

Water management

Cities are regulating how your customers can water their lawns, so it's up to you to keep their yards looking green.

By Brian Horn

With local water restrictions becoming stricter, landscape contractors and lawn care operators are finding it increasingly difficult to keep lawns looking fresh and green. Soon, you're giving your customers excuses that they don't want to hear, even if they are valid. They just want you to make their lawn look nice. By adding a water management service to your company, you can keep your customer happy, while staying within the constraints of the law.

Mark Govan, president of ABC Pest Control in Tampa, Fla., has added a water

management service to his company and offered a service to customers that would reduce their watering amount. The product is applied to the grass, and it pulls water vapor out of the air and directs it back to the plants root system.

for ways to keep their lawn looking nice without hurting the environment. "If we can only water twice a week, this takes that one day of watering a week away so people can not only save water by not having to apply it as often, but now your plants aren't wilting. And we all know when a plant dries out it dies out," Govan says. "So, we stop that process from ever starting."

Govan says it was hard originally to make homeowners aware of the product and the service. Through his radio show, he was able to talk about the service, but some still weren't sold. To convince them the service was worth it, he would offer to do half the lawn for free as a way of showing the skeptics the product's effectiveness.

"When one side of the lawn looks great and the other side of the lawn is dead, it didn't take them very long to have them call us," he says. "It's a freebie. We can sacrifice an ounce or two of the product to get a regular, long-term customer."

Technicians could use the same equipment they would normally use, except for a different spray nozzle, to apply the product, says Mike Roberts, technical director. Govan says he would like to do a cost analysis comparison to show that purchasing the service would be cheaper than the money they would spend to water the lawn more frequently.

"If you are using city water, it's expensive," he says. "In order for homeowners to purchase that water to put down on their grass; they're spending a lot of money."

The author is associate editor at Lawn & Landscape. He can be reached at bhorn@gje.net.

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PROFILE

Company name:
ABC Pest Control

Founder and president:
Mark Govan

Location: Tampa, Fla.

Founded: 1985

Revenue: \$3 million

Employees: 38 year round

Customer breakdown: 93% residential; 7% commercial

Services: pest control, lawn and ornamental, tree injections and irrigation

QUOTE

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— MARK GOVAN, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, ABC PEST CONTROL

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