

Get ready to celebrate National Lawn Care Month

April is National Lawn Care Month, and a great opportunity for you to get some media coverage about this national event and your firm. Over the next couple of weeks, take time to schedule activities and distribute press releases to increase awareness with your local media and your customers. National Lawn Care Month also gives you the chance to talk about the benefits of lawns and landscapes.

Plan a project

You can plan a special community project or schedule a special job during April and invite media to attend and

see the work. Hold a community lawn seminar at the site to explain proper lawn care. Invite your local elected officials (mayor, town council, supervisors, economic development officer, and so forth) as well as the media. In planning your event, include hands-on activities that local officials could do such as helping to lay sod or plant a tree.

Pick a particular day at the site — April 3 would be ideal — and line up a lot of activity. Send out a media advisory on March 28 that simply lists “who,” “what,” “when,” and “where.” Be sure that it says “Media Advisory” so that the media will know that it’s an invitation to attend the event. The first Tuesday of the month is a desirable

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day to hold an event because it’s at the beginning of the month. It also gives you time on Monday to follow up with press and remind them of the following day’s event.

Weekdays are always better than weekends for news coverage, as many media outlets have smaller crews on hand on the weekends. If your area televises the news at noon (check your local television guide), you should schedule the event close to noontime and give television stations an opportunity to hold a live remote from your project. Typically, television news stations are looking for good visual areas to send their noontime crews. Also, find out if there is local news programming in the morning. While you do not want to hold an event at 5:00 a.m., think through what you could do if a television station was interested in doing something for early morning news. You might have a smaller crew working at the site during the early morning hours and then hold your event for everyone else later in the day.

Informational material

If you hold an event, compile a press kit for the media who attend. This can be a simple folder with your logo. It should include a comprehensive background piece on your firm, including awards you’ve received, fact sheets, and a press release about the day’s event. During the month of April, put additional releases in the kit and drop them off at your local media outlets to get additional attention.

Put together a fact sheet on the benefits of a healthy lawn, including

An advertisement for Oly-Ola Stone-edg. The top part features the brand name "Oly-Ola" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with "Introduces" underneath it. Below this, the text "Stone-edg" is written in a smaller font. The central focus is the phrase "SIZE MATTERS..." in a very large, bold, sans-serif font, with a reflection effect underneath. Below this, a smaller line of text reads "...especially when you are restraining architectural hardscape stones". The advertisement includes several images: a black plastic edging strip with a textured top surface, a grey concrete edging strip, and a black plastic edging strip with a different texture. A ruler is shown vertically on the right side, with the text "With its 1 inch height, Stone-edg is ideal for shallow hardscaping" written along its length. At the bottom left, there is a small diagram showing a cross-section of a stone with a concrete base and an edging strip on top. The text "When QUALITY MATTERS," is written above the Oly-Ola logo, which consists of the brand name in a stylized script font above "EDGINGS, INC." in a smaller, bold font. At the bottom right, the phone number "1-800-EDGINGS" and the website "www.olyola.com" are listed.

environmental, aesthetic, and improved water quality. Visit the PLANET Web site's "Member Center" at *LandcareNetwork.org* to download at no charge PLANET's newly developed lawn care brochures (see sample brochure enclosed in this mailing of *PLANET News*). You'll also find press releases about National Lawn Care Month on the site. Use the releases with your local media and add an opening paragraph about your company. Change quotes in the releases to be your own.

and offer tips on lawn care or landscape (again, see the PLANET Web site and the lawn care press releases). The fourth release could focus on a special project that your firm has planned or a customer project of which you are very proud. Tie it into National Lawn Care Month by repeating the benefits of a healthy lawn (and/or landscape).

It's a lot of work, but a full media campaign in April will pay off in huge dividends for the year. Rest assured

that your local media will know who you are and how to reach you, and, as story opportunities arise during the year, they will know to contact you. In addition, you will have generated enormous community goodwill by educating consumers. 🐾

If you have a story idea, question, or recommendation, or need some public relations help, please call (800) 395-2522, ext. 100, or e-mail BendurePR@aol.com.

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You may want to put notes on your customer bills that read, "Celebrate April as National Lawn Care Month," or place stuffers in the invoices. Send releases and fact sheets to all local media, particularly home and garden writers. Don't forget your local television and radio stations.

Send a release a week

Every Monday throughout the month of April, send a new press release to your local media. Distribute the first release the last week in March and follow through with the other releases the entire month of April. Each release should have a different message. For instance, you may want to start with a company overview and an announcement that National Lawn Care Month is around the corner. The next week's release could be about your company and the benefits of a healthy lawn (and landscape, if you're a landscape professional). Your third release could focus again on your company

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