time by the Toronto General Trust Company, but, due largely to the wishes of Mrs. Jury, in 1950, Mr. Scott was able to purchase the company under very favourable terms. Holding a degree in horticulture from the OAC in Guelph and a degree in Plant Physiology from Ohio State University, Mr. Scott was the only owner of Brookdale Kingsway with an educational background in horticulture.

As he was a born merchandiser, the primarily mail order business flourished under the care of Mr. Scott. He was responsible for the production of a biannual catalogue, known as *Your Garden Guide*, which at the time was considered to be *the* gardening bible.

In 1959, Brookdale Kingsway was sold to John Chester, Ian Smith and Elmer Banting, businessmen and lawyers looking for a change of pace. Although they continued with the mail order business for a few years, new postal rates and packaging information soon forced the closure of this part of the business. More focus went into nursery production, which by that time had grown to 700 acres, and developing the wholesale sector of the business. In 1966, the company expanded into the distribution of related gardening products with the purchase of National Garden Sales. One year later the company expanded again with the purchase of a bare root shade tree farm in B.C.'s Fraser Valley.

The company changed hands once again in 1971 when it was purchased by The Radley Group, a multi-national corporation represented by Gordon Gray. At that time Knox Henry was hired as general manager.

Specializing in the production of bare root material, primarily for the garden centre marketplace, Brookdale Kingsway Nursery continued to expand their growing operations. By the late 1970s, the company foresaw the need to increase their market share and considered a merger with a more sales-oriented company as the quickest, most effective way of achieving this goal.

When one of Ontario's leading landscape/development companies decided they no longer wanted to be in the growing business, it was an opportunity knocking at Paul Olsen's door. From 1973 to 1977, Paul had been employed as the manager for Assagi Nurseries, a company involved in the growing of caliper-sized landscape materials for their parent company. Acquiring some equipment and the rights to purchase the inventory assets of Assagi, Treeland Wholesale Nurseries, as his new company was to be called, began servicing the local landscape construction market.

As the company quickly exceeded even their most optimistic expectations, it became necessary to purchase inventory from other Ontario growers as well. Paul soon realized he was filling an important void in the marketplace, but to maintain a secure supply



Brookdale Treeland Nurseries is committed to keeping up with all new technologies, allowing them to remain competitive in the marketplace. Shown above is part of BTN's mechanized potting operation.

for their future requirements, Treeland would need to become growers, as well as rewholesalers, of nursery stock.

Beginning with 30 acres of rented land,

the company soon expanded to 200 acres of caliper tree growing in the Mississauga area. Recognizing that their rented office, shipping and storage facilities on Mississauga Road would one day be engulfed by encroaching commercial development, a 35-acre parcel was also purchased in the Schomberg area. This property was gradually developed with the construction of a new office facility, equipment barns, loading docks and irrigation ponds.

By 1982, Treeland Wholesale had become one of Ontario's leading landscape suppliers. However, the changing economic climate convinced the company that diversification was necessary to ensure future stability and Treeland began to take a closer look at the retail sector. From both a production as well as a marketing perspective, this move would necessitate some radical changes, and so, when Treeland was approached by Gordon Gray of Brookdale Kingsway Nurseries, a company that had been supplying the garden centre market for over 60 years, to consider a merger, Paul heard opportunity knocking at his door once again. The benefits of consolidating these two very diverse companies, were obvious to all and the transaction, resulting in the formation of Brookdale Treeland Nurseries Limited (BTN), became official in the fall of 1983.

The combined assets of this new company were considerable. Besides the former Brookdale Kingsway's Bowmanville location, there was also a whip growing operation in British Columbia and a landscape pick-up yard in St. Joachim, Quebec. In 1984, BTN also became a partner in, and then full owners of a landscape pick-up yard in Sussex, New Brunswick. As the various sectors of its diverse operations developed and the business climate changed, the company decided to divest themselves of these out-of-province locations in order to focus their energies on their Ontario-based production operations.

Over the next few years, there was a heavy expansion into container growing to better service the retail garden centre sector. The field-growing operation was also

Nurseries Limited

expanded with the purchase of farms in the Newtonville and Alliston areas. Today, BTN has a total of 835 acres, including 500 acres of caliper tree production, 150 acres of conifers and 50 acres of containers. While their extensive production helps them to maintain stability over their supply and prices, they continue to purchase, on average, 30 to 40 per cent of their annual inventory requirements as a buffer against the fluctuations of marketplace supply and demand.

As with most successful businesses, large or small, BTN has an inherent ability to gradually adapt and change to meet gradual



BTN is a full service company, offering their landscape customers the convenience of a one-stop pick-up yard or alternatively, they will arrange to ship orders directly to the job site.

marketplace changes. However, with a history of dramatic changes behind them, Paul considered the aggressive entrance of the mass merchandiser into the lawn and garden industry as opportunity knocking at his door yet again. Supplying this unique and growing sector of the industry would take more than simply expanding BTN's container growing operation, however. It would require a large investment in administrative technology, including enhanced computer programs to track and analyse cost and sales, as well as to implement UPC bar coding and EDI (Electronic Data Interlink).

To reduce or eliminate labour costs, mechanization is an important aspect of BTN's production philosophy. More recently they have embarked upon a consolidation

program, in the belief that, especially in view of modern production technologies, a company's growth and profitability are not necessarily linked to the expansion of land assets. Current container-growing programs are geared towards shorter production cycles and more inventory turns with the same available resources, allowing for greater cost controls and efficiencies. "The next 25 years will see a gradual but continual change in attitude by our industry towards their overall business philosophy which will have a significant impact on production techniques," predicts Paul Olsen, adding that BTN is determined to take a leadership role in embracing and implementing these philosophies.

Paul also believes the key factor affecting both BTN's future, as well as that of the industry, will be the proper management of human resources. The first step will be to attract and keep good people in the industry through the promotion of professionalism, and BTN is an avid supporter of the journeyman's apprenticeship program, the new CNTA certification program and especially all efforts in this regard by Landscape Ontario. BTN has always participated actively in Landscape Ontario management, including Paul's many years on the provincial Board of Directors and his current two-year tenure as president.

While BTN is still jointly owned by Paul Olsen and other shareholders, provisions are currently being made to accommodate the needs of the next generation. Son Jeff Olsen has worked for the company for five years and currently holds the position of sales manager. BTN presently employs 20 people

As one of Ontario's leading suppliers to the landscape construction industry, Brookdale Treeland Nurseries has, over the years, supplied nursery stock to numerous projects, both large and small, throughout Canada. Their current marketplace extends beyond the Canadian border with a significant portion of annual sales into the U.S., and the occasional shipment of bare root stock overseas to countries such as Holland, Germany and even Russia.

The following are just a few of the projects supplied by BTN since 1983:

Canada's Wonderland (Maple)
Bell Trinity Square (Toronto)
Quebec City Waterfront Renewal
Marineland (Niagara Falls)
Oakville Place (Shopping Centre)

Honda (Alliston)
Ryerson Community Plan (Toronto)
Mississauga City Hall
Woodbine Centre (Toronto)



Growing for the mass merchandiser market now makes up a significant portion of BTN's annual volume. Shown above, a selection of plants ready for shipment on special merchandising racks.

on a full-time basis, and an additional 75 to 100 people on a seasonal and full-time seasonal basis. Management staff who deserve special mention include Ib Petersen, production manager, David Brown, production manager, Hans Nielsen, contract sales, Mike Petersen, traffic manager, Steve Venoit, container production, Eric Petersen, shipping manager, and Don Anderson, controller.

BRAUN Nursery Limited

Anyone who has ever had the privilege of doing business with Frank Braun will appreciate that it was his strong sense of independence and outspokenness which compelled him to leave behind his generations-old agricultural business in his native Czechoslovakia when it was nationalized by the ruling communist government. In 1949, Frank, together with his wife Hilda and two young children, Hana and Peter, considered themselves fortunate to have a farm sponsor in Canada and the opportunity to make a fresh start in a new country.

Braun's nursery stock requirements, for both the landscape and retail divisions, were purchased from other wholesale growers. Within the construction industry, however, the need for landscape-sized materials far outstripped the growing industry's production capacity, and most stock was imported from the U.S. at inflated prices. Realizing they would need to produce their own caliper trees in order to remain competitive, in 1960, Braun's acquired their first 100-acre farm in Mount Hope.

Although he had spent many years working in the business on a part-time basis,

In the meanwhile, however, the nursery sector was making the industry sit up and take notice. As the nursery farms consisted primarily of clay loam soils, Braun's soon determined, primarily through experience, which items they were able to grow well and concentrated specifically on these varieties. By specializing and through a focused sales effort which has seen their market areas expand throughout Ontario, Quebec and the north-east and north mid-western states, Braun's has been able to realize a premium price for their product. Over the years their production was expanded to 1,000 acres of



Frank and Hilda Braun, 1972



Frank Braun and Ben de Boer, 1965



Peter Braun, 1970

Working on a Hamilton-area farm for one year and then briefly as a warehouse manager, it was not long before Frank's independent streak took over, compelling him to start out on his own cutting lawns. Thanks to assistance from Hana and her aggressive approach to marketing, sending flyers to businesses and residences in the area, the maintenance company grew rapidly. It was soon one of the largest in the area, employing up to six crews.

As the early 1950s were a time of general economic prosperity, Frank soon realized the potential of the landscape construction industry. At the same time, the company also ventured into the retail sector. Requiring a place to store extra nursery stock and materials for the landscape and maintenance divisions, in 1955 a location was purchased on Hamilton's Upper James Street which could also serve as a retail store under the careful charge of Hilda Braun.

Thanks to Frank's personable nature, good negotiating skills and especially his ability to hire skilled and dedicated European craftsmen, the contracting division grew rapidly. The retail division thrived and eventually the maintenance sector was phased out.

upon graduating from university Peter became a school teacher. In 1961, he returned to the family business to take over the construction division, leaving his father more time to devote to the management of the growing and retail divisions.

With hospitals, colleges and schools being constructed at an unprecedented rate, these were golden years for the landscape construction industry. Braun Landscape and Nursery was involved in the design and implementation of numerous large scale projects, including Hamilton Place, the Skylon in Niagara Falls, Hamilton's Board of Education and virtually every high school in the city. This increased activity in the landscape industry presented a good opportunity for the nursery, which soon expanded to include a wholesale division.

Braun's continued to be a major player in the landscape industry for many years; however, increased competition for fewer projects and the resultant lower prices, made it impractical to keep this division going. As a direct result of the recession of the early 1990s, the landscape division was closed down completely. Escalating real estate values had resulted in the closing of the garden centre in the early 1980s.

caliper tree production.

As their own operation required thousands of baskets per year, and especially realizing this huge market was being serviced primarily with expensive imports, in 1979 Peter Braun introduced wire basket manufacturing to the company. Intended to be a part-time winter work project, Peter knew he had to simplify the currently-accepted manufacturing technique and soon developed the continuous wire basket. Over the years, the manufacturing process has been greatly refined and although it continues to provide winter employment, manufacturing is now a year-round operation as Braun's has become one of North America's leading wire basket suppliers. An off-shoot of the tree baskets has been the introduction of moss-lined hanging wire baskets, which also account for a significant proportion of the manufacturing division's sales.

Braun Nurseries' flexibility to creatively meet current marketplace demand and especially their ability to hire those people with the skills and work ethics which have been a company tradition for the past 45 years have contributed to their past successes and will see them continue to flourish into the future.

Niche marketing was not invented in the 1990s, but increasingly, small businesses are finding this to be an important marketing strategy in a marketplace which more and more is being dominated by big businesses. PAO Hort-



An aerial view of Independent Horticultural Supplies' Milton facility, circa 1984. This property was later sold to Shemin Nurseries in 1986 and in 1994 became the home of Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association.

icultural (Milton) has carved out a very important market niche for themselves in supplying unique and specimen plant materials to Toronto and area landscape contractors and architects. From exotic-looking cloud pruned Waterii pine or 2 m spiralled dwarf Alberta spruce, to huge 50 cm caliper beech, at PAO Horticultural, landscape contractors are able to find the kinds of plant materials which will enhance any landscape project or design.

PAO Horticultural found their marketplace niche through a natural process of evolution. Started in 1988 by Paul Offierski with the assistance of long-time business associate Bruce Warren, the company's actual history dates back to the late 1970s. With years of experience in the industry working for Meyer's Landscape and Garden Centre of Peterborough (1970/73) and then as a sales person for Sheridan Nurseries (1973/76) and again in sales for Braun Nurseries, in 1978 Paul decided it was time to start his own business. Operating from a six-acre parcel of rented land in Oakville, Independent Horticultural Supplies Limited was a wholesale broker of nursery stock, buying from nursery suppliers across Ontario and B.C. to the Oregon west coast, and selling to retail garden centres and landscape contractors.

Less than two years later, the business was moved to a purchased 46-acre parcel of land with Hwy. 401 frontage just east of Milton. In 1986, both the business and the land were sold to Shemin Nurseries, and

became the Canadian location for the American-owned chain of one-stop wholesale pick-up yards.

By 1988, Paul was back in business again, this time under the name of PAO Horticultural, operating from a 20-acre property on Trafalgar Road. The Ontario economy was booming and there were shortages of nursery stock in practically every category. Having over the years developed good relationships with west coast nursery suppliers, PAO Horticultural focused on direct-shipping to retail garden centres but also bought in nursery stock on speculation for the landscape construction sector.

As a wholesale broker, PAO Horticultural was particularly hard hit when the economy took a nose-dive in the early 1990s. There were now surpluses of inventory in almost every category and, with the low value of the Canadian dollar, demand for imports dropped off almost overnight.

In the meantime, PAO Horticultural was



Back row: Bruce Warren, Baljit (Bill) Sangha, Wellesly Galloway. Middle row: Jansinder (Binder) Singh Sandhar, Paul Offierski, Clint Cripps. Front row: Elsa Leppanen, Sherry Smith, Toni Athaas.

noticing an interesting trend. Landscapers, who knew Paul's nursery stock came from a wide variety of sources, were calling looking

for those items they couldn't find elsewhere. And those specimens or oddball pieces Paul found on his buying trips were bought almost instantly, mostly by landscape contractors specializing in high-end residential work. Here was an ideal business opportunity and, with the flexibility typical only to small businesses, the scope of PAO Horticultural changed almost overnight.

Today, PAO Horticultural is well-known throughout the province for their huge selection of specimen plant material. Landscapers and designers, dealing with reluctant or sceptical customers often bring their clients to PAO's yard so they can envision for themselves the potential of the proposed landscape design. Sometimes landscapers are looking for a specific variety, but more often they will design around that "just perfect" piece they have found at PAO.

To provide their landscape pick-up clients with one-stop convenience, PAO keeps a full selection of nursery stock in inventory. More recently, they have also added landscape rockery and a selection of ornamental stone to their inventory. Two of their more popular additions have been specialty and oversized perennials and flowering bulbs.

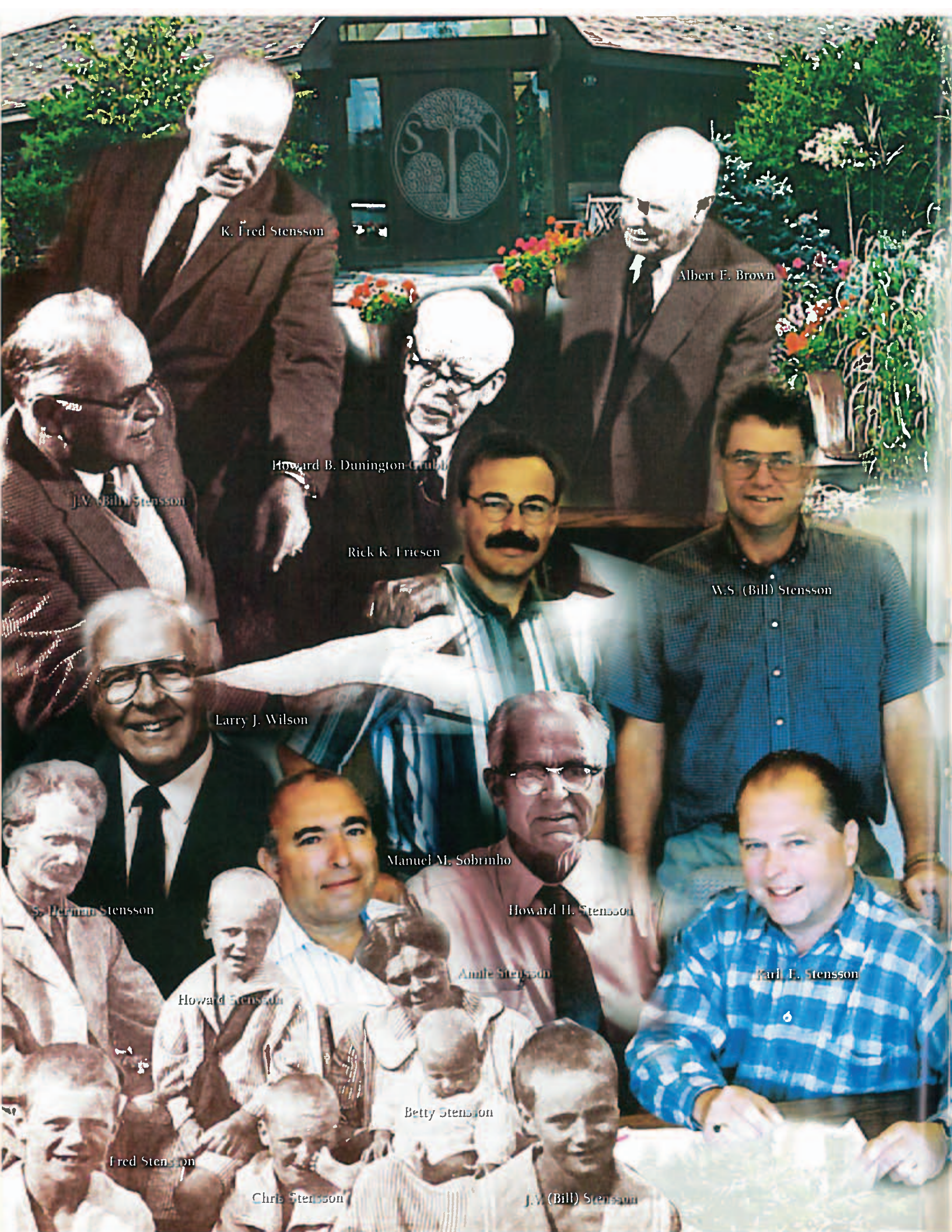
At PAO Horticultural, buying is equally, if not more important than sales, as good products tend to sell themselves. The one great advantage of being a broker is the tremendous flexibility and satisfaction it affords PAO staff to listen and quickly respond to their customers' needs.

Niche marketing was not invented in the 1990s, but this was a decade which defined the concept of "added value." At PAO Horticultural,

customers have come to rely on the added values of thorough horticultural knowledge and above all, excellent customer service.



A full selection of nursery stock is kept in inventory throughout the season at PAO's Trafalgar Road location.



K. Fred Stensson

Albert F. Brown

Howard B. Dunnington Grubb

J.V. (Bill) Stensson

Rick K. Friesen

W.S. (Bill) Stensson

Larry J. Wilson

Manuel M. Sobrinho

Howard H. Stensson

S. Herman Stensson

Amie Stensson

Karl E. Stensson

Howard Stensson

Betty Stensson

Fred Stensson

Chris Stensson

J.V. (Bill) Stensson



Then & Now



*"Sheridan Nurseries is proud of the people who helped make it successful...
past and present employees represents a vast pool of talented and successful people..."*

Compared to most other parts of the world, horticulture in Canada is relatively new. In fact, Sheridan Nurseries was one of the pioneers of horticulture in this country.

In 1911, landscape architects Howard and Laurie Dunnington-Grubb emigrated to Canada from England. They were two of the first Landscape Architects in this country and their firm went on to design such famous landmarks as the boulevard on University Avenue in Toronto, Oakes Garden Theatre in Niagara Falls, Gage Park in Hamilton and numerous large country estates for the wealthy industrialists including the Parkwood Estate in Oshawa.

The Dunnington-Grubbs were disappointed with the lack of ornamental plants and the almost non-existence of perennials in Canada, so they decided to start a nursery. They purchased 100 acres of land in a small town called Sheridan just west of Toronto. Today the town has disappeared and become a part of both Oakville and Mississauga.

At the time, there were no experienced horticulturists in Canada available to run the nursery, so the Dunnington-Grubb's advertised the position in Europe. Sven Herman Stensson, who was a gardener at Kew Gardens in England, and formerly chief gardener for the Crown Prince of Denmark at Knuteborg Castle, answered the ad and in 1913, he and his wife Annie and four sons, picked up and moved all their belongings to Canada. Their fifth child Betty was born in Canada.

All the children were active in the business until they retired. J.V. (Bill) Stensson was a member of the Landscape Architecture firm of Dunnington-Grubb & Stensson as well as being President of the company until his death in 1972. Fred was the first salesman on the road and retired as Vice President of Sales over forty years later. Chris and Betty were involved in accounting and payroll until their retirements and Howard was President from 1972 until his retirement in 1993.

Three of Herman's grandchildren (Bill, Karen, and Karl) are actively involved in the business. William (Bill) Stensson is President and oversees the Nursery Operations which is now 1,920 acres in size including 80 acres of propagation and 75 acres of container plants. The nursery grows over 800 varieties of top quality plant material, comprising more than 2,000,000 plants per year. Over the years, Sheridan Nurseries has been responsible for several plant introductions including 'Green Gem' 'Green Mountain' and 'Green Velvet' Boxwood; 'Ivory Silk' Lilac Tree; 'Mountbatten' Juniper; 'Glenleven' and 'Green Globe' Linden and the Hybrid Tea Rose 'Sunsation'.

Karen Gazley (Stensson) is employed in the Wholesale Sales division as part of a winning sales team which now boasts a staff of 10 as well as 4 sales agents. It serves Eastern Canada, North Eastern and Mid-Western United States and our own Retail Garden Centres.

Karl Stensson is Vice President of Retail Operations, overseeing 7 Retail Garden Centres in Ontario and Quebec. Sheridan stores are proudly independent relying on quality, variety and exceptional customer service to expand in the marketplace. They are year round facilities selling Nursery Stock, Foliage Plants, Gift, Patio and Christmas products and a wide variety of Horticultural Hardgoods. Sheridan has always been involved with innovative community projects. From the Artists Gardens at Harbourfront, the Historical Parkwood Estate and the Glen Williams Town Hall Renovations to ceremonial tree plantings at local schools and ongoing support of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Sheridan has supported many worthwhile community events over the years.

Sheridan has proudly supported Landscape Ontario and its predecessors with active involvement. Both Howard Dunnington-Grubb and Albert Brown (a former Vice President of Sheridan), were both Life Members of the O.L.C.A. Upon Mr. Dunnington-Grubb's death on February 26, 1965, the O.L.C.A. created the Dunnington-Grubb award for landscape excellence which today is the highest honour that a landscape design company can receive within Landscape Ontario. Howard Stensson served on the first Board of Directors of Landscape Ontario and Karl Stensson served as its President in 1979.

Sheridan Nurseries is proud of the people who helped make it successful. The "Who's Who" list of past and present employees represents a vast pool of talented and successful people; People who went on to create other successful business including Ben DeBoer, Bob Nielsen, Otto Timm, Bill Kegel and many more. There are success stories including Constant DeGroot who worked for Sheridan for over 50 years and Manuel Sobrinho who started as a field worker and 40 years later is National Accounts Manager and others such as Thomas Frank, Mitzi Iwasaki, Lou Sato and Uli Rumpf who have spent most or all of their careers working for the betterment of Sheridan.

Many Sheridan employees have received awards from Landscape Ontario including 2 Trillium awards, the Past Presidents award and the Frank Ewald Award. This support further extended to the C.N.T.A. where J.V. (Bill) Stensson and Karl Stensson have served as President and to the C.O.P.F. where Howard Stensson served as President. Sheridan Nurseries continues to believe in a strong industry voice and wishes Landscape Ontario many more years of increasing strength and growth.

Dutchmaster Nurseries Limited

The lure of Canada, the land of opportunity for anyone with a willingness and capacity for hard work, enticed numerous people to our country in the 1950s. Two of these were Henry and Frances Tillaart, owners of Dutchmaster Nurseries Limited, which today is one of Ontario's largest caliper tree suppliers. After their immigration from Holland in 1958, Henry worked at several jobs both outside and within the industry before starting his own company in 1971. He had made the decision to start out on his own several years earlier, however, and in 1964, had purchased a 160-acre farm on Hwy. #7, north of Pickering.

Although Dutchmaster Landscaping started out as both a landscape construction and wholesale nursery growing operation, by 1975 the company changed their focus to concentrate solely on the supply of caliper trees to landscape contractors and municipalities. To better reflect this focus, the company name was changed to Dutchmaster Nurseries Limited.

Starting with a single farm and three employees, Dutchmaster was forced by a government expropriation of land in 1978, to move to a nearby farm on the 16th Sideline, a few miles east of their first location. The company has since expanded to eight farms covering 700 acres of land, employing up to 60 people on a full-time and full-time seasonal basis. They have also participated in the offshore labour program for more than 10 years, which provides them with an additional 15 people during the season.

Especially in the 1970s and into the 1980s, Dutchmaster's growing program could not keep up with the marketplace demand, especially for large caliper trees. In order to serve their customers, Dutchmaster purchased in-ground inventory from other growers and farmers. This necessitated moving men and equipment to these sites to dig this inventory which was then shipped directly to the job site or back to Dutchmaster's own holding facilities. This digging often took crews into the U.S., especially when customers were in search of those sizes and varieties not available within Ontario.

By the mid-1980s, Dutchmaster's own production was finally able to keep up with marketplace demand, allowing the company to focus all of their resources on the growing of quality caliper trees. Today, Dutchmaster Nurseries digs up to 60,000 trees per year for



Henry (pictured above) and Frances Tillaart started Dutchmaster Nurseries Limited in 1971 to supply landscape contractors and municipalities with quality nursery stock. Their large fleet of trucks (below) ensures their customers receive the quality and reliable service they have come to expect.



a customer base which extends from Ontario to the maritime provinces and into the U.S.

As with many seasonal companies, Dutchmaster Nurseries was always on the look-out for winter works projects which would allow them to keep some of their key people employed year round. As one of the province's largest diggers of caliper trees, they soon decided what the marketplace really needed was a better, more durable tree spade. In 1982, Dutchmaster began to design and manufacture the Dutchman's Tree Spade. Through their own experience and by keeping in close touch with the industry, over the next few years many refinements and improvements were made. Today, the Dutchman's Tree Spade has gained acceptance global acceptance, although most product is sold throughout the North American marketplace. What started out as a make-work project is, today, a very profitable part of the company's overall operations.

Dutchmaster Nurseries is very much a family business with each of Henry's six children being involved in different degrees

and capacities. The third generation is also showing a keen interest as well and currently several of Henry's 12 grandchildren are learning the business through part-time work.

Dutchmaster Nurseries puts a great deal of value on the work which can be accomplished on behalf of industry by their trade associations and are members of Landscape Ontario, the American Nursery and Landscape Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Giving back to the community is also an important objective for the Tillaarts, and Henry is a member of the Knights of Columbus. Recently, he was also presented with an award of excellence by the Town of Pickering for Dutchmaster's contributions to the prosperity of the town.

At Dutchmaster Nurseries, competitive pricing and reliable service are the driving factors. Combining these with strong family values will allow them to establish relationships with their customers that will grow in future years and for generations to come.

Upon his retirement in 1980, Jim McKague found it was not difficult to leave behind the bureaucratic red tape that was all a part of managing the Canadian operations of a large multi-national company. During his final years with this manufacturer of construction and some horticultural products, however, a seed had been planted in Jim's mind about the benefits of pine bark as a growing media. Much to his surprise, and in spite of the corporation's earlier rejection of this idea, Jim found that his entrepreneurial spirit and his need to prove he was right was far stronger than the call of the golf course.

The first step to turning the idea into reality was to locate a source of raw materials, a task which proved to be surprisingly simple. The eastern Ontario sawmill owner of the first stock pile of good quality pine bark was gratified, if somewhat amused, that anyone was actually willing to pay him for what he considered to be waste.

The next step for Gro-Bark (Ontario) Ltd., as Jim's new enterprise was to be called, was decidedly more difficult. Convincing Ontario's nursery growers on the benefits of pine bark as a growing media was only the first part of the sales job; they then needed reassurance on the consistency of quality, cost-effectiveness and finally, the product's long-term availability. Jim was none-the-less convinced he was on the right track and, with the courage of his convictions, he incurred five years of financial losses in the belief that once growers tried pine bark, they would never turn back. His persistence and tenacity paid off as growers discovered for themselves what Jim already knew to be true — pine bark was an excellent container media ingredient.

Having accomplished his original objectives, Jim was finally ready to get serious about his retirement and his golf game and in 1987, he turned over the reigns of the company to his son Bill. Holding a degree in Agriculture from the University

of Guelph, Bill found that life's twists and turns had taken him into public accounting. He had followed his father's new venture with keen interest, however, and readily changed careers to take over the running of Gro-Bark.

Working on the solid foundation established by his father, Bill made the company's expansion his immediate objective. As a result of his diligent efforts, the Gro-Bark of today is a distinctly different company than it was 10 years ago. Entirely new marketplace niches have been sought out and developed in addition to the challenges of keeping up with changes to

were added to the company's equipment inventory of three trucks and "walking floor" trailers. Soon it became desirable to have an operating location closer to their customer base and in 1996, Gro-Bark purchased Scott's Composting Farm near Milton, one of Ontario's largest privately operated commercial composting facilities.

The company continues to expand its marketplace niches. More recently growers have found it more economical to have their container media premixed with incorporated fertilizers. There is an on-going demand from the landscape industry for high quality soil amendments. And, the golf course industry is also beginning to discover the benefits of pine bark and compost-based soil mixes. As with the nursery industry before them, if a golf course superintendent can be persuaded to try the product once, he quickly becomes a convert.

As much as quality has been an issue in the past, it will be doubly more so in the future.

Growers and golf courses

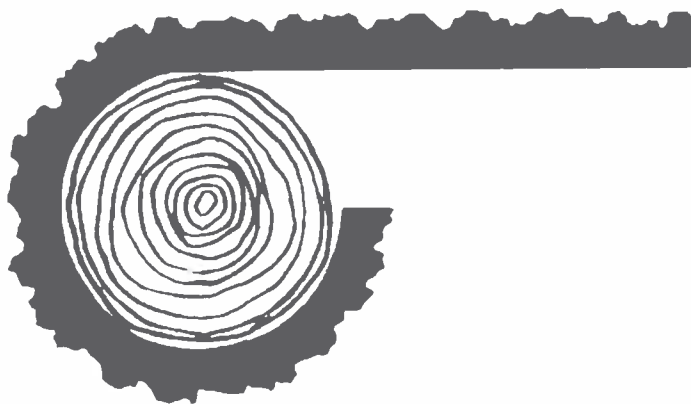
in particular, demand assurances of consistently high quality product. To meet these requirements, Gro Bark is currently focused on refining its already high standards with a more scientific approach to studying bark required by a variety of users. Currently in Ontario, there are no longer any large stock piles of quality composted pine bark within an economical distance to the market. Gro-Bark is therefore implementing a long-term program to ensure there is an abundant supply of properly composted pine bark to enable them to meet the marketplace demands for both the short and long term needs of their customers.

The grower industry. The grower industry continues to make up the core of Gro-Bark's business, but the supply of other sectors, especially quality bark mulches to the landscape construction industry has proven to be an important market as well.

The challenge today is to secure on-going supplies of quality pine bark, says Bill, with the real emphasis being on the word "quality." In order to keep their commitments to the industry, quality sources are secured through contracts, but the real key is being able to initiate and maintain good client-supplier relationships.

As the company's continued stability also depended on building up inventories, acreage was leased close to supply sources in both Bancroft and Burke's Falls. The expansion into the relatively new field of composting was a natural fit for Gro-Bark and the appropriate grinders and shredders

GRO-BARK



“We at Gro-Bark are proud of the industry we serve and the relationships we have established with our many customers. We believe our relationship with our customers is a partnership; it is only if our customers succeed that we can succeed.”

hank deenen landscaping ltd.

In the mid to late 1950s, Hank Deenen Landscaping was an ultra-small, one man landscape maintenance company. The necessary tools were transported to and from job sites in the company's one vehicle, a station wagon which on weekends served as the family's means of transportation. You knew when the work week was over because the company's only advertising venue — a wooden sign bearing the company name — was taken out of the back window.

This compares dramatically with the Hank Deenen Landscaping Limited of the 1990s, a modern landscape construction and maintenance firm specializing in corporate and commercial maintenance and construction. A look at the company's history reveals the work ethic and above all the perseverance required to take a fledgling company starting out in a young, unstructured industry to become one of the major players in the Toronto area's very competitive and sophisticated marketplace.

Hank and Maria Deenen's decision to move to Canada was motivated primarily by their desire to leave behind their respective family business in their native Holland. Hank's family was in the cattle and trucking business, and neither had any interest in joining the hotel/food service business in which Maria had grown up. It was with a spirit of adventure and the unknown, therefore, that in 1952 they made the decision to join friends and relatives who had already immigrated to Canada.

Hank's first full-time job was as a factory worker with Illinois Tool. He supplemented his income as a part-time landscape labourer. Knowing he had at least a little experience in grounds maintenance, the management at Illinois Tool asked him if he would look after their grounds during the season. When other businesses in the area began to solicit his services as well, Hank quickly realized the potential of the marketplace and decided to start his own business. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

Hank Deenen Landscaping made the transition from being a part-time to become a full-time seasonal business in 1955. Delivering home fuel as a truck driver for BA helped Hank to pay the bills during the winter months. The company turned into a year-round venture in 1957 when several of the young maintenance company's clients began

requesting snow clearing services as well.

The company moved location several times, always within Toronto's east end, to accommodate the needs of a growing business with increased staff, more equipment and inventory storage requirements. The first location away from the family home was a lot with a storage trailer on Cosentino Ave. From there Deenen Landscaping moved to an industrial building which had the extra advantage of a mechanic's bay. This new location, also on



The company and this Lawnboy were first started in 1954, pictured here with founder Hank Deenen.

Cosentino Ave., served their needs well for the next eight years. It was not until the company moved to their current location on Midland Ave. in 1975, however, that the office and the business were finally operated from the same location. As with most small businesses, this was a family affair, and running the office from home allowed Maria to look after her family as well as the company's ever-increasing administrative functions.

Hank Deenen Landscaping started with some commercial and mostly residential grounds maintenance contracts, many in the prestigious areas of Victoria Park and the Bridal Path. It was natural that these clients would also require Deenen Landscaping to accommodate their site upgrading and landscaping needs and the company gradually expanded into the residential

construction sector. It was not until son Harold joined the company in 1974, after graduating from Humber College's Landscape Technology program, bringing with him new and ambitious plans, as well as a willingness to share the many responsibilities of running a company, that Deenen Landscaping began to tackle larger, commercial projects. Bidding on commercial grounds maintenance projects and the landscaping of town house developments, the company began expanding rapidly.

In 1979, disaster struck. It's a story told all too often by the landscape sector of the industry — prices were being quoted too low and it was becoming harder and harder to collect outstanding accounts. Unscrupulous developers held back large percentages of monies owing for extended periods of time, were very late in paying their bills or, worse yet, simply stopped paying their bills.

Although Deenen Landscaping was close to financial failure at that time, they were determined to return the company to its former profitable status. After three years of dedication, commitment and above all, hard work from all of the management and full-time staff, the company was finally able to say it had made a complete recovery.

The lessons learned from this experience have had a lasting impact on the operations of Deenen Landscaping. The more obvious included tighter credit policies and a weeding out of their customer base. By seeking out large corporate and government work and thereby ensuring more solid receivables, the apparent decreases in profitability were only an illusion when compared to the high losses once suffered because of unpaid accounts.

Just as importantly, Deenen Landscaping has now taken the attitude that efficiency and accuracy of their administration systems are equally as important as efficiency and accuracy on the job site. From the financial reports generated monthly to the methods used for generating sales leads, there is a closely monitored system in place for virtually every office function.

Harold believes that their computerized estimating system, adapted from the construction industry for their own requirements, is the most accurate system available. It is so accurate, in fact, he feels it has considerably reduced their success rate in

he bidding process. "Most times we'll come in second low on a tender. In the bidding game it's usually the company that made the biggest mistake that gets the job," he explains.

Employing 38 people on a full-time or full-time seasonal basis, with an additional 14 casual labourers during the season, Deenen Landscaping's work load is fairly evenly split between landscape construction and landscape maintenance, depending, of course, on current economic conditions. The generally longer term of most maintenance contracts provides a stable income base for the company. Maintenance customers are also a good source of landscape upgrade projects, which are particularly valuable during times of economic recession. And, as many of their clients prefer to deal with a single contractor for all of their landscape, grounds maintenance and snow removal, this latter category continues to make up a significant portion of Deenen Landscaping's annual volume.

Although Deenen's landscape division is capable of performing most hard and soft landscaping functions, they have found it more economical to hire in sub-trades for the installation of irrigation systems, playgrounds, electrical and mechanical work and decorative steel fences. In the same way that townhouse development was the core of their landscape work 20 years ago, today Deenen Landscaping is very involved in park development, with a minimum of three to four and as many as six park development projects per year. Naturalization has become very fashionable but many landscape companies, unfamiliar with the scope of these projects, tend to not bid or be very cautious in their bidding process.

The fact that Hank Deenen Landscaping has undergone such dramatic changes in their 40-plus year history in many respects correspond to the changes which have occurred in the industry within the same time period — changes in which they are proud to have played an integral role. The lack of structure to the industry in which he had chosen to participate greatly concerned Hank Deenen and he invited his colleagues to join him in discussing methods for bringing greater control over their industry. It was through meetings held in the Deenen family's

basement recreation room in the mid 1960s that the plans to start the Ontario Ground Maintenance Landscape Association (OGMLA), one of the forerunners of Landscape Ontario, were originally conceived.



Hank and Harold Deenen are pictured here with some of the company's employees at their Midland Road location. At far right is Frank Deenen.

This photo of two Deenen employees (Carlie Deenen and Doug Collins) was taken as part of a publicity advertising photo shoot for Mark's Work Wear House.

As an awareness of the inestimable value of trade associations led to a commitment by the management of Deenen Landscaping to support and nurture these associations. It was natural that Harold would also follow in his father's footsteps. Since joining the family business, he has been involved on numerous Landscape Ontario committees, usually as the chair. He has also spent eight years on the

provincial board of directors and served as president in 1982. Deenen Landscaping's commitment to association involvement allows them to meet their important company objective of ensuring a healthy, professional business environment for both today's and future generations. More recently, this mandate has taken on particular significance as Harold's daughter Carlie has already expressed an interest in the business and, following family

tradition, has enrolled in the Landscape Technology program at Humber College. Harold's cousin, Frank Deenen, took an active interest in the landscape industry as a result of summer jobs working for the company and after studying at Humber College, worked up to the position as chief estimator.

Ultimately, a company's success can be traced back to the skill and especially the commitment and dedication of their staff. The management at Deenen Landscaping are all too aware, however, that this commitment and dedication does not come freely — it must be earned. Deenen Landscaping is continually refining the employee manual which governs the activities of all of their staff. By setting standards for appropriate behaviour and dress, the company is better able to maintain their professional image at all times. It is their strict adherence to those factors which directly affect the employee's well-being, however, especially safety procedures, that send employees the message that management is interested in more than the bottom line. In this regard, an employee safety manual is the written confirmation of a company's policies and especially their practices. Deenen Landscaping's reward is in their high number of long-term employees, many who have been with the company for 15 and even 20 or more years.

With today's rapid pace of change, planning for the future is more of a challenge than ever. An important part of meeting that challenge is not just keeping up with, but incorporating those technologies that allow a company to be more efficient and profitable today. By learning from their past experiences and embracing what today has to offer, Hank Deenen Landscaping feels they are particularly well-positioned to meet the demands of tomorrow.

Wright Lawn Care and Landscape Services

Celebrating 30 years of business in 1997, Wright Lawn Care and Landscape Services and its owners have proven that long-term success comes from perseverance, hard work and dedication to the industry it supports.

Owned and operated by John and Ruth Wright, Wright Lawn Care provides lawn and grounds maintenance to Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Cambridge and the surrounding area. As explained by brochures created in-house, their service can extend from weed and insect control, aeration, sodding, seeding and vegetation control to providing tree and lawn diagnostics and supplying their customers with their own custom-blended fertilizer.

Working in the pest control business in Toronto in the late 60s, John, a graduate from the Ontario Agricultural College and currently an ISA certified arborist, decided to open Wright Lawn Care after he saw that there was only one other company providing lawn care services. Teamed with wife Ruth, a teacher for 13 years, Wright Lawn Care caters to both residential (90 per cent) and commercial clients (10 per cent). The groundskeeping division has relatively the same split with 75 per cent of residential clients, compared with 25 per cent of commercial customers.

John and Ruth pride themselves on their hands-on management style, and their constant efforts to educate their employees and clientele, especially in light of the bad publicity the lawn care industry has received over the past few years. The use of fortified organic fertilizers and the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system Wright's utilizes, though sometimes difficult and costly to provide, has helped defray the bad publicity, better establish lawn care as an environmental benefit, and as such, has attracted more business their way.

Dedicated employees have also played a large part in Wright's success. Gary Durst (maintenance manager) and John Keenan (operations manager) are both 25-year veterans with the company. Joy Luft has worked as bookkeeper for the company for the past 11 years. The remainder of the staff is made up of college students and others who Wright's employs on a seasonal basis.

As is the case with most family businesses, the Wright children have, at one time, been involved with the business. Son David has followed family tradition with a career in horticulture, receiving his degree in



John and Ruth Wright.

Landscape Architecture from the University of Guelph (now situated in Houston, Texas). Daughter Carolyn, a Queen's University graduate now resides in Vancouver, B.C., while daughter Julie is in her fourth year at



The bright, enthusiastic and hard-working staff of 1997.

McGill University.

Keeping up to and exceeding industry standards has been the norm for both John and Ruth. Part of the first group of pesticide applicators to be licensed in 1964, John



Gary Durst (left) and John Keenan (right).

continues to look for safer and more productive ways to do business. As member/director of the Ontario Grounds Maintenance Landscape Association, one of the founding associations of Landscape Ontario, John has contributed to the industry and Landscape Ontario since the outset. In 1976, John was president of the Hamilton Chapter, moving on in 1979-80 as charter president of the Waterloo Chapter. At the provincial board level, John was director/secretary of Landscape Ontario from 1980 to 1988. He is currently charter director of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundations, director of the Lawn Care Commodity Group of which he was the founding chair, and director of the Pesticide Symposium. John was recognized for his efforts in 1986 when he received the past president's award. In 1988, Wright's was awarded the Dunington-Grubb Award for outstanding Grounds Maintenance, the first maintenance company, says John, to receive such an honour.

As John and Ruth confirm, membership in trade associations is important if a business wants to stay abreast of new technology, especially in the lawn care industry which has seen many changes over the years. The most crucial, says John, began around 1966 when certain products were banned from use within the industry. Among these were chlorinated hydrocarbons (DDT) and 2, 4, 5-T, with other pesticides restricted and withdrawn from the Canadian marketplace. As John explains, the withdrawal of some of these minor-use pesticides is a result of government regulations which require manufacturers to continually register and re-register their products.

Both John and Ruth are firm believers in safety, and as such have supported regulatory changes by the Ministry and Landscape Ontario's attempt to educate all lawn care operators through the annual Pesticide Symposium.

Wright Lawn Care and Landscape Services has survived these past 30 years not on mere luck, but a combination of hard work, customer satisfaction, communication and education, and their attempt to keep abreast with the technology and regulations which have had a major impact on the industry. Armed with these tools, Wright Lawn Care and Landscape Services expects to take on the next 30 years with the same enthusiasm.

Jan Gelderman Landscaping

Treating people right – if you could summarize the reasons behind the success of Jan Gelderman Landscaping in three words, it would be these. From superb employee relations to the best in customer service, a superior standard has been set, starting with its president and second-generation owner, Hank Gelderman.

It was a passion for plants and an uncanny knack for numbers that inspired Jan Gelderman to start his landscaping company back in 1955. Today, Hank uses the same principles to manage a much larger company, and also contributes his obvious qualities as a “people person.”

Hank readily accepts any ideas for improvement from any of his employees, and credits the success of the company to the people who work with him. With the realization that responsibility goes hand in hand with authority, Hank trusts his supervisors to perform their duties as efficiently and effectively as possible, without his interference.

Today, Jan Gelderman Landscaping is comprised of four divisions: grounds maintenance, turf management, landscape construction and snow removal. Grounds maintenance is the largest division, accounting for 55 per cent of annual sales.

Many of today’s employees have been plying their expertise at Jan Gelderman Landscaping for many years. Roy Hummel who oversees the entire maintenance division is in his 20th season. John Buikema, maintenance supervisor, has contributed over 18 years. Julian Holmes, who heads up turf management, has been involved for 11 years. Harry Gelderman, Hank’s brother, runs the landscape construction division, while Hank manages the snow removal service.

The maintenance division incorporates the work of its crews into a strict weekly schedule. Condominium complexes make up 80 per cent of the maintenance contracts. Quality control, which is top priority for Jan Gelderman Landscaping is carried out by a supervisor who spends one day a week visiting sites to assess how they are being maintained and to suggest any upgrades that may be required. The company’s



Left to right: Office manager Shauna Krikke, president Hank Gelderman, and maintenance supervisor Roy Hummel.

custom-written computer software tracks all the time spent at each job so it can be compared with the previous year’s time and costs. And, because appearance and quality are important, each crew spends one morning per week performing maintenance on all their equipment.

The turf care division utilizes two spray trucks and provides a wide range of services and expertise to keep customers’ lawns healthy and looking great. This division takes



Jan Gelderman Landscaping maintains the immaculate grounds of this country property.

care of the weed spraying and fertilizing of all the maintenance sites, and also provides the same services on a sub-contract basis for other landscape companies in the area.

The landscape construction division is mainly involved in renovating existing

properties. Stone work and water features are completed by those employees who specialize in this type of work, while other employees handle most of the larger installation jobs. A freelance designer is used on a per-plan basis, and Harry Gelderman prepares estimates on the computer and presents the completed garden plan and estimate to the client.

The snow removal division is headed by Hank Gelderman. While the company has many contracts for their snow removal service, the majority is handled by sub-contractors. Independent sub-contractors sign contracts each fall to perform snow removal services at certain properties. All customer calls are directed through Jan Gelderman Landscaping, and because the phone also rings in the house, calls are answered 24 hours a day. It is during this season the high-tech communication and record-keeping systems are truly put to the test – and help to provide the finest customer service.

In order to service the customer in the best, most efficient way possible, Jan Gelderman Landscaping has also invested heavily in technology. Supervisors all carry cellular telephones, as well as laptop computers equipped with estimating software, current customer accounts and information. Each truck has a two-way radio and all foremen carry alphanumeric pagers. The office manager can send a telephone message to anyone’s pager instantaneously, and the foreman on site can promptly respond to a customer’s request. It is company policy to return a client’s call within 15 minutes whenever possible.

Last year, using the services of an advertising agency, Jan Gelderman Landscaping re-designed their logo and created an advertising package based on the company’s “Our Care Shows” message.

Although Jan Gelderman Landscaping has grown from the small company it was in 1955 to one of the largest, full service landscape contractors in the area, the principles set in place in the beginning are still prevalent today.



Somerville Nurseries Inc.

Businesses, especially nurseries, open for a number of reasons: the love of plants and trees, talent in the growing and harvesting of these trees, a keen business sense, or the realization that their business can fill a market niche by supplying their customers with prime nursery stock and customer service. Such was the case for Somerville Nurseries Inc. (SNI), which was started in 1950 after John Somerville, with a keen interest in growing Christmas trees, planted Scotch pine on vacant land then owned by Peter Thomson & Sons, the lumber company started by his grandfather in 1900. Forty-seven years later, SNI has emerged as one of the largest producers of field-grown conifers with approximately 2500 acres under management in the Alliston area.

John was joined in the business a few years later by brother Dave, and in 1956, the tree growing enterprise was incorporated under the name Creemore Holdings Ltd. This was changed to Somerville Nurseries Ltd. in 1978, and a subsequent name change in 1990 gave way to the company's present identity, Somerville Nurseries Inc.

While the company started out planting only Scotch pine, in 1970 it became apparent that a demand existed for other types of landscape-sized conifers. A variety of pine and spruce species were added to SNI's line to service the landscaping market.

Technical knowledge was also an important element in SNI's growth, and in particular, the health of the plant after transplant. John gained most of the required root-pruning techniques and knowledge while travelling through Europe in the early 1970s, visiting some of the more experienced nurseries. As a result, SNI developed their own unique root pruning system. Still in use at SNI, the technique greatly enhances the survivability of Somerville's nursery stock.

The 1970s also saw an addition to the Somerville team. The late Jim Herod, former long-time employee of Sheridan Nurseries, moved to Alliston and joined Somerville Nurseries Inc. Well respected in the industry and by his peers for his knowledge, interest and integrity, Jim proved to be a tremendous help in developing Somerville's nursery business.

The company's corporate structure was reorganized in 1990, and saw the appointment

of Fred Somerville as president, and Robert Somerville as vice president of operations. As an operation, SNI employs a number of dedicated, long-term employees and credits them for much of their present success. Paul Fraser, Somerville's production manager, has been with the company in that capacity since 1976. Kim Icton heads up the sales department with Gini Oksanen as assistant sales manager and nursery shipper. Alan Little is responsible for sales in New York State, while Rick St. Croix is the Western Canadian "Kriss Kringle" Christmas Tree sales representative. John Coates joined the company a few short years ago as controller, and makes an important addition to the SNI team.

The most recent contribution to the business came in 1996, when Syd Lucas, previously Nursery Forester at the Ministry of Natural Resources Provincial Nursery at Kemptonville, joined SNI to help develop the bareroot seedling nursery. Producing mostly native conifers and hardwoods for sale to growers, conservation authorities and private landowners, this bareroot seedling nursery has many plans for future expansion. This expansion follows a market niche in the production of large, field-grown conifers, especially as more nurseries are moving into containerized production.

Currently, SNI grows and supplies approximately 75,000 trees annually to the nursery trade and employs a staff of up to 150 during their peak season, most of whom are high school students. Most of the nursery stock they produce are conifers which range in size of 200 cm to 300 cm.

Somerville Nurseries' Christmas Tree line has increased dramatically since it started supplying the Christmas tree market in the 1950s. Forerunners in the industry by producing high-grade plantation grown Balsam and Fraser fir, SNI now produces seven different Christmas tree species. Upper grade Christmas trees are sold under the "Kriss Kringle" brand name which to many experienced retailers represent excellent quality and high industry standards. A full line of live, potted trees, and wreath and garland materials complete SNI's product line. Annual Christmas tree sales total approximately 130,000 pieces.

SNI has been involved with Landscape Ontario throughout the association's history, currently with memberships in L.O., the Canadian Nursery Trades Association, the Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario, the National Christmas Tree Association and the American Association of Nurserymen.

Somerville Nurseries' business philosophy was initially motivated by a basic entrepreneurial interest in growing trees for profit. Quality, integrity and increasing customer service keeps SNI poised as one of the major players in this growing market.



Jardins Boardwalk Gardens

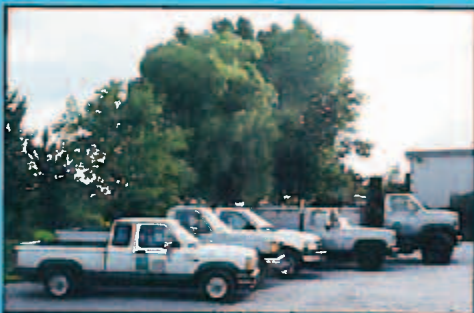
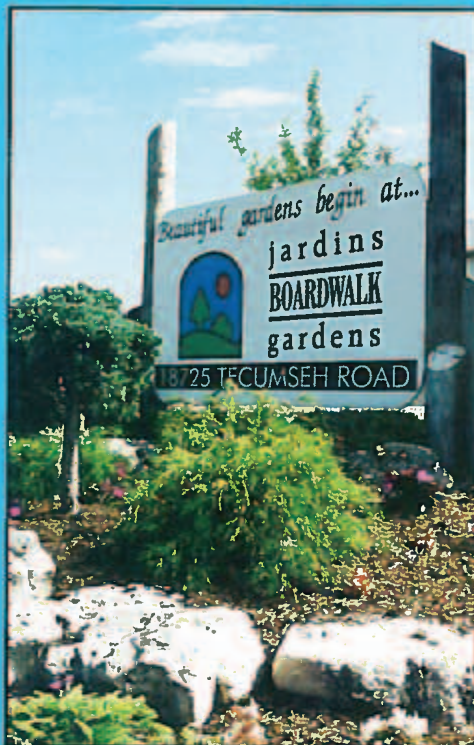
After several years of cutting lawns while still in elementary school, Roger Beaulieu expanded his client base and started his own company, Green Turf Lawn Maintenance and Landscaping. A pick up truck, a riding mower, a trailer and a few accessories were the necessary tools of the trade. The business was turned into a full-time venture in 1984, with the ambition of earning enough money for University. However, the lack of accumulated resources and continued demand for his services lead to the continuation of the business, while the dream of "higher education" became less and less important.

In the spring of 1985, Roger expanded the business to include a small retail store when an appropriate site became available for lease on the outskirts of Tilbury. Although the two sectors -- landscape and retail -- were complimentary, sales at Boardwalk Gardens, as the garden centre was called, were not as good as anticipated. The situation was further complicated by vandals and thieves. At that time the business was moved to a more "downtown" location but when sales did not improve by the end of the following season, the store was closed down.

Undaunted by this set-back, Roger took the optimistic view that this learning experience could be the start of a new beginning. While Green Turf continued to landscape and provide maintenance services to their ever faithful clientele, a 16-acre farm was purchased to become the new home of the landscaping operation. Part of the land was devoted to growing a specific shade blend of sod that local growers could not supply in sufficient quantity. A small parcel of land was also devoted to growing some nursery stock, to be used mainly by the landscape construction division.

To accommodate the growing business, a new building was constructed in 1989 to house a shop and storage facilities.

The location of this small farm was also ideal for a country-style garden centre and so Boardwalk Gardens was reintroduced in 1991. The operation of the two different divisions from the same location by the same owner but with a different name was the cause of some confusion to the consumer. Consequently, in 1993 both divisions were incorporated as a single company operating as Jardins Boardwalk Gardens. The bilingual name reflects the 30 per cent francophone client base served by Boardwalk Gardens and acknowledges the strong French



heritage of Southwestern Ontario.

Also in 1993, Jardins Boardwalk Gardens became involved in a government-sponsored initiative to grow native Carolinian seedlings. With the local Conservation Authorities as their only client, Boardwalk and other private nursery growers were encouraged to grow large quantities of native seedlings from indigenous seed sources. This prompted the company's largest expansion to date. A large greenhouse was added and at the same time, to better cope with the increasing pressures of a growing business, the office was moved from Roger's home to a newly renovated space within the barn constructed a few years earlier.

Unfortunately, within a few months of this expansion, government cutbacks to the seedling program resulted in the company owning large quantities of unsold stock with no customers and no overwintering facilities -- all within a period of general economic recession. The resultant impact on both cash flow and profitability was devastating. Boardwalk struggled through the rest of the year, only to realize early in 1995 that bankruptcy was virtually inevitable.

After consulting with accountants and lawyers, Roger was almost ready to sign the bankruptcy papers when, at the 11th hour he realized he had not, after all, come to terms with the idea of closing his business and most of all, hurting those companies and suppliers which had helped his company grow.

With renewed determination and the help of a business friend and mentor, Roger instead went to his bank with a restructuring plan. By selling certain assets, making dramatic cutbacks to his overhead and focusing on the bread and butter of the industry, especially the landscape and retail sectors, he has managed to turn his business into a profitable one.

Roger attributes the success of his restructuring plans to a number of factors, including the perseverance, commitment and cooperation of suppliers, and especially the dedication of his staff. In particular he credits landscape foreman Mark Hurley, who adds his individual touch to each job and to his mother Edna Beaulieu, (also known as Mrs. B.) who tends the garden centre, the greenhouse, and the gardens in her own special way.

At Boardwalk Gardens, we strive to give our customers the best possible products and services for a fair price with a smile and a continued commitment to be here when they need us.

CANADALE NURSERIES LTD.



Bill and Joan Intven.

Because of strict government controls on the country's scarce land resources, Bill and Joan Intven realized their dream of owning their own nursery would never come true if they stayed in their native Holland and in 1950 made the decision to immigrate to Canada. In their early years in Canada, Bill felt it necessary to first provide a secure income for his young and growing family. With a horticultural background, it was only natural that his first job was at McConnell Nurseries working in the propagation department. The downside to working in a nursery was the long hours required in season, and several years later Bill took on a position with a local manufacturing company. By resisting offers of management positions and better pay, Bill was able to work after-noons and evenings getting his own nursery business started.

The dream became a good deal closer to reality in 1955 with the purchase of a 50-acre farm. Although the land had been neglected for many years, it did have beautiful sandy soil and a good supply of water.

By 1962, the nursery was demanding his

full attention. Calculating that if the business could gross \$2,000 that first year he could pay his bills and feed his family, Bill decided to take the plunge and launch the business on a full-time basis. The name Canadale, as the business was to be called, reflected the Intvens' loyalty to their new country as well as their community, as all of the streets in the area ended in "dale."

Thanks to Bill and Joan's years of preparatory work, the business did much better in the first year than originally projected. Starting as a grower/retailer, Canadale focused on the growing and sale of the more "bread and butter" items. Joan ran

the garden centre while Bill looked after the landscaping with son Mike who later started his own quality landscaping company, Greentrends. In 1977, after graduating from Queen's University, son Tom came into the business on a full-time basis and expanded the growing operation and the wholesale business with it, specializing in top grafting and other unique items. Thanks to the diversity of their growing division, even with today's demand for the different and the unusual, Canadale's retail garden centre is still able to rely on their own nursery for 80 per cent or more of their plant material requirements each year.

The first polyhouses for container grown stock were constructed in 1980 and soon covered 20 acres of gravel found beneath the topsoil. By 1982, the wholesale business accounted for more than half the company's annual volume, and today has leveled off at 55 per cent of the company's annual business.

In 1982, after graduating from the University of Western Ontario, Pauline Intven came into the business full-time to manage the office and assist in garden centre management. Today, as

well as being the garden centre manager, Pauline is also in charge of accounting.

Canadale now grows a complete line of nursery stock, including many types of top-grafted ornamentals, Japanese yew and the other unique dwarf plants made necessary by today's smaller home lots. Although they've now narrowed them down to a more manageable 40 varieties, Bill and Tom developed a passion for Japanese maples that eventually grew to over 100 varieties. Customers came from many miles away as word of this unique collection grew.

By travelling to the four corners of the globe in their quest for new and rare plants, Canadale tries to offer one of the best selections of hardy plant material in Ontario. They have also developed a few of their own introductions, and hold the COPF registration on two plants, Canadale Gold Euonymus and Jessica Globe Cedar.

Bill and Joan, who for many years handled all of the administrative functions in



Canadale's garden centre is well-known for their diverse selection of quality nursery stock.

addition to raising a family of seven children, have happily turned over the day-to-day running of the business to son Tom and daughter Pauline. Many other long time staff have also contributed to Canadale's success. In the garden centre, Jim Stinson has cheerfully greeted their faithful clientele for 12 years. In the nursery, Martin Wynards (26 years), Robb Parmeter (10 years), Rick Graham and Denise Prance (eight years), Connie Silcox (seven years, bookkeeper) and many others help to maintain Canadale's reputation for quality and selection.

The history of Canadale Nurseries is proof that dreams can come true, as long as you're prepared to provide the necessary commitment, hard work and perseverance.



Both field and container growing make up Canadale's nursery production.

Kord Products Ltd.



Founded in 1968, Kord Products has grown to become a key player in the North American horticultural market, supplying plastic and fibre containers. The company's continued growth has led to the establishment of four manufacturing plants in Canada, the United States (U.S.) and Ireland, encompassing 300,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space, and employing over 500 people.

Kord Products' strategically located facilities allow the company to effectively respond to marketplace demands across the continent. The company's corporate headquarters, located in Brampton, Ontario provides customer service, finance and management information needs to the operation and also houses Kord's consumer products packaging as well as one of their largest off-site warehouses.

Bramalea, Ontario is the location of Kord's largest plastic manufacturing plant, housing a wide range of injection moulding equipment. The company is set up to run single or multi-cavity tooling specializing in, but not limited to, thin wall, high speed moulding. This location also offers injection blow moulding and high speed, fully automatic thermoforming. The engineering department and mould shop are also located in this plant.

In Burlington, Ontario, Kord manufactures moulded pulp fibre products, ranging from horticultural containers to protective packaging.

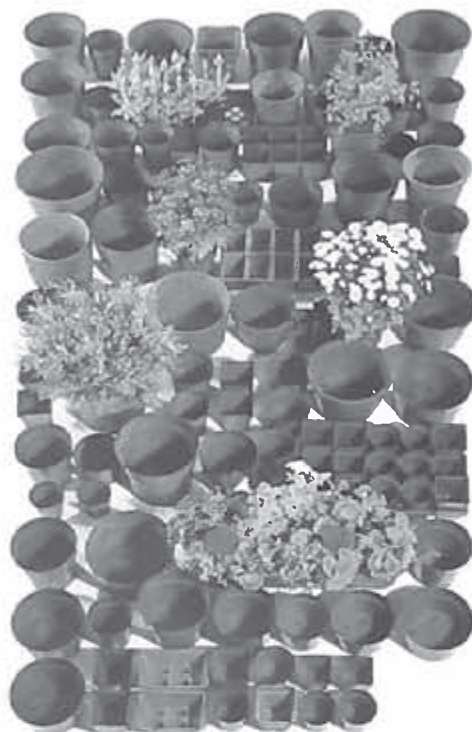
Across the border in Lugoff, South Carolina, Kord's U.S. subsidiary, specializing in plastic injection moulding, offers customers a Southern and mid-Western manufacturing and distribution point, providing shipping economies and delivery reliability.

Birr, Ireland is the home of Kord Erin Ltd., a successful joint venture which has provided their market with a full selection of moulded pulp fibre containers for the horticultural industry.

Kord has as many as 14 company-operated distribution facilities and a further 20 partner distributors. This network of 34 locations allows Kord to move products quickly and easily to anywhere in North America, as well as the Caribbean. Recent U.S.-based acquisitions have strengthened Kord's long-term marketing position.

Their ongoing investment in the latest technical capabilities

combined with their commitment to stay attuned to the industry's needs, has allowed Kord to become North America's leading manufacturer of plastic and fibre horticultural growing containers. With over 300 different shapes and sizes of plastic pots, hanging baskets, saucers, trays, flats, paks and nursery containers, Kord remains well-positioned as a full-service supplier. Kord's biodegradable moulded pulp containers provide for those



growers requiring the additional insulative and breathing advantages of fibre. Made from recycled papers, this selection continues to be popular in today's environmentally conscious marketplace.

Kord's commitment to service begins when a project is initiated. State-of-the-art computer-aided design and engineering allows their technical team to bring an idea to life, which is then transformed into moulds to produce the product in the most efficient manner possible.

The company's sophisticated mould shop is staffed with experienced mould and

toolmakers who are equipped to handle everything from building a new mould to providing an unequalled level of maintenance for Kord's 300-plus proprietary moulds. Kord also provides routine maintenance for their customers' moulds to ensure all are in peak running condition.

Kord also believes that quality must be built into the product. This responsibility begins with a dedicated floor staff, monitored by a Quality Assurance Department. This team maintains a focus at the forefront of market development to strive for the highest level of confidence possible. Recognizing the seasonal requirements of many of their products, Kord maintains tight control over their 200,000 square feet of warehousing. A large fleet of company-owned trucks provides maximum shipping flexibility and reliability, as well as product integrity.

This commitment to service and product superiority also extends to Planter's Pride®, Kord's proprietary brand of lawn and garden consumer products. A variety of colours and designs are offered in this product line which consists of pots, saucers, growers kits, hanging baskets and accessories. Packaged differently than those products sold exclusively to the trade, Kord's retail line uses bold, visually stimulating packaging and labels to attract their retail clientele, and to differentiate between the two product lines.

Product quality and marketing aside, Kord is particularly proud of the long-term partnerships and alliances they have and will continue to build. Kord shares a special connection with their customers, partners and distributors by offering a high level of professionalism, made possible by their employees who are all experts in their field. With this knowledge and expertise, Kord's employees are able to communicate effectively with their customers to ensure all of their needs are met.

Expert knowledge, superior product and an awareness of their customers' needs has enabled Kord to continue to mark out its future. In 1996, Kord Products Limited ensured their prosperity further when they became a division of Cam Vec Corporation.

One of Kord's two original founders, Ralph Welsh remains as president of Kord Products Limited. Warren Watson is the company's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.



Best Way Stone Limited -- Celebrating 32 years



The staff of Best Way Stone Limited.

Established in 1965, Best Way Stone Limited (BWS) proudly celebrated its 32nd anniversary of service to their customers in 1997. The company was founded in 1965 by professional landscapers/contractors Angelo and Paul Pignatelli, a hard-working father and son team who recognized the growing demand for landscape/building products. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Angelo and Paul started to manufacture patio stones, along with other concrete products which they installed primarily on their own landscape jobs, but it wasn't long before the products required their full-time attention. As a result, in 1965, the team decided to dedicate their efforts to the manufacturing and distribution of their ever-expanding product line. The firm grew quickly, keeping pace with the rapid growth in the Greater Toronto area (GTA), and in 1974, they added a third partner, Frank Pacitto.

Within a relatively short time, production volumes and staff increased dramatically which necessitated a move in 1986 from its facilities in Richmond Hill to the present 10-acre site in Woodbridge. Conveniently located on Weston Road, just north of Highway 7, BWS is easily accessible by Hwy 400.

Over the last 32 years in business, BWS has been a leader in recognizing changing market conditions and producing new and innovative products to meet these changes. For example, in 1978, they began manufacturing and distributing interlocking concrete pavers. In 1996, they started manufacturing the newest "tumbled" landscape products such as their STRADA ANTICO interlocking pavers and the PALLADIO ANTICO

retaining walls and in 1997, the firm added the "PARKWALL Retaining Wall System" to their product line. This newest addition is an innovative retaining wall system with many unique features not found in other wall systems. BWS manufactures a full range of precast concrete products including inter-



One of the first patio slabs made (circa 1960).

locking paving stone, retaining wall systems, patio slabs, sidewalk and splash blocks, precast steps, residential curbing and concrete window sills.

"The philosophy behind the success over the years," according to Mr. Pacitto, "can be best described in one phrase: Commitment to quality, service and customer satisfaction." BWS has continually met the challenge of maintaining their leadership in the competitive Southern Ontario precast concrete market by investing in modern, state-of-the-art equipment and improved production facilities.

As a family-owned Canadian company established more than three decades ago, the firm has a long and proven record of product innovation and the manufacturing of landscape products of the highest possible standard.

BWS has increased their production capacity in recent years to manage the substantial growth of the paving stone industry. The paving stones they manufacture offer a durable, high quality means of paving any residential or commercial area, and come in a variety of stone designs and colours to allow for maximum flexibility on any project. These paving stones and other products manufactured by BWS are manufactured using precise dimensions and quality with zero slump concrete, high frequency vibrations and hydraulic pressure.

BWS also maintains its production of sidewalk and patio slabs, steps, curbs, chimney caps, key stones and concrete window sills. They are also a leader in the manufacture of imprinted patio stones, which are in increasingly high demand by many landscape design professionals for townhouse, subdivision and condominium upgrades.

The company has been and will continue to be suppliers to many major companies in the building industry, including many top builders and building supply outlets. BWS also supplies garden centres and nurseries across Southern Ontario with a wide range of products. There is pride in their friendly, knowledgeable staff who will help in all client's paving needs, either for do-it-yourself projects or by suggesting the use of professional contractors who have met their standards. Great emphasis is placed on quality, selection and meeting the delivery commitments to their clients.

"Although we don't supply every builder in Southern Ontario, we are considered strong players in a highly competitive market," reports sales manager Paul Tiribelli. "Best Way Stone Limited is proud of its past and has great expectations for the next 30 years."

Currently, BWS remains a family-owned business, with the next generation being slowly introduced into the company. The firm is a member in good standing of the Toronto Home Builders Association (THBA), Landscape Ontario (LO) and the Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute (ICPI).

The staff and management would like to congratulate Landscape Ontario on 25 years of dedication. Keep up the good work and service to the landscape industry, and good luck on your efforts in the future.

Draglam Developments Inc.

Good product development, business and marketing skills are essential to any business. But when the owner of that business has a number of companies in operation in that industry and others, and has the drive to make it profitable, success is somewhat guaranteed.

Such was the beginning for Draglam Developments only eight short years ago. Owned and operated by Pat Lamanna, Draglam was just one in a succession of related businesses.

"Draglam is just one in a number of businesses started by the family," says Pat. "In one way or another, all businesses are related. We are involved in the construction business as Toronto Redi-Mix, supplying ready mixed concrete," says Pat of the largest affiliated company which now employs 50 full-time and part-time staff members from their two plants in Brampton and Concord, and has a fleet of 30 trucks.

Now under a joint ownership between Joe Lamanna, son Pat, Robert Zannetti and Tony Pellegrini, Draglam Developments has come a long way since its beginnings in 1990.



Owners: Joe Lamanna, Pat Lamanna, Robert Zannetti, Tony Pellegrini

Starting with one location in Concord, which now houses the head office, Draglam's market area has increased to five locations in Scarborough, Aurora, Brampton and Toronto, serving the Greater Toronto area.

Draglam Developments' focus when it first started out, says Pat, was to supply bulk road salt to the snow removal industry. The Draglam of today still supplies this but has since added, quite successfully, to that product line. Sand and gravel distribution followed, and was joined with Draglam's latest venture — soils.

Earthco Soil Mixtures, a division of Draglam, targets the soils market, providing screened and shredded topsoil, triple mix and amendments to the horticultural market.



Developed in 1997 when Draglam Developments' owners saw the need for top quality topsoil, Earthco's main supply comes from the topsoil that was stripped down during the construction of new housing developments. "Our operation is a mobile one," explains Pat of Earthco's operation and its staff of five. The office and plant move from site to site, depending on where the stripped topsoil can be found. Earthco uses the latest in screening and shredding technology and has recently purchased a larger fleet of trucks to handle the workload.

The success of the company can be seen not only in the expansions, but it can also be seen in terms of Draglam's financial position. "Our sales have grown each year we have been in business," explains Pat. "And, this year our sales have more than doubled from \$1.2 million to \$3.5 million."

Past experience, work ethic, and key employees with the same dedication and hard working mentality have all contributed to the company's present position in the marketplace.

Dedication such as this is expected from both the Draglam employee base of 15, as well as its owners. With over 30 years of experience in the horticulture industry, Joe Lamanna would not expect anything from his employees that he would not do himself. This includes the level of personalized customer service Draglam provides their clientele. "We go out of our way to serve our customers, even opening on Sundays and working around the clock to make a customer happy," says Pat. "We are a friendly, honest business providing dependable, quality products."

Future aspirations extend to an increased sales base, says Pat, with a Quebec-based, salt distribution division,

further extending their reach into the horticultural market.

Dedication and a willingness to serve the customer have brought Draglam Developments into the 90s marketplace and will secure their place for what the future will bring.



A & T Industries Inc.

When Frank Armstrong first started A & T Industries, he had one customer, one order and two weeks in which to establish his business. Over five years later, Frank continues to service that customer and has expanded his client base to include independent garden centres, mass merchandisers and landscapers.

It was a case of supply and demand, says Frank about the way he started. A salesman by profession, Frank was attending a trade show, employed then by another company, when a gentleman from Aikenheads approached him to source out burlap, EPDM pond liners, PVC piping to the chain store. "He knew exactly what he wanted. All he said was 'I'm here, come and find me.' So I found him," says Frank.

As he explains, Frank went directly to his employer and asked if they wanted to pursue this deal. The company refused the deal, says Frank, explaining that the company's focus was shifting away from burlap and landscape fabric and putting all

their efforts into another division. A change in his sales route was all the initiative Frank needed to make the permanent change and establish A & T Industries, named after his two children, Alexandra and Taylor. "I built it for them," he continues, in the hope that one day they will take over the business.

The rest is history. Since his relatively quick start up more than five years ago, Frank has increased its product line to include EPDM pond liners, "Multi-Flow" drainage systems, pumps, bacteria pond cleansers, landscape fabric, shade cloth, ground covers, geotextiles and koi food.

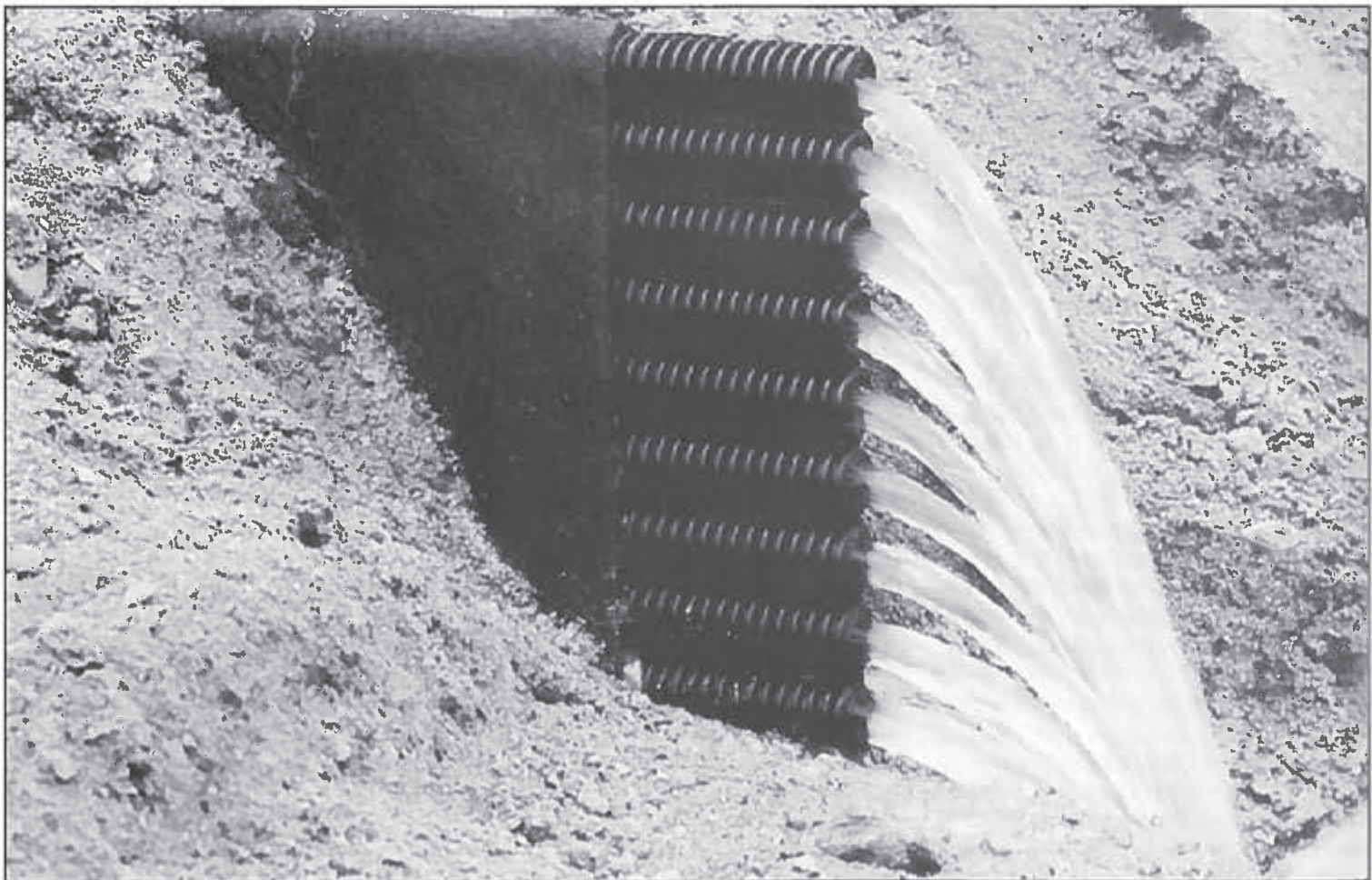
Employing three full-time and two part-time people, A & T Industries' busy season extends from mid-March to November, making it necessary to use their three warehouses, two located in Etobicoke, and one in Edmonton.

Frank deals with a number of different suppliers and manufacturers of product. Carlisle, says Frank is the largest manufacturer of EPDM roofing membrane

and pond liners. Pond liners and EPDM roofing membrane are made with different oils. "One is made with an industrial-based oil while the other is made with a non-staining food product oil," says Frank, explaining that there is a potential for pond contamination if roofing membrane is used in a water garden.

Frank does not like to see any customer leave thinking that they have got a bad deal, particularly in regard to product safety. "It's different when you are the owner of the company. When someone is not satisfied with a product, they may not come back to you and that affects your livelihood." To ensure a skeptical customer is completely satisfied, Frank may allow them a "trial run" before they make a final judgement about purchasing the product. This extends to their initial line of pond liners and drainage systems and also extends into their newer line of water gardening products.

"Water gardens have enjoyed tremendous growth and it shows no signs in slowing down," confirms Frank. "It's got amazing



growth potential.”

A & T Industries introduced their expanded water garden line in January of 1996. Bacta-Pur, a bacteria-based pond cleanser, Desy's Koi Food and Aqua Elite pumps make up the current line with new products expected in the next few years.

Out of all the products he supplies, Frank sees their Multi-Flow drainage system as the next big selling product. A & T Industries began a concentrated, promotional effort in 1997, with good response from the industry.

The Multi-Flow product is unique, says Frank of its modular design. Easy-to-access “inspection ports” allow installers and maintenance crews to ensure that water flows consistently with no blockages. Replacement and repair is relatively simple and saves the expense of having to dig up an entire drainage system.

While A & T Industries' largest customer is the garden centre, both independent and the mass merchandiser, Frank believes that the most growth and prosperity can be found in the landscape sector. “They are the bread and butter. They are the ones that come back time and time again to purchase products for their jobs,” Frank concedes. Most important is the idea exchange between the landscaper and the supplier.

The fresh exchange of ideas can come from customers, but according to Frank, it is membership within trade associations such as Landscape Ontario which gather the most results. An associate member of Landscape Ontario, regular advertiser in *Landscape Trades* and an exhibitor in Landscape Ontario's annual trade show and conference, A & T Industries has benefited greatly from its relationship with the association. “Whether you are a member or not, every company in this industry has benefited in some way from the activities and causes Landscape Ontario handles on our behalf,” says Frank, referring to the many regulations that, at first, did not effectively represent the landscape industry.

“I want to thank Landscape Ontario for all of its efforts in furthering this industry, and wish them continued success for the future,” declares Frank. “Gardening and landscaping is now Canada's number one leisure activity, something that may not have happened if it wasn't for the promotion of the industry, and our businesses. Their success is our success.”



A Carlisle EPDM pond liner was used to line a 1.2 million sq. ft. man-made lake at EURO-DISNEY near Paris, France.



Participation in trade and consumer shows, whether as an exhibitor or donator of product, is an essential part of marketing and promotion for any company. By supplying pond liners and other products to the designers of Canada Blooms' feature gardens, A & T Industries not only introduced themselves to their customers but also helped turn Canada Blooms into a world-class event.

A & T Industries Inc. Supplies:

Aqua Elite Pumps, Desys Koi & Fish Food, Bacta-Pur water quality improvement, Terrasic stone speakers & lighting, Shade Cloth, Aqua Tech Pumps, Non-kink Hoses, Multi-Flow drainage, Scarecrow motion activated sprinklers, Ground Cover, PVC Hoses, Underlay, Half Barrel Liners, Leader Pumps, EPDM Pond Liner.

Pavestone PLUS: "Quality Concrete"

When Pavestone PLUS Inc. first opened its doors, it was to provide the industry with quality precast products, something that had been missing in the marketplace in the 1960s.

David Bender and his brothers Steve and Eugene opened Pavestone PLUS, then known as B & B Concrete Products of Kitchener in 1969, to fill the gap and to provide the landscape industry with quality precast units. Previously employed for three years as a Consultant in Engineering or "materials testing engineer," Dave saw first hand the level of quality of the materials available at that time, and felt sure that they could provide a better product with consistent quality as the primary focus.

The business's first location on rented facilities on Highland Road in Kitchener provided them with a half-acre (600 square feet), enough for an office and a processing plant. 1972 saw the incorporation of the original business (B & B Concrete Products) and several relocations, this time to another rented facility on Courtland Ave. Their offices and the manufacturing plant were

located on the three-quarter of an acre of land and took up 2000 square feet.

Another move in 1975 to Manitou Drive, still in Kitchener, provided more space. Both sales and manufacturing were handled quite easily out of this location until 1987 when the step manufacturing moved to Strasburg Road in Kitchener.

Still known as B & B Concrete Products of Kitchener, it wasn't until 1987 that Pavestone PLUS Inc. officially came into existence, specializing in high volume machine-produced concrete products.

While the Manitou Drive location still operates as company depot, the Strasburg location ceased all operation in 1996, after the company moved all manufacturing to its present site on North Dumfries Rd. 22 in Cambridge.

The present site on North Dumfries Rd. in Cambridge was purchased in 1988. Its 12-1/2 acre location handles all manufacturing and administration for the company, and since 1993, the plant has expanded with four additional phases to over 35,000 square-feet from the original area of 6000-square-feet.

1997 also saw the purchase of an additional two-and-a-half acres to bring total acreage to 15.

The expansion and steady growth Pavestone Plus has undergone since its inception is quite apparent if you look at the

company's move from one location to another, but it is not until you look at Pavestone PLUS' expansive product line that you get the true picture.

Starting out as a manufacturer of paving stones and paver slabs, Pavestone PLUS has expanded its line to include specialty



interlocking pavers in a variety of shapes and colours. Wallstone PLUS, Wedgestone PLUS and GRANDE retaining wall systems, edge restraints, steps, curbs, and a line of concrete sealers and cleaners and other related concrete products make up the Pavestone PLUS product line, with more new product introductions in the planning stages. The latest paver product is a very exclusive, colourful line of architectural paving modules. All Pavestone PLUS products, including the new "StoneTILE" line use the new "Colourmagic" colour process. Quite a few of these products were developed by Dave, Steve and Eugene Bender. Roman Cobble, a trapezoid-shaped paver with a slate-like surface texture, was one such product, as well as the Cobble R PLUS paver system, which has a multi-stone look while using only one stone.

Dave also developed Edgestone, a precast concrete curb or border with



Quality Choices" provide solid growth

interlocking ends that hinge, and Wallstone PLUS and GRANDE, mortarless interlocking concrete systems suitable for retaining walls, fences, privacy walls, erosion control and curbs. Both Wallstone PLUS and GRANDE work on the patented multi-groove and tongue interlock principle.



Wallstone 1, another product developed by Steve and Eugene Bender, was designed with a lip at the back to give automatic setback, and reversible top coping. A mortarless precast concrete retaining wall system, Wallstone 1 adapts particularly well to curves.

Pavestone PLUS sells into markets in Ontario and the northeastern U.S. The company started selling to the U.S. in 1989 and has since enjoyed steady sales.

Expanding on their mandate to provide quality products to the industry, Pavestone PLUS added contractor referrals and design services to their retail customers. Trade customers are also well taken care of with extended sales and service to contractors, builders, landscapers, governments and dealers. Professional engineers also provide design services at "no charge" for retaining walls.

The number of employees has grown considerably. As of May 1997, Pavestone

PLUS employs over 80 full-time and seasonal part-time staff members, an increase from 22 in 1988. Pavestone PLUS has many key employees who assist with the day to day operation of the business, and help to maintain the vision and the level of quality for which Pavestone PLUS has become known. Jim Barnett, vice president of sales in Canada and the U.S. began as head of the sales team in 1994. Pat Cronin, with over 20 years of experience with the company is Pavestone PLUS's accountant and handles all credit management. Cathy Maxwell has been with Pavestone PLUS for the past 12 years as their inside order and inventory coordinator.

As most owners of family businesses look towards the succession of family members to join the business, for Pavestone PLUS it is a reality. Steve's daughter, Angela van Boekel, a graduate of the Business Finance program at Fanshawe College joined the company full-time in 1992 as marketing manager. Her advanced computer skills have also been put to good use throughout the company.

Pavestone PLUS plays an active role in the trade through their involvement in associations such as Landscape Ontario, the National Precast Concrete Association (NPCA) and the Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute (ICPI).

Dave Bender has had the most direct contact with these associations as chair of

the Concrete Paver Committee of the National Precast Concrete Association (NPCA) in 1989, and as founding director of the ICPI for North America in 1990. Chairman of the Board for the ICPI followed in 1995, and in 1997 he handed over the reigns to become Immediate Past Chairman and member of the Board of the ICPI.

Pavestone PLUS has been involved with Landscape Ontario as an associate member since 1980 as a regular advertiser in Landscape Trades and Horticulture Review, an exhibitor in Landscape Ontario's Congress, and through various fundraising and chapter activities.

Pavestone PLUS' mandate has changed a little since the original business opened in 1969. Knowing they have helped to improve the level of quality found in the manufacturing of precast concrete, Pavestone PLUS now looks to be the "one source" for the most complete selection of precast concrete products manufactured to the best quality and most consistent standard in the industry, thus providing "quality concrete choices" now and in the future.



Going the Extra Mile

Specialties Robert Legault Inc. has distinguished itself in the horticulture market since its inception 17 years earlier, and has maintained a steady and impressive growth rate throughout its history. Keeping abreast of the fast evolving trade, exploring new markets, in combination with a full commitment to customer satisfaction has helped to maintain their vision and ultimately their ongoing success. Specialties Robert Legault Inc.'s mandate mirrors this as they truly believe in "doing whatever it takes to keep our customers happy and coming back for more."

Privately owned by Robert Legault, president and Robert Dupuis, vice president, Marketing and Operations, Specialties Robert Legault Inc. began selling professional and retail products to the horticulture industry in 1980. At present, they have a staff of 15 who work out of their Ste-Therese, Quebec location.

With a significant market share in Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces, Legault's sales have increased by 30 per cent every year since it opened, a result, say the owners, of the number of products and the level of customer service they provide. Legault supplies a vast array of horticultural products to a customer base of independent garden centres as well as larger retailers and mass merchandisers, horticultural buying groups and growers.

Through joint ventures with a number of manufacturers of horticultural products,

Specialties Robert Legault distributes a number of products, including Berger Peat Moss and Growing Mixes, Hortibec Soils and Composted Manure, Sovebec Cedar Mulch, Earthgro Barks & Mulches, S. Boudrias Decorative Stones, Schundler Perlite and Vermiculite, Hydro Agri Canada Water Soluble Fertilizers, Pursell's Controlled Release Fertilizers, Dramm Professional Watering Tools, Massarelli's Ornamental Stone Statuary and Benick International Ice Melting Products. The company also offers consultation and laboratory analysis services. Berger custom mixes are available on request.

The company's innovative concept of



"One Stop Shopping" provides customers with the convenience of ordering different product categories in the same shipment. "Our customers know that when they order from us, we can deliver everything they need with a simple phone call, saving them precious time," explains Mr. Dupuis.

While part of Specialties Robert Legault's growth is directly attributable to the vast and varied supply of product, long-term success is due, in part, to the experience of owners Mr. Legault and Mr. Dupuis, and their energetic staff. Combined, Mr. Legault and Mr. Dupuis have over 17 years of experience in the horticulture industry with particular strengths as marketing and sales specialists. Maurice Gingras, sales director is actively involved in marketing for Specialties Robert Legault Inc., and works closely with his team of representatives



in sales development. Benoit Corbeil has been the company's administrative services manager for the past two years and has been responsible for systems set-up and office management.

Any company can offer first-rate products but without the customer service to ensure total customer satisfaction, each sale is half-earned and not totally guaranteed. This is one area in which Legault excels. "Our approach to business is very much Customer Service Oriented and we pride ourselves on having established a long standing reputation. Our sales representatives are backed up by an experienced and fully dedicated Customer Service Team which truly goes the extra mile to offer a fully customized, first rate service to our valued customers," con-

cedes Mr. Legault and Mr. Dupuis. They explain that their sales force, in particular, take an aggressive approach in maintaining close customer relations and are actively involved in all marketing activities.

Specialties Robert Legault Inc. is a member of Landscape Ontario, the Quebec Federation of Ornamental Horticulture (FIHOQ) and Flowers Canada.

Judging from their efforts to offer the right products with an exemplary level of customer service to every client, Specialties Robert Legault has established itself as a "One Stop Shopping" experience. With the number of companies competing for their share in this market, it is those companies which go that extra mile that will win the sale. Specialties Robert Legault, its owners and its staff may have been ahead of its time in their customer service-driven business, but it is exactly this thinking which will place them further and further in this information- and service-starved industry.



Ritchie Feed & Seed (1982) Inc.

Maintaining their vision

You wouldn't think there was a connection between supplying feed for agricultural operations and fuelling the dreams of avid gardeners, but for Ritchie Feed and Seed, which provides both feed and a full line of lawn and garden products, the mix was a natural progression.

Established in the 1930s by founder Jack Ritchie supplying feed and seed to agricultural operations, delving into the "gardening" market was just one way to change with the times and ensure their niche in the marketplace of the future. Though not new for the 90s, the cross market move was a novel idea in the 40s when Ritchie's made the initial move into the selling of horticultural supplies.

Now, 67 years later, Ritchie's has two retail garden centre locations, three feed operations and employs 80 year-round with this number increasing to 120 during the busy spring season. The first location of the store and mill on York Street in the heart of downtown Ottawa was home to a retail "cash 'n carry" business, supplying roses, perennials and chemicals. Only one-quarter the size of the original property, this store did not have adequate space or parking for a full-service garden centre. Ritchie's main location (at Hwy. 417 and Innes Rd., Stittsville), established in 1963, is a good deal larger, with great visibility and easy access. Seen from the highway, the garden centre attracts those who have come to make a planned purchase as well as drive-by customers who come to browse on their way to their next destination.

By being a one-stop-shop for farmers as well as gardeners, the clientele Ritchie's attracts is somewhat eclectic. Farmers know they can still get the products and supplies they need to run their farm. Ritchie's is both manufacturer and distributor of feed. And, the gardening public has come to realize the careful selection and care that go into Ritchie's lawn and garden division which, customers say, boasts the best and largest selection of plant material in the area.

Seed, bulbs, plant material, tools, soil and soil amendments, fertilizers, chemicals, birding supplies, lawn and garden machinery and water gardening supplies are just a few examples of Ritchie's product selection.

Expansion for Ritchie's was just not reserved for the actual products they supply but can also extend into the locations from which they sell the product. Ritchie's now has five locations, up from the original one, and has enjoyed such an expansion since 1963 with its Windmill Lane store. 1983 saw the opening of the Stittsville store, and the 1990s have brought locations in Brinston, Winchester and Chesterville. Operating as C&L Feeds, a division of Ritchie Feed & Seed (1982) Ltd., these three locations are currently being

expanded to include an inventory of lawn and garden supplies.

As with any business which has been in operation for more than 65 years, Ritchie's has seen many changes to the industry and have developed products and techniques to ride out these changes. Among the supply shortages, recessions and downtrends in merchandising, Ritchie's has also had their share of break-ins and robberies. Despite these obstacles, current company president J.D. Johnston explains that customers "can always count on us to open our gates every spring."

"The business philosophy is to be everything to everyone. When people come to Ritchie's we want them to view us as the best source for information, supplies and plant materials and the place where all your gardening needs are met," explains Mr. Johnston.

This philosophy can sometimes be exceedingly hard to meet, especially in this economy where businesses are vying for the largest share of ever-dwindling consumer dollars. "The retail market has seen some retrenchment in recent years," he describes. "We have had to adapt by being more imaginative with our

promotions and advertising." This includes redirection or redevelopment of some of Ritchie's product lines. "We have to supply what the consumer wants and needs," he adds.

While Ritchie's has survived this recession through good ideas, customer service and, of course, the teaming up of agricultural and horticultural products, many ideas can be gleaned from information exchange. Through memberships in Landscape Ontario, the Ottawa Valley Turf Association and the Feed Dealers' Association, Ritchie's enjoys and can benefit from the educational programs, meetings, and information and resources available to them. Supporting many local horticultural societies and other community organizations also helps to increase their profile in the community.

For a company which started out as a supplier of seed and feed to the agricultural sector and now has a niche in the growing gardening market, you can bet Ritchie's will not be one to rest on its laurels.



Windmill Lane garden centre store, 1982.

STAFFING RITCHIE'S

Though there is little space to acknowledge the entire Ritchie team, we would like to acknowledge a few of the key employees.

J.D. Johnston, Company President

15 years of experience with Ritchie's. Responsible for the overall operation of the company.

Nicole Dufresne Baker, Controller

Three years with Ritchie's, responsible for all administrative and financial issues.

Doug Ritchie, Retail Manager

Great-nephew of founder, over 30 years with the company.

Greg Lightle, Garden Centre Manager

12 years with Ritchie's, responsible for overseeing all garden centre activities, and the lawn and garden divisions.

Gerry McKenna, Agriculture

Sales Manager

14 years with the company, responsible for providing service to agriculture customers.



NU-GRO CORPORATION

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ith its head office located just outside of Woodstock, Ontario, the Nu-Gro Corporation is an international business with small town beginnings. From manufacturing slow release nitrogen to composting Oxford County's yard waste, Nu-Gro is a significant player in the global arena of horticulture. Golf course superintendents, gardeners and cat lovers are all familiar with various products manufactured and marketed across the country and around the world. This very diverse clientele has been formed out of a wide range of products and services that have helped to maintain Nu-Gro's viability over the years.

The Nu-Gro Corporation was formed in 1988 with the acquisition of Hillview Farms Ltd., a manufacturer of composted horticultural products and cat litter in Wood-



stock, Ontario.

Located in the dairy capital of Canada, this small business was owned by the Schell family and was one of the first companies to package soils and manures in Ontario. As Nu-Gro began to take shape, it was Hillview Farms Ltd. that was the foundation for future growth. The corporate head office is still located in Woodstock.

In 1988, Nu-Gro successfully completed an initial public offering with a listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Now a public company, Nu-Gro was a \$6 million business with a significant market share in the composted horticultural product sector. Initially, Nu-Gro turned its energies toward upgrading and expanding its horticultural business, and while it made continuous improvements at the Woodstock processing plant, plans were underway to expand into the lawn and garden fertilizer business. It was at this point that Nu-Gro formed a 50/50 joint venture company (Intermix Ltd.) and began the process of constructing a state-of-the-art blending and packaging facility in Putnam, Ontario. The facility was designed to produce the highest quality granular fertilizer for the lawn and garden, and golf course markets. With the combination of Hillview's horticultural products and Intermix's fertilizer, the unique concept of one-stop-shopping began to materialize.

In the summer of 1990, Nu-Gro purchased the remaining 50 per cent of Intermix and by the fall,

Intermix had been amalgamated with Hillview Farms Ltd., continuing to operate under the Hillview name. With all product under one name, the one-stop-shopping concept continued to blossom as retail customers responded very positively to buying fertilizer together with their composted horticultural products.

The need for a national brand of fertilizer was realized in 1991 with the acquisition of the Canadian Home and Garden Division of ICI Chipman, operating under the C-I-L brand name. The acquisition included the C-I-L brand of fertilizers and pesticides, two blending and packaging plants in Alberta and Quebec, and former C-I-L employees with years of knowledge and experience. Nu-Gro was now a national company serving customers from coast to coast.

For the next two years, Nu-Gro concentrated its efforts on integrating the new C-I-L business, upgrading the production facilities and maintaining quality products and a high level of customer service. Then in 1994, Nu-Gro announced a new line of C-I-L

consumer fertilizer known as "GOLF - GREEN PLUS®." This new line was specially designed for the independent garden centre and was a high-

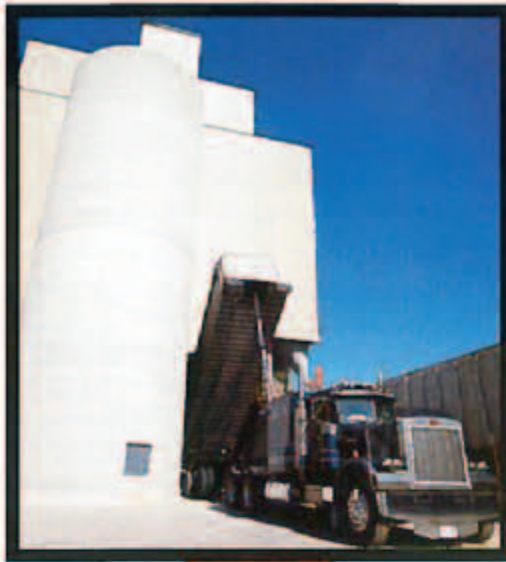
er quality, organic-based line which met the needs of avid gardeners who typically shop at quality garden centres across Canada.

In 1995 and 1996, Nu-Gro began its backward integration into the fertilizer raw material business. With the purchase of 80 per cent of Omnicology Inc., a manufacturer of high quality, controlled release nitrogen fertilizer products, and 100 per cent of SCU Nitrogen Inc., a producer of one of the highest quality sulphur coated ureas in the world, Nu-Gro had moved into the global arena of controlled release nitrogen. To augment these moves, Nu-Gro also purchased the brand names "Nitroform" and "Nutralene" from AgrEvo USA Company, which made Nu-Gro a dominant player in the world market of controlled release nitrogen.

Today, Nitroform® is manufactured in Louisiana,



Missouri, and Nutralene® is manufactured in Gloversville, New York. Both products are sold and distributed to fertilizer blenders across North America and around the world, as well as used at Nu-Gro's plant, situated within a world scale nitrogen facility owned by Terra International Inc. A long-term urea substrate contract with Terra represents a key advantage for SCU operations. Their high quality substrate allows for a more uniform sulphur coating which ultimately provides a more predictable nitrogen release.



SCU® is the primary ingredient in Nu-Gro's C-I-L GOLFGREEN line of consumer lawn fertilizers, the leading national brand in Canada. Sulphur coated urea is also used extensively in golf course and lawn care products. Approximately 65 per cent of SCU® production is sold to customers in the U.S., with operations similar to Nu-Gro. With this move into the U.S. market, Nu-Gro has significantly reduced the seasonality of its business, as well as benefitted from the current trends in the fertilizer business in the U.S. which have helped to enhance Nu-Gro's business in Canada.

1996 also saw the sale of the C-I-L pesticide product line to Wilson Laboratories Inc., in exchange for an equity interest in the company, which has allowed Nu-Gro to focus its attention on the horticultural, professional turf and cat litter businesses.



In summary, the completion of these four transactions contributed to Nu-Gro's move up the profit ladder, with sales of \$33 million in 1995, \$44 million in 1996 to projected sales in excess of \$60 million in 1997. Nu-Gro also went from a company in which 98 per cent of its sales were in Canada, to an international enterprise with 40 per cent of its sales made outside of Canada.

With a changing retail environment over the past few years, all businesses have had to adapt and change their practices to remain viable. Nu-Gro has recognized a consumer need for higher quality blends of fertilizer and soil products, and has taken measurable steps to

fulfil these needs. With products that have been around since the 1800s, such as Moo Poo®, Sheep Manure and Top Soil, and newer formulations such as Triple Mix®, Mother Earth®, Secret Garden Soil, GOLFGREEN Plus®, Kitty Comfort® and Natural Select®, Nu-Gro has positioned itself solidly in the Canadian horticultural market.

Nu-Gro now enjoys an enviable position in the marketplace because it owns the technology and manufacturing of several types of controlled release nitrogen (CRN). Government restrictions are increasing, which means that CRN use will be mandatory in environmentally-sensitive areas. This bodes well for long term growth in the controlled release nitrogen business. Proprietary technology, a wide range of products and strong research and product development capabilities will enable Nu-Gro to meet the specific needs of customers and the environment today, as well as in the future. Nu-Gro's three operating units, each with a strong team of employees are well positioned to take on new opportunities as they arise, and to strengthen the company's worldwide presence.

Nu-Gro has had a long standing relationship with Landscape Ontario as one of the original exhibitors at their annual Congress trade show, through both Hillview and C-I-L. Nu-Gro's involvement in the association also extends to the Annual Dick Sale Memorial Landscape

Ontario Charity Golf Tournament for the Hospital for Sick Children. The golf tournament is an event Nu-Gro has always helped to organize and support. Dick Sale, one of the founders of the tournament, was a longtime employee of Hillview Farms and Nu-Gro. We are very proud that Landscape Ontario chose to name the annual golf tournament in his honour.

The goal of the Nu-Gro Corporation is "to achieve excellence in everything we do." With our continued commitment to quality products and superior customer service, Nu-Gro's prospects for the future look very bright.

Vanden Bussche Irrigation & Equipment

In an industry in which so much emphasis is placed on growth, it is not surprising to see one of the industry's most experienced players enjoy the same growth and success.

Established in 1953 by Gerard and Roger Vanden Bussche, Vanden Bussche Irrigation and Equipment Limited first supplied irrigation equipment, design and installation services to the tobacco farmers of Delhi, Ontario.

This market share soon expanded to other agricultural crops as the owners realized that other types of farming would benefit from irrigation. Vanden Bussche approached vegetable growers and nurseries with these products and soon began supplying the agricultural market with everything from spray guns, soft hose and hard hose travelers, to centre pivots and drip irrigation. In 1996, a deal was worked out with Bauer of Austria to become North America's assembly centre for their irrigation travelers. The deal stipulated that Bauer ship broken down travelers to be assembled at the Delhi operation. In hindsight, company representatives say that it is something that they should have started 10 years ago, and they predict that, by the year 2000, the majority of the unit will be built in Canada, with the exception of the gear box and turbine.

An expansion into the ever-growing turf sector proved to be another opportunity for Vanden Bussche and necessitated the purchase of two locations: one in Scarborough and the other, a warehouse and distribution centre in Milton, Ontario. Both locations make up the turf irrigation division, distributing products for in-ground irrigation. The Milton location was opened in 1993 and serves as headquarters for the division. Though there is little walk-in traffic, this location instead works on an order basis and ships product on a "same day service" delivery system, using a courier or their own trucks. The Scarborough location on Progress Ave. in Scarborough, while it uses the same type of delivery system does experience more drop-in traffic, mainly because of its more urban location.

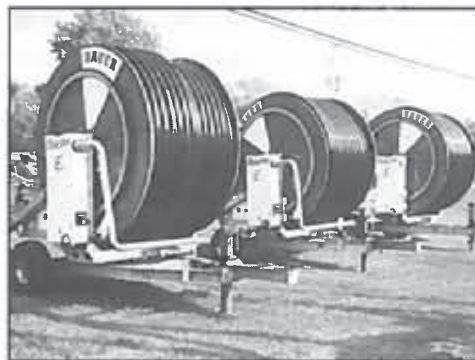
As turf irrigation works more on an in-ground irrigation system, the products that this division supplies is different than those supplied by the agricultural division. As an exclusive distributor of Rain Bird, Vanden Bussche's turf irrigation division distributes



Vanden Bussche appreciates the dedication and commitment in time their staff of 44 gives the company.

the wide range of Rain Bird products for golf courses and sports fields. Ipex, Irritrol Irrigation, Netafim, Lasco, and Oil Creek Plastics Incorporated are among the other manufacturers for which Vanden Bussche distributes product. They also supply the Nightscaping® landscape lighting line, a field in which landscape contractors have tried to create add-on sales and services.

Both the agricultural and turf irrigation divisions have seen many changes in the industry, fuelled by research, a change in opinion, or by the latest technologies available to the professional. Rain guns were used after farmers and manufacturers realized that the sprinklers could not effectively irrigate larger growing tobacco plants. Rain guns however, were still labour intensive and



An agreement with Bauer of Austria gives VBI the exclusive rights as their North American assembly centre for Bauer's irrigation travelers.

created a lot of irrigation overlap.

Turf irrigation, although it uses different irrigation techniques, has also experienced technological changes, most noticeably in the area of controlled irrigation. Water conservation is becoming extremely important. An irrigation system that simply throws water around is no longer acceptable due to water lost due to run-off and evaporation, and the turf damage that occurs because of over-watering. To remedy this, the turf irrigation division now sees an increase in those sports fields, golf courses, and to a lesser extent,

commercial and residential properties, which use a weather station and computer module to monitor the most effective time to irrigate.

Vanden Bussche has weathered these changes remarkably well, and reports that all locations have experienced a steady increase in sales, despite the recession of the 1990s that held the economy for ransom.

While part of their success to-date can be attributed to their expansion into the turf and agricultural markets, Vanden Bussche also credits their team of dedicated employees. With a staff totaling 44 for all three locations, Vanden Bussche has a staff of 30 in the Delhi office, 12 in Milton and two in Scarborough. "The key is in how you treat your employees. If you treat them well, then you will get a professional, hard working and dedicated employee." This dedication is especially valuable during the busy spring and summer seasons.

Involvement in trade organizations also plays an important role in Vanden Bussche's operation as they use the networking opportunities available to them, either through sponsoring association events, chapter meetings, or by advertising through their newsletters, magazines and trade shows. Presently, Vanden Bussche is a member of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association (L.O.), the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, the Ontario Turfgrass Research Association, The Irrigation Association, the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association, the Ontario Parks Association and the Sports Turf Association. Vanden Bussche was also asked to assist with the production of the "Best Management Practices: Irrigation Management" educational booklet on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Although Vanden Bussche has no immediate plans to expand their Milton or Scarborough locations, they have recently purchased a parcel of land adjacent to its Delhi operation.

With three locations, and eight acres of land in which to expand, Vanden Bussche Irrigation & Equipment Limited appears to be on the top of its market. Add to that mix the superior products, customer service, dedication to an industry and the adaptability and vision of its original owners, one can envision the place that Vanden Bussche will take in this industry's future.

NUTRITE

Nutrite originated over one hundred years ago from a well-known Canadian meat company called Canada Packers. Canada Packers formed the fertilizer division out of a need to dispose of (recycle) animal by-products such as bloodmeal, bonemeal, etc. Second generation farmers noticed that the cleared forest land was becoming depleted of nutrients and needed a larger source of manure than their livestock could generate.

The industry developed further, as rock phosphates and potash could be treated with acids to become weathered more quickly and therefore, available as plant foods in the same growing season. The products were in powder form and extremely dusty. Another Canadian company called International Fertilizers had developed a method in the 1930s to make these dusty particles into round granules. Canada Packers and International subsequently merged in the 1940s and was then known as Canada Packers Shurgrain Feed and Fertilizer Division.

The 1940s and 1950s saw Shurgrain launch a line of turf fertilizers for golf courses which contained organic ingredients, sought after by the superintendents for their slow-release capabilities. Eventually, after World War II, the need for home fertilizers began to emerge. Shurgrain developed a lawn and garden line of fertilizers.

In 1968, Canada Packer's fertilizer division was sold and a new company called Nutrite was formed. The analysis back then was a 10-6-4, 75% slow release from UF, and was a homogenous particle.

Throughout this period, Nutrite was always on the lookout for better and more predictable slow release ingredients that could be used in its horticultural fertilizers. UF was replaced with Methydur, an ingredient more suited for Canadian turf, Polyon coated ureas, and now organic sources such as Sustane, a turkey manure compost with turf disease suppression ability.

In 1996, Nutrite was acquired by the European Norsk Hydro, the largest fertilizer producer in the world. Norsk Hydro invented synthesized fertilizers and was a supplier of nitrogen products to the global market as far back as 1906.

From this acquisition, Nutrite has access to new and exciting fertilizers for greenhouse and nursery growers. In 1997, Nutrite introduced the KRISTALON line of water soluble fertilizers for the greenhouse trade, imported directly from The Netherlands. In addition, Nutrite now manufactures DELTASPRAY in Canada, another Hydro soluble line used for golf courses, nurseries and other horticultural crops.

Although the fertilizer industry has had a relatively short history in Canada, Nutrite continues to be a major innovator in the specialized horticultural market, now and into the future.



VIGORO®

MADE-IN-CANADA QUALITY



Vigoro's roots in the Canadian plant nutrition business run very deep; In fact, all the way back to 1902. From the very beginning, the company has developed an excellent reputation for top quality products designed to meet individual market needs.

Many of these products were true innovations which contributed greatly to the good health of today's lawn and garden industry in Canada.

In 1924, Vigoro, then known as Swift Canada Co. launched Canada's first home lawn and garden fertilizer containing micronutrients for a fully balanced plant diet.

The 1950s saw the introduction of PINK Vigoro, an organic-based, all purpose fertilizer that has been a favourite for the past 40 years for several generations of Canadian gardeners.

In 1954, Vigoro launched the first non-burning lawn fertilizer, a slow release nitrogen formulation that gave homeowners a healthier lawn with fewer fertilizer applications. It was a great step forward and the rest of the industry soon followed in their footsteps.

1968 marked another milestone for Vigoro with the introduction of IBDU® (isbutylidene diurea) controlled release nitrogen. Twenty-five years later, this product still remains unmatched in its ability to deliver uniform release of nutrients over an extended period of time. Today, IBDU® has become a mainstay in the turf nutrition programs of leading golf courses across North America.

The release of the IBDU® nitrogen is based on hydrolysis with water the key element that triggers the nitrogen release. However, IBDU is 1000 times less soluble than normal nitrogen sources, therefore it delivers consistent feeding over a 10 to 12 week period, despite the level of water present. Even compared to other slow release nitrogen sources such as Sulphur Coated Urea, IBDU delivers more consistent, longer-lasting nutrition. The result is an even, healthy looking

lawn with very low risk of excessive nitrogen leaching prematurely out of the lawn into ground water systems.

Research continues to be an important aspect of Vigoro's operation. This includes continuing investment in plant nutritional technology. IMC Vigoro Corporation currently employs six Ph.D.'s actively involved in plant nutritional research in Vigoro's advanced facilities. New developments in controlled-release formulations of major and micro nutrients are continually being introduced.



Shown at left is one of the earliest PINK boxes. Shown beside it is the current full range of one of Vigoro's most enduring product line.

A SECURE SOURCE OF SUPPLY

In 1996, Vigoro completed a merger with IMC Global to form IMC Global Corporation, a new company with nearly \$3 billion in annual sales. For IMC Vigoro Canada, this development has brought vast new resources, both in the supply of raw materials for fertilizer manufacture, and research and development of new products.

The combination of IMC's experience as a major international supplier of primary nutrients and Vigoro's strength in agricultural, professional turf care and consumer markets has aided in IMC's ability to deliver

outstanding support for Vigoro's efforts in Canada. Vigoro's Canadian operations are recognized as the leaders within the new corporation when it comes to success in lawn and garden markets.

CANADA'S LARGEST LAWN AND GARDEN FERTILIZER COMPANY

The most recent acquisition in 1997 of So-Green Corporation was a move that expanded IMC Vigoro's position as Canada's leading lawn and garden fertilizer manufacturer.

The So-Green brand is well known nationally for its high quality, top selling lawn fertilizers. Formulated in an organic base called "malorganite," the So-Green line brings new strength to Vigoro's already impressive national sales and a new key ingredient which could be used in other Vigoro products.

A QUALITY CANADIAN FERTILIZER SOURCE

Success in the lawn and garden markets can be attributed to the strict quality control standards to which Vigoro adheres. All products are formulated to these strict controls, and are manufactured in Canadian facilities built specifically for home and garden production.

Each batch of fertilizer is carefully monitored to ensure absolute consistency of formulation, particle size and packaging. Special care is taken to ensure that weed or insect control ingredients are confined to the appropriate products, and do not contaminate other fertilizers.

Above all, Vigoro ensures they meet and exceed the expectations of those people who use Vigoro products.

Vigoro's Canadian distribution system has also been designed with customers' needs in mind to ensure fast, responsive delivery wherever Vigoro products are sold. "Just in time" delivery? With Vigoro, you can count on it.

The Allan Block Connection

Allan Block is a precast retaining wall system manufactured, distributed and marketed in Ontario by Atlas Block, a company that remains virtually unknown in most of Ontario in spite of the fact that they have been serving the construction trades, primarily in northern Ontario, for almost 45 years.

Privately owned by Don Gordon, Atlas Block is a Canadian company with head office and one of three manufacturing plants located in Orillia. The other two plants are located in Midland and Brockville.

In 1991, seeing diversification into the landscape marketplace as one way to beat the recession, Atlas Block acquired the



Steve Robinson and Marty Lamers (left) are kept continually busy throughout the year with their upfront approach to marketing the Allan Block line. Consistent participation in consumer and trade shows, as well as trade publications introduces the products to potential customers while keeping the Allan Block name in front of existing clientele. Customers are invited to view the products at their Showroom (above) or at their yard (below).



manufacturing rights for Allan Block in Ontario, Quebec and northern New York State. Allan Block is a modular, precast retaining wall system invented in 1985 by Minnesota landscaper Allan Gravier, who was looking for a better modular precast wall. The end result of his quest was a system with its uniqueness and effectiveness centred around its hollow design and a front lip on the top of the block.

Aware that he had a potential winner, Mr. Gravier patented his product and made it available to the trade through licensed manufacturers such as Atlas Block.

Being hollow, the Allan Block is lightweight and consequently easy to handle and install. Its hollow design also makes the Allan Block cost-effective to manufacture and economical to transport.

Today, the Allan Block product line has grown to include Allan Block Jr., for the construction of small retaining walls and planters, the AB Stones at 12, 6 and 3 for the construction of larger walls up to 30 feet in height, and, for the new and different look, the

AB Classic Splendor. Allan Block Jr. is available in seven colours and the AB Stones come in four colours. All units are pre-split to provide the attractive rock-face finish demanded by today's marketplace.

Home shows are the primary means of advertising Allan Block to the residential consumer. Within the industry, Allan Block is promoted to landscape specifiers and contractors through trade publications and

trade shows.

Allan Block offers technical support and specifications for the design industry, and on-site installation support on an as-needed basis.

The Allan Block Systems are sold through an extensive and exclusive network of over 100 dealers throughout Ontario. This marketing approach is designed to provide customers with competitive pricing combined with the benefits of local service.

A long and prosperous journey

When Otto and Marie Pick started out from their native Czechoslovakia to Canada they were looking for a place to raise a family and start a business. What they found was a great opportunity to mix family with business and expand their expertise to the international market. Pickseed and the Pick family, now in its third generation, recently celebrated its 50th year in the business, proving they have the ability to change and grow with the market.

The business that Otto Pick set up in 1947 has gone through a number of changes since its inception but what has always remained is the family's involvement in the business and their ability to look and expand into a number of markets. Otto Pick, Agricultural Services was the first business to open under the Pick family, with this soon changing to Otto Pick & Sons Seeds Limited and finally to Pickseed Canada, Inc.

What started out as supplying seed to a small area has grown into forage, turf and hybrid corn research and production with facilities in Winnipeg, Manitoba; Lindsay, Ontario; Tilbury, Ontario; St. Hyacinthe, Quebec; and Edmonton, Alberta.

Otto received his first taste of the seed market as a salesman for the Greenland Permanent Pastures company, owned and operated by fellow Czech immigrant Karl Abeles, where he advertised the benefits of permanent pastures to Ontario farmers. After two seasons as salesman, Otto started his own business and continued to convince farmers to establish a permanent pasture close to the barn, go through the work of rotational grazing and manage pastures as a crop.

Distribution, production, cleaning and actual research followed, making Pickseed one of the largest and well-established companies in the seed business.

In 1959, after Otto suffered a fatal heart attack, sons Tom, who was at the Ontario Agricultural College, and Martin who was already working in the business, took over. Otto Pick Agricultural Services, which had sold their line of packaged lawn grass seed to contractors, municipalities and the first sod producers soon needed to find a new source for Climax timothy seed, thanks to a revision in The Seeds Act. Tom and Martin contracted the production out to growers in Manitoba. Since the volume of seed purchased from these growers exceeded the amount needed for use in the domestic market, they could

expand quite comfortably into both the wholesale and export markets as well. Eric Schweizer Samen of Switzerland put in the first export order in 1962 for 20 metric tonnes of certified Climax timothy.

Further expansion led the business into



other forage seeds such as meadow fescue, alfalfa, brome grass, red clover and birdsfoot trefoil, contracted out, of course, to growers in Manitoba. A receiving station and office in Winnipeg, established in 1964, has now grown into an efficient processing plant. State-of-the-art cleaning equipment and significant bulk and bag storage are also a part of this facility.

Pickseed West in Tangent, Oregon, was the next step in market development. Tom and Martin formed a partnership with the late Kent Wiley to supply turf and amenity seed in both the national and international markets.

Other expansions into the

turf and forage market resulted in the acquisition of the turf, forage and seed department of Maple Leaf Mills Limited, renamed Mapleseed Inc. Originally Hogg & Lytle Ltd., Maple Leaf Mills history dates back to 1882.

Since Otto's arrival in Canada, the family and the business had a few homes -- the first being the farm in Caledonia. A subsequent move to Toronto and then to Richmond Hill (with a population then of 2,000) followed, and in 1993, Pickseed moved offices again, this time to Lindsay, an agricultural town (population 15,000) in the Kawartha Lakes district of central Ontario. The head offices and central warehousing are located at the Lindsay property, with forage research, a distribution facility and new seed cleaning facility, as well as a seed laboratory. A seed corn research production operation out of Tilbury, seed distribution warehouse in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, and a processing plant in Sherwood Park, Alberta for fescues, brome and timothy seeds complete the Pickseed business.

We are pleased, say Tom and Martin, with the satisfactory progress the company, started by their parents in 1947, has made. Much of this success can be directly attributed to the loyalty and hard work displayed by key personnel. "Many of these colleagues are 10 to 25-year veterans of both the good and tough times and their contributions are immeasurable in the growth of this Canadian company."

More recently, sons Andrew (Tom) and Charles (Martin) have joined Pickseed -- Andrew as production coordinator and project manager, and Charles is responsible for the Eastern Canadian Turf Division.

When asked what he saw for the company's future, Charles stressed that Pickseed was always one to take the lead in the future and will continue to do so, whether it be in research, marketing or production. "We want our role not only to be in the Ontario marketplace, but also to be on an international level," he says, explaining that he sees marketing and research to be strong components in Pickseed's future.

So, the company that started 50 years ago with a vision still has a clear vision of where they would like to go next. Whether in research or production, it is apparent the Pickseed family, now with three generations to its credit, still has as bright a future as they had in 1947.

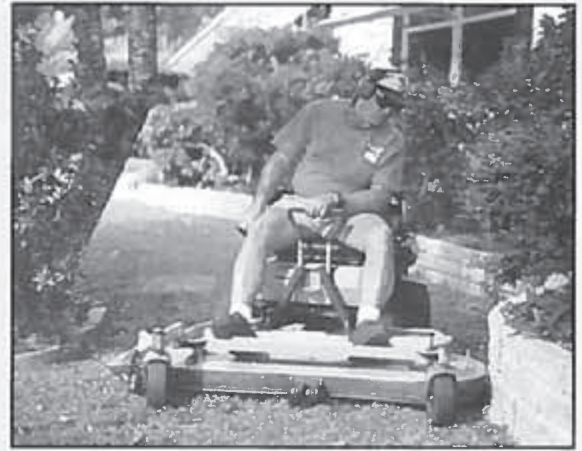


Pro-Power Canada Inc. - Part of the Family

Providing quality landscapes or grounds maintenance to a client requires good technical skill, a certain level of horticultural expertise and imagination. Pro-Power Canada Inc., the Eastern Canada distributor for Walker Mowers has for the past five years, supplied the best tools this industry has to offer, and believes it is both the quality of the product and the philosophy behind the manufacturer which has attributed to this success.

To understand this dedication and belief in a product, Paul Penny, owner of Pro-Power Canada Inc. says it is more effective to look at the history of Walker Manufacturing, its owner and the history of this family-managed business.

Walker Manufacturing founder Max Walker has been inventing and designing equipment for more than five decades. He built his first lawn mower, a sickle bar unit in 1949, and the first Walker was introduced in the late 1970s. Today, the company that literally introduced the compact commercial transmission steer mower to the market turns out more than 20 riders a day from its new factory in Fort Collins, Colorado.



In Max Walker's Own Words:

Q: Max, your company has been designing and manufacturing mowers for 16 years in Fort Collins, Colorado. But where does the Walker story really begin?

A: I was born and raised on a cattle farm in Fowler, Kansas. Our business was raising Polled Herefords and selling the bulls to ranchers. Like most farmers, we had to improvise to make things work and I especially enjoyed working on and modifying equipment. After marrying Margaret and starting a family, we began to dream about leaving the farm and starting our own manufacturing business. A friend encouraged me to develop a new golf car, one that was powered by a gasoline engine instead of batteries. Back then, batteries didn't have the capacity they have today and cars would run out of power before the golfer could get through the course.

Q: Did you actually design and build golf cars?

A: Yes. I built our first golf car in the late 1950s. We didn't have any capital to speak of, and, in terms of equipment, all we had was an electric welder, cutting torch, hack saw and a Mulberry Tree.

Q: A Mulberry Tree?

A: I used a fork in the tree to bend the pipe frame. It was crude but it worked. Everything on that car was handmade. In the first year, I built about a dozen cars and sold them by running a couple of ads in golf course magazines. Margaret and I operated the company. I did the product development and manufacturing; Margaret learned bookkeeping and handled the books and responded to leads.

Q: Was that first business a success?

A: Well, yes it was. It was tough finding the necessary capital but we managed. We even grew the business to include the development and manufacture of a utility truck (we called it the Walker Power Truck), a floor scrubber and a

large deck scrubber for the Navy...

Q: How did you get into the mower business?

A: While we were manufacturing coolers...we started to investigate the mower market. In 1977, our family had purchased a new riding mower in Loveland, and we were disappointed in the way it operated. It couldn't manoeuvre around the trees in our yard, and the grass catching system seemed all too cumbersome. So being machine designers, we designed a mower that met our needs. By then, my two sons Bob and Dean were interested in the business and helped in the design process.

Q: But having little or no mower manufacturing experience, how could you develop a new mower?

A: Well, we knew what we wanted. We wanted a mower with a zero-turning radius. We wanted a mower with an internal and not external catching system, and we wanted something very compact. We also needed to have a centre discharge mowing deck to accommodate the catching system. With that in mind, we built our first prototype. Coming from a farming background, we also appreciated the value of having a machine that was serviceable, so from the beginning we designed a mower that could be easily serviced. In fact, our first golf cars had a body that was raised for easy engine and drive train accessibility.

Q: Max, to what do you attribute your success?

A: In the early years, our success was dependent on lots of hard work and really coming up with a mower like no other on the market. The machine has a well-defined niche and it has been well received. Later on, as we grew, the credit for our success has to be shared by my sons. Dean is really the architect of the mowers and attachments, and Bob is largely responsible for setting up distribution and marketing.

Q: As you think back on those early years, what were some lessons that really paid off?

A: I think the main lesson we've learned revolves around the word "control." We learned early on the only way to dictate our own destiny was to be in control. That's one more reason why today, we build as much of the Walker Mower as we can right in-house. I also realized that if this business were to grow and be a success, I would have to give over control to my sons who would take it to the next level. They have done that, and that one decision has been pivotal to our success.

Q: In terms of quality, the Walker Mower speaks for itself. Yet, there is something behind the scenes that ensures this high level of quality is an ongoing occurrence. What exactly is that something?

A: That's a tough question. But I think it all goes back to the family concept. We tell the people who work here they're part of the family; so are our distributors and dealers and our end-user customers. In fact, we tell our employees they don't work for us, but work with us to produce a product for which we can all be proud. Neither the metal in its construction nor the quality of its cut defines our mower's value. It is truly defined by the role it plays in helping other people make a living. We really believe that. If the Walker Mower can be a fundamental part of someone's livelihood, then we have done something right.

Pro-Power Canada Inc., located in Clarkburg, Ontario respects the strong, family foundation on which the company was built. As associate member of Landscape Ontario and a regular supporter of the association's magazines and trade show, Pro-Power Canada Inc. knows first-hand the accomplishments and success that can happen when people work together. Pro-Power Canada Inc. would like to extend their warmest wishes to Landscape Ontario as they celebrate 25 years of service and involvement in this industry.

Designed to be a step ahead™

Most visionary owners enter a marketplace with a product in which they believe. The product may be an existing one, an improved design, or as in Unilock's case, the owners may see the potential of a new market niche where none had existed before.

The history of Unilock all began in 1972 while founder, Ed Bryant, was building a chalet at Horseshoe Valley. His European stone mason showed him an interlocking paving stone. Intrigued by this small piece of concrete, he envisioned paving stones as an alternative product to conventional pavements. Surprised and delighted to see that no such product existed in Canada, Mr. Bryant established North American Stone Co. as the answer to this new market niche. Shortly thereafter a merger with another manufacturer created what is today, Unilock Ltd.

Unilock's first two locations were opened in Barrie and Georgetown in 1973 to service the Ontario market. Unilock proved, and continues to prove in their ability to produce and deliver quality products.

Unilock continued to grow in the 1970s. Demand for pavers increased during the 70s, and by 1980 Mr. Bryant decided to focus all his efforts on the business of pavers from that of his prior interest in the computer industry. Unilock was taken into the 80s with great



Ed Bryant sets his eyes on the first Uni-Stone in North America in 1972.

passion and determination to meet the new demands that the company was facing at that time. Unilock met these challenges by expanding its production and service capacity with the addition of a new plant in Georgetown in 1984, and in Pickering in 1987. The building boom of the 80s, in Canada and in the U.S. provided Unilock with an intriguing opportunity to expand the company into new markets. In 1984, a plant facility was established in Buffalo which was the start of a plan to create a network of locations to service the Northeast. By 1990, production facilities had been built and were in full operation in three more markets: Chicago Illinois in 1987, Detroit Michigan in 1989, and Brewster New York in 1990.

Following most great economic expansion periods, as confirmed in the 80s, there are always periods of adjustment. The period through the early 90s was no exception. However, unlike many companies of that time, Unilock viewed this as an opportunity for new growth and challenge to meet the ever changing needs of the market. New lines of pavers and colours were introduced throughout the 90s. The acquisition of Risi Stone in 1993 brought with it an unsurpassed scope of retaining wall products to compliment the existing line of paving stone products. In 1995, Unilock acquired Decra-Loc Canada to further position itself to take advantage of the next growth cycle of the 90s.


During these growth years, Mr. Bryant developed many relationships with associates of the industry here in North America and abroad. Local trade and international associations with Unilock are key factors in what enables the company to bring new products to the market place. Unilock is not only an associate member of Landscape Ontario, but is also a member of a number of international associations of paver and retaining

wall manufacturers: The UniGroup, Risi Stone Systems, S.F. Group, and a recent affiliation with Stein & Design. The knowledge and technical expertise gained from these relationships play an active role in the development and introduction of new and innovative products.

Unilock's stringent quality control programs which require a variety of physical and visual inspections are also beneficial. Mr. Bryant has set out a mandate for all members of the Unilock Group of Companies to ensure the highest standard of quality...."We will not sacrifice quality for cost."

The designer's requirements have changed these past decades resulting in the introduction of new shapes and colours. From the original true interlocking paver, the zig-zag looking Uni-Stone, new functional and interesting systems have followed such as Classico. After its introduction, skeptics of the Classico system soon became its advocates after realizing the versatility of its shape and the solutions it provided in the changing hard-scape market. But, the need for change did not stop there. Custom colours were introduced for those projects which required that special detailed look.

Projects where Unilock's products have been specified and installed range from the simplest walkways and the most luxurious residential driveways, to large high profile public areas such as: Metro Toronto Zoo; Toronto City Hall; Great America (Six Flags), Illinois; McDonald's Corporation U.S.A.; New York Tennis Center; Benjamin



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First Unilock Brochure: 1973.



1983 Brochure.

Moore Headquarters, New Jersey; Cedar Point Amusement Park, Ohio; Tiger Stadium, Detroit; and Lester B. Pearson International Airport (Terminal III), Toronto.

Though the number of paver manufacturers have increased since they developed this market niche, Unilock has maintained their position as market leader. Unilock has capitalized on the growth of the industry, and as Ed Bryant explains, by acquiring the rights and operations of other stone manufacturers and expanding on their own locations, Unilock has been able to supply market demand. Notwithstanding these vital

changes, Unilock maintains its effort to meet the needs of the ever changing design community. Most recently, the Unilock product line has extended to include "Series 3000", "Brussels Block" and 1997's addition "IICampo".

As the next millennium approaches, Unilock also plans to continue its expansion of their present locations. The facility in Chicago was expanded to double its production capacity only two years ago. Work has begun on the construction of a new plant for their Brewster, New York location. A new plant is planned for Cleveland in 1998, on previously purchased land.

While the manufacturing process is recognized at Unilock as important, the relationships that have developed over the years with contractors and dealers have ultimately made this growth possible. Unilock has worked closely with a network of highly knowledgeable and skilled Authorized dealers and contractors and ensures that this group is continually up-to-date on new innovations in the industry and on the latest installation practices. Unilock provides information for pavers and retaining walls in various formats such as, product data, paver and retaining wall specifications, retaining wall design binders, software programs as well as CD-ROMs for the specifier.

Unilock currently employs 250 full- and part-time staff in all Ontario and U.S. locations. In Ontario, Joe Kerr, vice-president and senior general manager has been with Unilock since 1979. His past positions within the company were as sales and marketing manager, and Ontario general manager. Mr. Kerr was first promoted to his present position in 1988, but was soon transferred to Brewster, New York to oversee the start-up of Unilock New York, Inc. He returned to Unilock Ltd. in his current capacity in 1992.

Tony Hooper, vice-president of Finance and Administration, is responsible for the planning, financing, and accounting functions at Unilock. Involved with Unilock since 1989, Mr. Hooper's past experience includes eight years with Peat Marwick in the main audit and small business practices.

Mike McIntyre joined Unilock in 1977 as an outside sales representative. Now general sales manager, Mr. McIntyre has held



1997 Brochure.

various sales, marketing and operations positions within the company.

Best described as a service driven company, Unilock Ltd., its owners and employees believe in the quality of their products and service, their ability to market these products to the trade and consumer markets, and the level of excellence provided by their network of dealers and contractors. "Our high quality products are produced by high-quality employees for high quality customers," explains Mr. Bryant as the reason behind Unilock's success to date.

PREMIER HORTICULTURE



Premier Horticulture's grasp on the horticulture industry dates back to 1929 when Ernst Mayer founded Premier Peat Moss Ltd., a single peat moss bog operator and distributor shipping throughout the Eastern United States (U.S.) Now, with over 60 years as a manufacturer of peat-based horticultural products, Premier Horticulture has expanded to an internationally-ranked enterprise.

Pro-Mix® was the first product in a line of many that Premier distributes across Canada and the U.S. Launched in 1968, today Pro-Mix® has been established as an industry standard for

professional mixes. Other products soon followed, and with it, the number of locations from which Premier manufactures and distributes. With 20 broadly distributed harvesting sites, 17 screening and bagging plants and an extensive North American and overseas distribution network, Premier's line of products has expanded to include potting and planting mixes, soils, composts and peat moss, marketed under the PRO-MIX®, BIOMAX® and PREMIER® trademarks. PRO-MIX® growing media and PRO-MOSS® Sphagnum peat moss make up part of their professional product line.

Premier has gone through a few name

changes since its inception in 1929. Then known simply as Premier Peat Moss Ltd., in 1987, the company, became a publicly-traded company, constituting the first name change to Premier CDN Enterprises Ltd. which controlled both the original Premier Peat Moss Ltd. and Premier Tech Ltd. 1994 saw another change, this time to better reflect the line of products that the company was manufacturing and distributing. Premier Horticulture Ltd. became the new name for the Premier Peat Moss subsidiary.

Research and development, an important aspect of any business in such an expanding industry, is of particular importance to Premier. In 1983, Premier opened the largest dedicated research centre to develop high technology growing media.

Bringing new products to market is part of the responsibility of this research centre. PRO-MIX® with Myrorise™ was developed in-house, a collaboration with greenhouse growers to bring to market an industry-exclusive biotechnology breakthrough. Premier test marketed this product in 1996 and to date, has had great response from the trade.

While new developments are very important to Premier's own individual growth, as well of the growth of the soil amendment industry, the packaging and promotion of existing products is just as significant in improving and expanding sales. In 1994, Premier implemented their own packaging redesign and refinement program to improve product recognition and to position their products in upbeat, trendy markets.

Despite all research and development efforts or rethinking of the promotional and packaging design, a company will not prosper without a good customer service policy in place. This means a policy which is not just advertised but is also followed by all levels of management. Premier's customer service policy extends from their customer service line, available to all Premier customers to their assurance of consistently providing "just-in-time" delivery, the development of value-added products, and especially their technical service support.

United Horticultural Supply

At first glance there may not seem to be a similarity between Orville Redenbacher popcorn and NORTRACE soluble fertilizers, but take a closer look at the family history of the company, which supplies them, and the association becomes quite apparent.

Serving the horticulture industry with a number of quality, environmentally-responsible products and services since its purchase in 1988, United Horticultural Supply is but one player in a family of companies serving many different markets across North America. Its American sister, United Agri Products of Greeley, Colorado, is the largest pesticide formulator and distributor in North America. And, its parent company, Con Agra is a major player in the food industry, supplying a wide range of brand names to supermarkets across Canada and the U.S. Hunts, Healthy Choice, La Choy Chinese Foods and Orville Redenbacher, all familiar to anyone who has ever shopped in a grocery store, are just a few of the brands Con Agra supplies.

Although United Horticultural Supply's product line bears little resemblance to that of its parent company, its relationship with United Agri Products is a more direct one with the Canadian division supplying the same or similar products as supplied by its sister. Today, United Horticultural Supply supplies product lines which extend from nursery pots, flats and inserts, soil amendments, commercial pest control, and commercial lawn care products, to paverstone edging, Diazinon Insecticide, Par III - Turf Herbicide, Casoron Granular Herbicide, Ramik Rodenticides, NORTRACE elements and NORTRACE soluble fertilizers are just a

few of the product lines United Horticultural Supply provides. These product lines are available to lawn care companies, golf courses, nurseries, greenhouses, landscape and grounds management contractors, and vegetation managers.

With this family background and its success in supplying a growing market, it is no doubt that United Horticultural Supply has an effective combination that most companies would love to have. But, according to key players within the company, success rests not with the individual products but in the company's mandate to provide quality products, services and support to the horticulture industry with responsibility to the environment.

To fulfil this mandate, United Horticultural Supply looks to its team of employees who work out of their headquarters in Dorchester, Ontario, as well as their network of 10 distribution centres extending from Port Williams, N.S. to Langley, B.C., and all provinces in between. Their Dorchester location, a 60,000 sq. ft. Phase III warehouse is certified by the Crop Protection Institute. Add an intimate knowledge of their products and needs and wants of the industry and a minimum requirement of five years of experience for each sales representative to their effective, cross-Canada distribution network, and you have a basic understanding of what makes this company thrive and prosper.

A network of sales and customer service representatives ensure customer satisfaction and in turn, company stability and growth. Bruce Sheppard (Central Ontario), Bernd Peschutter (Southwestern Ontario) and John Konecny (Toronto, Eastern Ontario) serve the Ontario market.

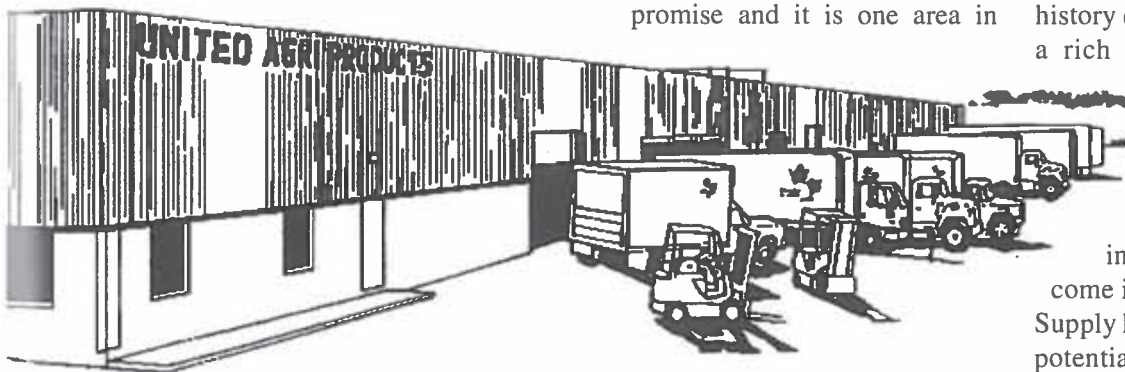
The turf grass industry has particular promise and it is one area in

which United Horticultural Supply places its faith, especially in light of the public attention this sector has received over the last five years. Sales figures for the last three years have surpassed expectations and the company estimates that this market can expect further growth in sales per year, making non-edible horticulture one of the fastest growing sectors in the agriculture/horticulture industry.

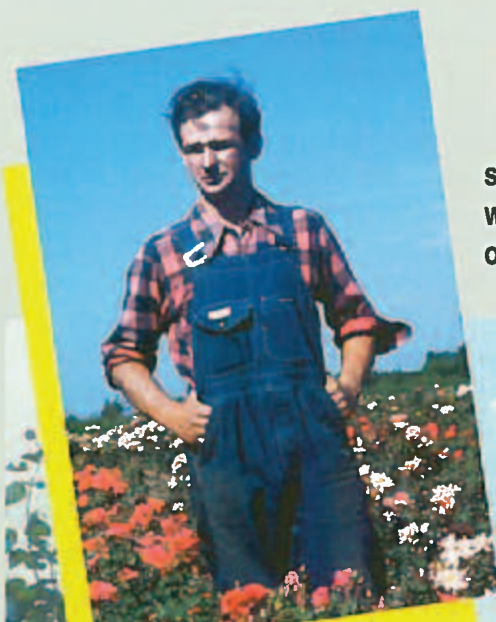
United Horticultural Supply has seen the many changes this industry has undergone, and representatives say that some of these changes, particularly in the pesticide market, are not necessarily detrimental to the industry. United Horticultural Supply plays an active role in education and awareness by encouraging their employees to volunteer with provincial associations to ensure new licensing regulations are in the best interest of the industry, to educate workers about the legislation changes and to promote all-important safety precautions. Armed with this information, the sector has also raised the public's awareness of effective, professional pesticide use. The change in attitude towards the management of available, open space can be due to the decrease of green space, parks and greenbelts, particularly in new developments, which forsake the lawn and garden area to build larger houses on the same or smaller sized lots.

United Horticultural Supply can be seen as the front runner in this green industry, as a supplier offering quality chemical product lines (among its many others), a manufacturer of technical grade products to other formulators and blenders, and also as a manufacturer of their own top-quality product lines.

While United Horticultural Supply's history extends back only 10 years, it has a rich history of supplying the right products to the right market at the right time, whether it is buttered popcorn or a commercial pest control product. And, like the predictions for an industry which is just beginning to come into its own, United Horticultural Supply has not yet realized its full growth potential.



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- Negotiation for positive changes to the Ministry of Energy and the Environment pesticide licensing system
- Promotion and support of the future workforce through scholarships, bursaries, dialogue with community college horticultural programs and the Ontario Horticulture Advisory Board, and the creation of the Landscape Ontario Horticultural Pre-apprenticeship Program.
- Leadership in the industry through involvement with the Pesticide Industry Council (PIC); the Forest Gene Conservation Association; etc.
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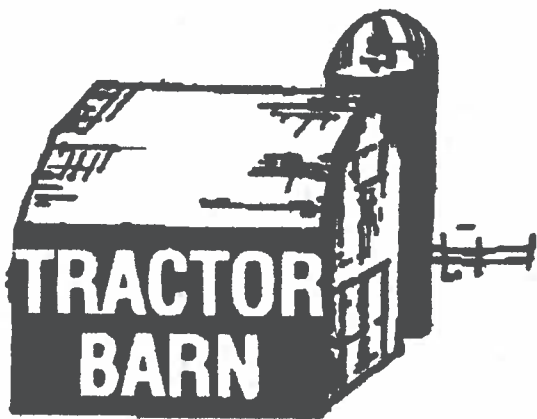
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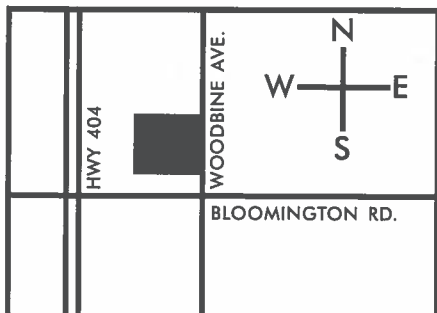
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