

Women a Powerful and Growing Force in Our Industry



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Keeping It Green *By Ron Hall*



The professional landscape/lawn service industry is a male-dominated industry. At least us males (unthinkingly?) assume it's so. The numbers are certainly on our side. But, make no mistake about it, women profoundly affect every part of the industry.

If you feel I'm overstating the case, please let me know.

Women lead many of our industry associations. Female landscape architects and landscape designers work in many of our companies. Wives, who are also co-owners and business partners, perform administrative and bookkeeping duties that keep tens of thousands of small landscape and lawn service family businesses going. Women, more often than not, make the Yay or Nay decisions when it comes to major residential landscape decisions.

But the most significant and overlooked role for women in our industry is as owners and entrepreneurs. They're out there; their numbers are growing; they're smart; and they can be just as competitively tough "as the next guy."

Writer and frequent *Turf* contributor Pamela Walton interviewed one of these capable business owners, Jodi Lewis, owner/operator of a [Lawn Doctor](#) lawn care franchise in Edmond, Okla.

Valuable Networking Opportunities for Women



Women green industry entrepreneurs can now count on the support and

networking opportunities offered by several national organizations, including a relatively new organization focusing specifically on female landscape professionals.

The National Association of Professional Women in Landscape (NAPWL) became a reality in 2011. The NAPWL is a diversified group of green industry professionals.

"The NAPWL is building a world-class community of the brightest and most innovative women in the green industry," reports Judith M. Guido, chairwoman of Guido and Associates.

The goal of the NAPWL, based in Orange County, Calif., is to serve the needs and empower women in the green landscape industry by promoting professionalism, education, sustainability and a sense of community. To learn more, visit www.napwl.org.

The National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) provides networking for the approximately 10.6 million women-owned business owners. The NAWBO, founded in 1975, has chapters in all the 50 states with multiple chapters in some states. Check out its excellent website at www.nawbo.org.

A related organization is the National Association of Women Owned Small Business, Inc., (NAWOSB), established in 2010. The NAWOSB describes its mission to educate women owned businesses about government bids, certifications, contracts and other opportunities. To learn more, visit www.nawosb.webs.com.

Lewis, a self-described "Type A" personality, grew up on a farm in Bristow, a speck of community of about 4,000 people in east central Oklahoma. Lewis earned a degree in agribusiness from Oklahoma State University in 2004. She then worked for two nonprofits before acquiring a Lawn Doctor franchise five years ago.

It never occurred to Lewis, shown left, that she couldn't run a lawn care company because she's a woman, reports Walton.

"First of all, my gender should never be a factor. I take it all in stride," said Lewis, adding that being a female in the lawn care business has advantages.

"From a sales standpoint, we're a lot less threatening, and often other women find it inspirational that I'm the owner of the business."

When we initially conceived the idea of sharing the stories of some of the remarkable women owners in the industry we didn't foresee just how many great female green industry company owners, CEOs, COOs and senior managers are out there. There are hundreds of them. The more we dug, the more we realized what a positive force they are in the landscape/lawn service industry.

And many of us manly men go merrily along thinking that the landscape industry is our sole domain. The women in this industry, it seems, are almost

content to let us to maintain this delusion.

We're looking forward to telling the stories of more women owners and industry leaders in future issues of *Turf*. Stay in touch and let us know if we can share your story with the industry, too.



Ron Hall
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