

Idea Exchange August 2005 - Non-Lethal Weapons

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However, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) does have provisions for exceptions to the statutory protection afforded certain species, if they pose a bona fide threat to domestic livestock.

In some instances, the offending predator may be legally killed, but only after protracted, non-lethal means of control have been exhausted, and then only under the most stringent rules governing weapons, ammunition, shooting hours, and other miscellanea.

Non-lethal forms of control must still be authorized by the USFWS, because these same activities would constitute unlawful harassment if used without authorization.

The proper procedure is to call the regional office of the USFW and request an application for a depredation permit. The completed application will then be forwarded to a field officer who will review the application and decide if a permit should be issued to the landowner to deal with the marauding species. The field officer has complete discretion and may choose to visit, follow up by phone, or simply approve or deny the permit without further communication, depending upon the circumstances. The most likely outcome of a permit application is that a permit will probably be issued for non-lethal forms of control.

Employee Perks

Perks can be a great way to retain employees, but The Lily Pad of Janesville, Wis., is using them to gain customers as well.

The retail arm of Pond Professors, The Lily Pad rolled out its Featured Employer Discount Program in June.

The program designates major employers in the area as Employer of the Month, and the selected company's or organization's employees receive special discounts.

For example, General Motors employees received a \$100 discount on 8'x11' pond kits in June, as did employees and members of the Janesville Athletic Club in July. In August, all area retail employees will receive some sort of discount.

Hardscape Hazards

In an effort to reduce job-related deaths and injuries, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, through a coalition with the Professional Landcare Network, recently posted revised safety and health topics for landscapers and related fields at www.osha.gov/SLTC/landscaping/index.html.

Topics include hazards related to hardscape construction, including water features.

The primary hazards include cuts and amputations, hearing loss, lifting-related injuries, slips and trips, "struck by" accidents, and those associated with trenching and excavation.

Most of OSHA's advice is common sense. A clean job site will reduce falls, get help lifting objects to prevent injuries, and wear appropriate protective apparel. Training employees on the proper use of equipment was also important. OSHA believes the injury and accident rate in landscaping is too high. In 2002, nearly 11,000 landscaping relating accidents were reported to OSHA, more than half of which resulted in the victim missing more than six days of work. This is down from an annual average of 13,000 from 1995 to 2000.

In 2003, OSHA reported 154 landscaping related fatalities.

Art Rock

Artist Colleen Barry works on the Mosaic Oasis, one of two prominent water features at the recently opened McConnell Arboretum & Gardens at Turtle Bay Exploration Park in Redding, Calif.

Barry's approach highlights a whimsical approach to rockwork, one that might be overlooked by traditional focuses of naturalistic or formal.

Helter-Skelter

When treating farm ponds for aquatic weeds, a moderate approach will prevent fish kills, according to Dr. Billy Higginbotham, a wildlife and fisheries specialist with the Texas Cooperative Extension.

"Going helter-skelter and treating the whole pond at once is not the way to go—if fish are important to the pond owner," he says.

The problem isn't a herbicide, but rather that the decaying plant matter uses too much of the pond's oxygen, possibly leading to a fish kill.

Higginbotham recommends treating about 20 percent of the pond at a time, then treat another section the next week. This prevents massive oxygen depletion.

He also recommends selecting the appropriate herbicide for the target aquatic plant for best results.

Many farmers like fish-friendly ponds, particularly for sport fish such as bass. However, when plant coverage of a pond begins to exceed 25 percent, bass have a difficult time finding smaller fish to eat.

Texas has an estimated 1 million farm ponds, averaging about 1/2 acre of surface area. Texas estimates the recreational value of these ponds at \$60 million or more.

We want your ideas on building water garden businesses. We'll pay \$50 for published submissions. Please send your ideas (50 to 200 words and photos, if any) to: Idea Exchange, 3 Burroughs, Irvine, CA 92618; fax: (949) 855-3045 or e-mail tbarthel@bowtieinc.com. Sorry, we cannot return materials.