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A message from the President



Spring is finally here and I think we are all excited for the change of the season. It's been a while since we had winter like 2024-2025 and I think it caught us all by surprise. The cold, the snow, the wet. It was great for some and challenging for others, but April is here, and spring is upon us. As we all know, we will be up against graduation and Memorial Day deadlines before we know it.

We just had our first event of the year, the annual Garden Party at the Indiana Flower and Patio Show. This is a wonderful event to attend and we as an association look forward to it every year. Hats off to Dan and his committee for putting on a great event. A special "Thank You" to the sponsors of the event for your continued support and a very special "Thank You" to all the companies and crews that worked so hard to put gardens in the show. The show gardens looked fantastic this year. Great job and we hope you have a good year from your efforts. Congratulations to all the winners of the various awards and well done to Country Gardens for winning the coveted 2025 Garden of Excellence award!

When I joined the team at Greendell + Musselman I was introduced to two books, *Extreme Ownership* and *The Dichotomy of Leadership*. I now listen to these books on average one or two times a year, I enjoy them that much. As we move into the spring and a new season, I want to share some notes from the books. **The Mission:** The mission comes first. But, you can only accomplish the mission with your team. It's not about

you. **Clarity is Key:** Every member of the team must know exactly what the mission is, what success looks like, and why it matters. If the team isn't stepping up, check yourself: have you clearly communicated the "why"? **Prioritize and Execute:** Identify the highest priorities, focus your efforts, and take action. When the team is aligned and communicating effectively, problems get solved, and progress happens. Over the next few days, weeks or even this year I challenge you to analyze a project you are working on. Are individuals and teams working together and helping each other toward the goal? Do you fully understand the mission's purpose, goal, and end state? Does the team understand? Do you and your team feel confident you know the desired end state to which you are working? Test it. Ask them for a Readback. If there are gaps, address and fix them.

Our next event will be the annual Educational Bus Trip. We are very excited to be going to the New Unilock plant in Harrison Ohio, paired with a Cincinnati Reds Game, and a behind the scenes tour of the Cincinnati Zoo. This will take place Thursday July 31 – Friday August 1st. Monitor the website and your email for the invitation. Mark your calendar now to block out the dates.

Have a great spring and hopefully we will see you on the bus trip July 31st

Chris Geryak, President

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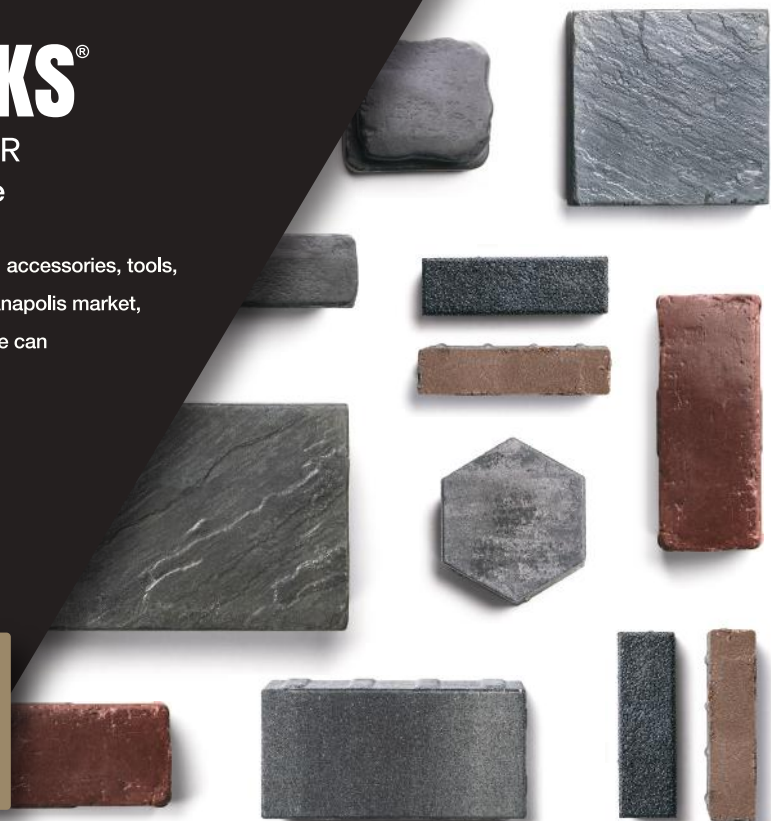
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How to Generate Leads and Land More Customers for Your Landscaping Business

In the competitive world of landscaping, securing new customers is crucial for growth and success. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting, having a solid strategy to attract and retain clients will set you apart. Here are some of the best ways to generate leads and land new customers for your landscaping business.

1. Build a Strong Online Presence

Optimize Your Website

A professional and user-friendly website is the foundation of your online presence. Ensure your site:

- Showcases your services with high-quality images
- Includes clear contact information
- Has a lead capture form for quotes or consultations
- Is optimized for search engines (SEO)

Utilize Local SEO

Since landscaping is location-based, focus on local SEO strategies:

- Optimize your Google Business Profile
- Use local keywords (e.g., "best landscaping company in [city]")
- Get listed in online directories like Yelp, Angi, and Houzz



Leverage Social Media

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are great for showcasing your work and engaging with potential customers. Post before-and-after photos, customer testimonials, and maintenance tips to build credibility.

2. Use Paid Advertising

Google Ads & Facebook Ads

Investing in paid advertising can yield quick results. Google Ads helps you appear in search results, while Facebook and Instagram ads target potential customers based on interests and location.

Retargeting Campaigns

Retargeting ads keep your business in front of visitors who have shown interest in your services. This increases the chances of converting them into paying customers.

3. Encourage Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Ask for Reviews

Happy customers are your best advocates. Encourage them to leave reviews on Google, Yelp, and Facebook.

Offer Referral Incentives

Provide discounts or bonuses for customers who refer new clients. This motivates existing customers to spread the word about your services.

4. Network and Partner with Local Businesses

Forming relationships with complementary businesses such as real estate agents, garden centers, and home improvement stores can lead to valuable referrals. Attending local networking events or joining business organizations can also help increase your visibility.



5. Offer Seasonal Promotions

Running limited-time offers on services like spring cleanups, lawn aeration, or fall leaf removal can encourage customers to act quickly. Promote these deals via email marketing, social media, and flyers.

6. Utilize Email Marketing

Email marketing helps maintain customer relationships and generate repeat business. Send out:

- Monthly newsletters with landscaping tips
- Special promotions
- Follow-ups after service completion

7. Participate in Local Events and Sponsorships

Getting involved in community events, home expos, and charity sponsorships increases brand awareness. Setting up a booth at a local event allows you to meet potential customers and showcase your work.

Conclusion

Generating leads for your landscaping business requires a mix of digital marketing, networking, and exceptional customer service. By implementing these strategies, you can attract more clients, grow your business, and establish a strong reputation in your community. Start applying these tips today and watch your landscaping business flourish!



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The Old Apple Tree



Consulting Arborist Corner

Judson R. Scott

Registered Consulting Arborist

As early as 1814 it is reported that there was an old apple tree growing in a field across from what is now Fort Wayne. The field was used by Miami Indians for growing corn and beans, and for picking blackberries. Legend suggests the old tree may have been planted by French traders or missionaries in the early to middle 1700's. The old tree was the centerpiece of a group of Miami huts and many accounts say that Chief Richardville was born near the tree. The Chief who died in 1841 at the age of 80 reportedly told early settlers that the tree was there bearing fruit when he was a little child.

The Ft. Wayne Apple Tree Legend

As early as 1814, it is reported that there was an old apple tree growing in a field across from what is now the city of Fort Wayne. The field was used by Miami Indians for growing corn and beans, and for picking blackberries. Legend suggests the old tree may have been planted by French traders or missionaries in the early to middle 1700s. The old tree was the centerpiece of a group of Miami huts, and many accounts say that Chief Richardville was born near the tree. The chief who died in 1841 at the age of 80, reportedly told early settlers that the tree was there bearing fruit when he was a little child.



Photo printed with permission from the Allen County Public Library.

Wallace Brice describes the tree in 1867 in his *History of Fort Wayne* as having a circumference of one hundred and forty-four inches and that it bore smaller apples in October.

Again a legendary account tells us that it was the old apple tree which a Native American would climb daily to harass the soldiers in the fort during the siege of the fort in 1812, until a sharpshooter from the fort shot him from hundreds of yards away.

Unfortunately in 1866 a strong storm brought down the tree, leaving nothing but legend.

Wallace Brice describes the tree in 1867 in his *History of Fort Wayne* as having a circumference of 12 feet and that it bore smaller apples in October.

Again a legendary account tells us that it was the old apple tree which a Native American would climb daily to harass the soldiers in the fort, during the siege of the Fort in 1812, until a sharp shooter from the fort shot him from hundreds of yards away.

About the Author: Jud Scott is a lover of trees and history and has earned the designation of Registered Consulting Arborist #392 (RCA) with the American Society of Consulting Arborists. As an RCA, Jud advises Attorneys, Landscape Companies, Park Departments, Developers, Architects, Insurance Companies, as well as homeowners concerning their trees and landscapes. Jud can be reached at 317-815-8733 or by email at Jud@arboristexpert.com

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The ILA Hands Out Awards at the



Left: Garden of Excellence Winner, Country Gardens Lawn and Landscape



Above: Best Use of Multiple Materials, Start To Finish Landscaping



Left: Best Use of Color, Country Gardens Lawn and Landscape

Indiana Flower and Patio Show



Above: Best Water Feature, Start To Finish Landscaping



Above: Best Design, JMT Landscape Group



Left: Best Use of Landscape Plant Material, Primary Grounds Landscaping

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TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Stone quarry tour in Batesville.

A tour of the brand-new Unilock plant in Harrison, Ohio (lunch included).

An evening at Great American Ball Park for the Reds vs. Braves game (optional).

Behind-the-scenes tour of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens (lunch included)



Day 1: July 31, 2025

Depart from Tiffany's Lawn and Garden Supply (address included).

Tour Batesville stone quarry.

Unilock plant tour (lunch provided).

Arrive at the downtown Cincinnati hotel.

Free time & optional Reds vs. Braves game.

Day 2: August 1, 2025

Behind-the-scenes zoo tour (lunch provided).

Return to Indianapolis by 5:00 PM.



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STAY TUNED FOR REGISTRATION DETAILS!

PAVER SEALANT: TO SEAL OR NOT TO SEAL

BY JOE RABOINE



Do I need to seal my pavers?

The short answer is Yes.

Paver sealant is an important maintenance tool to keep paver patios, walkways, driveways and pool decks looking as beautiful as they day they were installed.

However, “too much of a good thing” can come into play, and you should be wary of over-applying paver sealer by reapplying too often, which could create a haze. This week’s blog offers tips for knowing when it’s time to seal and how to best achieve the desired look.

SHOULD ALL CONCRETE PAVERS BE SEALED?

Yes. Concrete is porous and will absorb stains if not sealed. Sealants can also protect paver color from fading.

DO ALL PAVER SEALANT BRANDS OFFER THE SAME BASIC PROTECTION?

There are definitely some poor paver sealing products on the market. Don’t trust the fact that you bought it at a big box store or that it’s a high-profile brand. Just because a brand is good at one product category (like paint) doesn’t mean they are the best in another. Belgard recommends Techniseal® sealants. When it comes paver sealant, Techniseal® is a pioneer in the industry has a robust R&D department, resulting in effective and durable products specifically created for paver installation and maintenance

IS ANY ONE PAVER SEALANT FINISH MORE PROTECTIVE THAN ANOTHER?

There are basically two types of paver sealants:



Natural Look Matte Finish



Clear Look Semi-Gloss Finish



Color Boost Matte Finish



Wet Look Gloss Finish

film-forming (gloss or semi-gloss finish) and non-film-forming (matte finish). Film-forming sealants, such as Wet Look and Clear Look, offer the ultimate protection because they create a physical barrier on the paver surface. However non-film-forming sealants, Natural Look and Color Boost, still offer excellent protection and last a bit longer

HOW LONG SHOULD NEW PAVERS CURE BEFORE THEY ARE SEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME?

If using a non-film-forming paver sealant, wait one week before sealing. If using a film-forming sealant, wait 30 days to avoid trapping moisture under the protective barrier.

IS THERE A PREP PROCESS BEFORE APPLYING PAVER SEALANT?

Even new pavers should be cleaned with Techniseal® Paver Prep prior to sealing. Not only will it clean the pavers, but it will open the pores on the surface to allow better penetration of the sealant. Older pavers will also benefit, as Paver Prep will remove any efflorescence (or whitish salt buildup) that has accumulated. Any stains should be removed prior to applying Paver Prep, using

(Continued on page 17.)

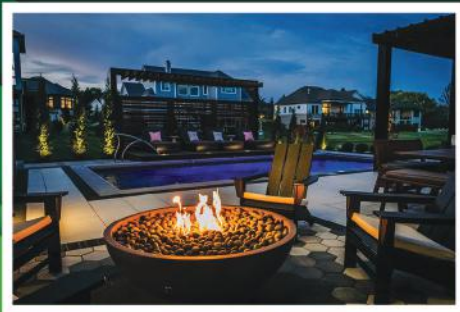
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(Continued from page 14.)

the specific stain remover for the type of stain. For more information, read last week's blog on paver stain removal.

HOW LONG SHOULD PAVERS DRY AFTER BEING CLEANED AND PREPPED?

The answer depends on your climate. In warm, sunny climates, the pavers will be dry and ready to seal in a few hours. In cooler climates or shady areas, it's best to wait about 24 hours.

WHAT ARE THE IDEAL WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR SEALING?

Ideal conditions would be 75 degrees and sunny; however, anywhere between 50-90 degrees is generally fine. Take note that solvent-based sealants evaporate faster, so lower temperatures are better for application.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD PAVER SEALER BE REAPPLIED?

The basic rule of thumb is every 3-5 years. For film-forming sealants, you will be able to notice when the physical barrier is showing signs of wear. For non-film-forming sealants, you will begin to see a significant color change of pavers during a rain when the sealant is wearing thin. Keep in mind that in cases of a really heavy rain, even well-sealed pavers may darken for a couple of days until the water fully evaporates, which is not an indication of sealant failure.

PAVER SEALING APPLICATION TIPS:

- Like with painting, it's best to keep a wet edge on a continuous area. In other words, don't let a section dry before you finish. Once you start working, keep working.



Visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGrkfxZidhk>



Visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCt3OzPLtdc>

- An application sprayer (available at any hardware store) makes it easier to work faster.
- Apply paver sealant to saturation. Get the pavers good and wet to make sure all crevices are covered. Then use a dry roller to soak up the excess to avoid lines and drip marks.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- When in doubt, hire a professional. To find qualified contractors in your area, visit the Belgard contractor locator.



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Spring Readiness: Set Your Landscape Company Up for Success

Spring is one of the busiest seasons for landscaping companies. Homeowners and businesses alike are eager to refresh their outdoor spaces after winter, making it the perfect time to ramp up your operations. To make the most of this peak season, here are essential steps to get your landscaping business ready for spring.

1. Prepare Your Equipment

Before the season kicks off, ensure all your tools and equipment are in top shape.

- Inspect and maintain mowers, trimmers, blowers, and other power tools. Clean, sharpen, and replace parts as needed.
- Restock supplies such as mulch, fertilizers, and grass seed to meet customer demand without delays.
- Upgrade or invest in new equipment if necessary to improve efficiency and service quality.

2. Train Your Team

A well-prepared team is key to a successful season. Take time to:

- Train new employees and refresh experienced ones on best practices, safety procedures, and customer service.
- Review job roles and scheduling to ensure optimal coverage and productivity.
- Motivate and encourage staff to embrace the busy season with enthusiasm.

3. Launch a Spring Marketing Campaign

Get ahead of the competition by ramping up your marketing efforts early.

- Update your website and social media with spring-focused promotions, fresh photos, and seasonal service offerings.
- Run digital ads targeting homeowners and businesses looking for lawn care, clean-ups, and

landscaping projects.

- Send out email campaigns and postcards to previous customers reminding them to book early.

4. Offer Seasonal Services & Promotions

Spring is the perfect time to promote seasonal services such as:

- Spring cleanups: Debris removal, lawn dethatching, and mulching.
- Lawn care programs: Fertilization, aeration, and seeding.
- Planting and garden bed prep: Refreshing flower beds, planting new shrubs, and adding seasonal color.
- Exclusive promotions: Offer discounts for early bookings or package deals to increase sales.

5. Strengthen Customer Relationships

Building strong relationships can lead to repeat business and referrals.

- Follow up with past clients to check in and see if they need services.
 - Encourage online reviews to boost credibility and attract new customers.
 - Engage on social media by sharing landscaping tips, success stories, and customer testimonials.
- ### 6. Optimize Scheduling and Operations
- With increased demand, efficient scheduling is crucial.
- Use scheduling software to streamline bookings and avoid overcommitting.
 - Plan routes strategically to minimize travel time and maximize efficiency.
 - Ensure sufficient staffing to handle the workload without burnout.

Conclusion

By preparing early and implementing these strategies, your landscaping business will be in the best position to capitalize on the busy spring season. Stay proactive, focus on customer service, and leverage marketing to ensure a successful and profitable spring.

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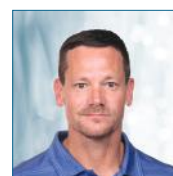
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The Redbud Problem: Vascular Streak Dieback

Article Provided By: Eric Brehob, Brehob Consulting & Distribution, LLC

Nurseries across the Southern U.S. are facing a growing challenge: widespread dieback and decline in redbuds, a beloved ornamental tree. Known as Vascular Streak Dieback (VSD), the condition is marked by chlorosis, wilting, internal vascular streaking, and eventual branch or tree death. While redbuds are primarily affected, other woody plants like maples and dogwoods are also showing symptoms.

Tennessee, the top redbud-producing state, has been hit particularly hard. Fulya Baysal-Gurel, interim associate dean of research at Tennessee State University, is leading the investigation. Collaborators include Janna Beckerman and John Bonkowski at Purdue, and Mike Munster at NC State.

Researchers discovered a *Rhizoctonia*-like fungus in the xylem, an unusual place for such a pathogen. Genetic analysis identified it as part of the *Ceratobasidium* genus, closely related to a fungus that affects cacao (CT). Despite the connection, scientists have not confirmed CT as the cause, since Koch's postulates—the gold standard for disease identification—have not been fulfilled.



Figure 1. VSD associated vascular streaking on redbud. Photo: Tennessee State University

What complicates the diagnosis is that multiple stress factors may be involved. Infected redbuds often show signs of root rot or nutrient imbalance, making it hard to determine a single

cause. Researchers continue to receive new samples and are analyzing patterns across regions, with confirmed detections in Tennessee, Indiana, Florida, Oklahoma, North Carolina, and Virginia.

“If you’re not looking for something, you’re not going to find it,” says Beckerman, emphasizing the importance of early detection. Yet, symptoms of VSD can easily be mistaken for other diseases like *Verticillium* wilt or cankers.



Figure 2. Leaf scorch associated with VSD symptomatic redbud plants. Photo: Tennessee State University

Managing the Unknown

With no definitive cure, researchers are urging nurseries to adopt best practices. That includes avoiding deep planting—often associated with higher VSD incidence—and maintaining optimal cultural conditions. Overfertilization, overwatering, and planting stress are common risk factors.

“We kept finding plants that were two to six inches too deep in containers or fields,” Beckerman says. “It’s a huge stress factor.”

Baysal-Gurel’s team found fungicides like Empress, Heritage, Prostar, Medallion, and Terraguard helped suppress symptoms in redbud. While none provide complete prevention, they may protect high-value plants when used as part of a rotation. Still, Beckerman warns: “Fungicides won’t fix poor planting practices.”



Figure 3. Dieback symptom observed in the VSD symptomatic redbud plants. Photo: Tennessee State University

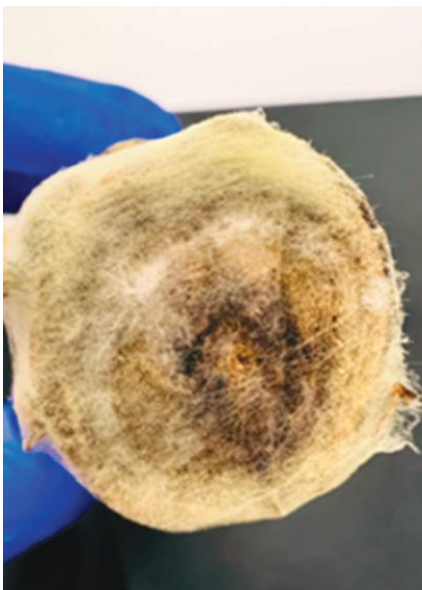


Figure 4. CT growing from the incubated VSD symptomatic redbud plants. Photo: Tennessee State University

How It Might Spread


Graft transmission is one likely route. Many symptomatic trees were grafted, echoing how CT spreads in cacao. Airborne spores may also play a role. Spore traps set from May to October confirmed airborne presence in Tennessee, and researchers are

tracking seasonal fluctuations.

Nutrient studies found yellow-foliaged redbuds had excess nitrogen and phosphorus, and low micronutrients. This imbalance may weaken resistance, especially when combined with pruning wounds or residue left on the ground.

Looking Ahead

A multi-state team continues to study VSD's spread and impact. Their goal: isolate the pathogen, confirm causation, and develop industry-wide guidelines. Until then, growers are advised to focus on clean plant sourcing, good sanitation, and stress reduction. As Beckerman sums up: "Healthy plants are your best defense."



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ILA Garden Party Happy Hour a Blooming Success at the Indiana Flower & Patio Show



More than 120 members of the Indianapolis Landscape Association gathered for our annual Garden Party Happy Hour at the Indiana Flower and Patio Show. Members enjoyed complimentary admission to the show and spent the evening connecting with colleagues and friends while strolling through the beautifully crafted gardens at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

The event featured beverages and hearty appetizers—a festive treat in celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Guests had the opportunity to admire the stunning garden displays created by fellow ILA members. Each company cast one vote for the coveted Garden of Excellence Award, which was proudly awarded to Country Gardens Landscaping and Lawn Care. Competition was fierce, and voting came down to the wire!

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our generous sponsors who made this event possible:



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We'd also like to extend our sincere gratitude to Marketplace Events, producers of the Indiana Flower and Patio Show, for their continued partnership. And a special farewell and best wishes to Laura as she prepares to retire this summer—you'll be missed!

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this event such a memorable evening!





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