

Career Profile

A weekly series devoted to providing information on career exploration

Do You Like

- Analyzing information and evaluating results to choose the best solution and solve problems?
- Developing specific goals and plans to prioritize, organize, and accomplish your work?
- Performing physical activities that require considerable use of your arms and legs and moving your whole body?
- Inspecting equipment, structures, or materials to identify the cause of errors or other problems or defects?
- Running, maneuvering, navigating, or driving vehicles or mechanized equipment?

Then This Could Be The Career For You!

The Type of Work

- Operate vehicles and powered equipment, such as mowers, tractors, twin-axle vehicles, snow blowers, chain saws, electric clippers, sod cutters, and pruning saws.
- Mow and edge lawns, using power mowers and edgers.
- Shovel snow from walks, driveways, and parking lots, and spread salt in those areas.
- Care for established lawns by mulching, aerating, weeding, grubbing and removing thatch, and trimming and edging around flower beds, walks, and walls.
- Use hand tools such as shovels, rakes, pruning saws, saws, hedge and brush trimmers, and axes.
- Prune and trim trees, shrubs, and hedges, using shears, pruners, or chain saws.
- Gather and remove litter.
- Maintain and repair tools, equipment, and structures, such as buildings, greenhouses, fences, and benches, using hand and power tools.
- Mix and spray or spread fertilizers, herbicides, or insecticides onto grass, shrubs, and trees, using hand or automatic sprayers or spreaders.
- Provide proper upkeep of sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, fountains, planters, burial sites, and other grounds features.

Pathways to Success

There usually are no minimum educational requirements for entry-level positions in groundskeeping. In 2008, most workers had no education beyond high school. A short period of on-the-job training generally is sufficient to teach new hires the necessary skills, which often include planting and maintenance procedures; the operation of mowers, trimmers, leaf blowers, small tractors and other equipment; and proper safety procedures. Large institutional employers such as golf courses or municipalities may supplement on-the-job training with coursework in subjects like horticulture or small engine repair. A bachelor's degree may be needed for those who want to become specialists. Supervisors may need a high school diploma, and may receive several months of on-the-job training. Formal training in landscape design, horticulture, arboriculture, or business may improve an applicant's chances for employment. Landscape designers may be required to obtain such training.

What Employers Look For

Individuals who:

- Appreciate nature, enjoy working with their hands, and possess strong analytical skills.
- Have creative vision and artistic talent.
- Are reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling obligations.
- Are careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks.
- Have a willingness to take on responsibilities and challenges.

Job Outlook

Employment of landscaping/grounds maintenance workers is expected to increase by 18 percent during the 2008 - 18 decade, which is faster than the average for all occupations. In addition, grounds maintenance workers will be among the occupations with largest numbers of new jobs, with around 269,200. More workers will be needed to keep up with increasing demand for lawn care and landscaping services both from large institutions and from individual homeowners. Major institutions, such as universities and corporate headquarters, recognize the importance of good landscape design in attracting personnel and clients and are expected to continue to use grounds maintenance services to maintain and upgrade their properties. Homeowners are also a growing source of demand for grounds maintenance workers. Many two-income households lack the time to take care of their lawns so they increasingly hire people to maintain them. Also, as the population ages, more elderly homeowners will require lawn care services to help maintain their yards.

Earnings Potential

Location	Year	Pay Period	Low	Median	High
United States	2009	Yearly	\$16,800	\$23,500	\$37,100
Ohio	2009	Yearly	\$16,200	\$21,100	\$34,000
Cleveland Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	2009	Yearly	\$16,300	\$21,100	\$37,800

O*Net Online, <http://online.onetcenter.org>.

LANDSCAPERS AND GROUNDSKEEPERS

DEFINITION:

Landscape or maintain grounds of property using hand or power tools or equipment. Workers typically perform a variety of tasks, which may include any combination of the following: sod laying, mowing, trimming, planting, watering, fertilizing, digging, raking, sprinkler installation, and installation of mortarless segmental concrete masonry wall units.



NAME: Barry Morton II

JOB TITLE: Vice President/Sales

COMPANY: Morton's Landscape Development Company

LOCATION: 11564 Station Road, Columbia Station

Q. How did you become interested in your particular field?

A. I started working with my father as a kid at about 8 years old. My family had a farm and I worked with my dad mowing and landscaping on the weekends and after school. I worked in the field and learned from my dad and my surroundings and ran my own crew during high school years and when I graduated I took over the sales for our company. The experience of working in the field made me a great salesman. I became more interested as years went by just realizing the opportunity for the future.

Q. Who or what influenced your decision the most and why?

A. I think that I made the decision myself knowing that I could make a career out of the family business and that I would be a key part in growing the business. My dad and I still compliment each other and have our roles as business owners. Other influences would be working with people and employees. Making customers happy and keeping employees employed drives me and I have a passion for that.

Q. What is your educational background?

A. I graduated from Columbia High School in 1996. Beyond that I participated in landscape classes, seminars and conferences all over the country. I did not go to college because I thought that I could succeed without it.

Q. How did you get to where you are today? What path did your employment journey take?

A. A lot of hours, hard work, passion and being surrounded with a lot of great people. The employment path started by learning the ups and downs of doing the work, then taking over the sales, a partnership with my father and eventually being the captain of the entire ship.

Q. What skills or certifications do you think are needed to be successful in this field?

A. Certifications needed are really general depending on your business. We have 2 certified landscape technicians. A pesticide applicator's license is needed when spraying pesticides and we have a couple guys with those. I am a certified landscape designer and have a designer that works full time that's certified also. As far as skills, I think being a people person is primary, then being a good listener, being a craftsman, having construction knowledge, good follow through and great customer service.

Q. What is the best part of your job?

A. The best part of my job is working with people and keeping people employed. Seeing our 25 trucks rolling down the road everyday and returning safely is rewarding. It is a challenge growing a successful business and staying in business during a recession, but we work at it every day.

Q. Do you have any words of advice for someone considering a career in your field?

A. Plan on working hard, working a lot of hours, and plan for change as times change. Keep up with the latest and the greatest. Utilize equipment and trucks to keep production moving efficiently.



Sources: Occupational Information Network, O*Net Online, <http://online.onetcenter.org>; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, <http://stats.bls.gov/oco>