

CASE STUDY

May 2017

COMPANY

Executive Landscaping, New Haven, CT

CONTACT

Mike Annatone, President

PRODUCT USED

DURATION CR® Controlled-Release Fertilizer



CASE STUDY PROFILE

CHALLENGE

Executive Landscaping wanted an economical nutrition solution for customers desiring a more sustainable lawn care program.

SOLUTION

DURATION CR® enhanced efficiency fertilizer, in 30-0-6 and 22-0-6 formulations.

RESULTS

Combined with Executive's Integrated Pest Management program, the consistent 90-day nutrient release of DURATION CR® fertilizer allowed for just two applications per year instead of five. The resulting fertilizer and labor savings freed up crews to perform other revenue-generating tasks.



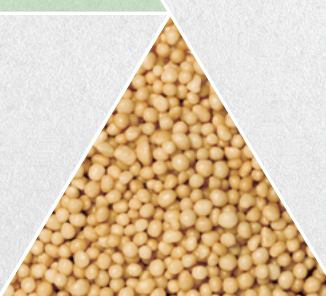
Executive Landscaping Chooses DURATION CR® Fertilizer for a More Practical, Sustainable Lawn Care Program

Executive Landscaping of New Haven, CT provides comprehensive landscaping services, including grounds management, irrigation system design, landscape design and installation, snow and ice management, masonry work and green roof projects. Since starting out as a small residential grounds maintenance company 33 years ago, the company has expanded to three locations throughout greater Connecticut. President Mike Annatone stays busy managing his staff and staying on top of all the day-to-day challenges that come with the landscaping business.

"I'm at work by 6:30 every morning," Annatone says. "I check out the day's schedule, attend staff and sales meetings and try to solve any problems that come my way. I'm always focused on our goal of providing full-service, high-quality landscaping at a fair price. That's how we differentiate ourselves from the competition. We also try to make sure we're staying on top of the latest trends, products and technologies available in the green industry."

Executive Landscaping emphasizes the importance of environmentally sustainable lawn care practices. The company has taken steps to educate its clients and offer alternative solutions to traditional lawn care methods and products.

"Responsible behavior is part of our DNA," Annatone says. "Sustainability is one of our core values. We train our staff to be both practical and environmentally smart. That said, we try to balance those two elements—practicality and sustainability. The services we offer and the products we use have to make economic sense for both us and our customers."



SEEKING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Executive's emphasis on practical sustainability is one reason Annatone began researching the green industry marketplace for a more efficient turf fertilizer back in 2015.

"We've always promoted sustainable practices," he says. "But over the past few years, more of our customers have asked us how they can have beautiful lawns with fewer chemicals. They're trying to embrace more sustainable lifestyles, which includes the products they—or we—use on their turf."

Recognizing the opportunity to fill a specific niche, Executive Landscaping developed what Annatone calls its "Environmental IPM" (Integrated Pest Management) program. This program is based on providing the right products at the right times, accompanied by regular inspection visits to ensure customer lawns and landscapes are looking their best.

"Our Environmental IPM program combines responsible plant care with a more balanced environmental approach," he explains. "While weed and insect management is certainly an important part of the program, so is plant nutrition. We needed to find a fertilizer that could perform well with less potential environmental impact."

That's when Annatone discovered Koch Turf & Ornamental's DURATION CR® fertilizer. This controlled-release, enhanced efficiency fertilizer uses patented, durable, polymer-coated technology that releases nutrients gradually and effectively. Research shows that when applied to turf, DURATION CR® fertilizer delivers consistent nutrition that lasts for weeks or even months with fewer applications.

"We did our homework and saw the potential benefits of using DURATION CR® fertilizer, especially for those customers looking for a more environmentally friendly alternative," Annatone says.

BETTER TECHNOLOGY, BETTER RESULTS

With longevities and sizes for every application, DURATION CR® fertilizer gave Executive Landscaping the opportunity to tailor fertilizer applications to each site's conditions—various growth cycles, weather, seasonal changes, traffic patterns and other unique situations. Annatone's crews trialed DURATION CR® fertilizer, determined the right rates and longevities for their specific needs, and began initially applying the fertilizer to their commercial properties combined with other elements of their Environmental IPM program.

"After we made the business decision to bring enhanced efficiency fertilizer technology into our operation, it began paying off quickly."

In the spring of 2015, Annatone's account manager, Jeff Beam, and his team used a 30-0-6 formulation with a pre-emergent herbicide for the first application in April/May, which provided crabgrass control. A second application of a 22-0-6 formulation with an insecticide for grub and surface insect control was applied at the end of June/early July. Both applications contained DURATION CR® fertilizer as the nitrogen source.

"After we made the business decision to bring enhanced efficiency fertilizer technology into our operation, it began paying off quickly," Annatone says. "We liked the extended longevities, and we also saw some labor savings because we didn't have to make as many applications. In fact, the labor savings in the spring adds up to about the equivalent of six weeks of application time. That freed our guys up to perform other tasks, which in turn generates more revenue."

Some fertilizers provide too much nutrition right after they're applied, causing flush growth that requires more frequent mowing and clipping disposal. Then, nutrient levels quickly decline, leaving turf without the nutrients it needs to thrive. Because DURATION CR® fertilizer releases nutrients consistently over time, the turf Executive Landscaping maintained experienced even growth with no surge. Annatone didn't have to send out his mowing crews as often, and his customers' lawns looked great throughout the entire season.

"DURATION CR® fertilizer has really performed well for us so far," Annatone says. "As an enhanced efficiency fertilizer, it's not the least expensive alternative, but when you factor in all the variables, it makes complete economic sense for us. We're buying fewer bags, making fewer applications and saving money on labor. Instead of fertilizing four or five times per year, we're fertilizing just twice because DURATION CR® fertilizer provides a steady, controlled release for up to 90 days. And, by including DURATION CR® fertilizer in our Environmental IPM program, we can give our customers the beautiful lawns they want while still respecting their desire for less environmental impact.

"It turned out to be the right choice for us."