



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: THE GREEN MACHINE

BLOOMFIELD BUSINESS CELEBRATES 45TH ANNIVERSARY



In 1974, Joel Caplin started a new business called Lawn King of West Hartford that only provided lawn care services. When in April 1975 he hired a young man named Richard Zito through the Bloomfield High School Work Experience Program, Caplin couldn't have known how much that hiring would improve his business. It was soon to be renamed "The Green Machine" and to see substantial progress.

Rick Zito had grown up on Duncaster Road in Bloomfield, one of six children of Frank and Millie Zito. Frank was a pilot, a builder, and a part-time Bloomfield policeman. Millie loved flowers and plants of all kinds. She convinced local garden clubs to care for several flower gardens on town land and got the town's Beautification Committee started. The flower bed on the southwest corner of the town green is the Millie Zito Memorial Garden. She and Rick studied together to become state-certified Master Gardeners.

In the year 2000, Joel Caplin decided that it was time to retire. Rick Zito, a partner since 1982, was able to buy the company, which by then was doing mowing, installing sprinkler systems, designing landscapes & hardscapes, and plowing. Today his three sons work with him. Ricky Jr. and Greg are also Master Gardeners and work in landscape design and lawn care respectively. Steve oversees hardscaping and excavation. With its headquarters at 1345 Blue Hills Avenue, the company employs about forty people, the majority of whom have been there for ten to twenty-five years. It offers its workers benefits and a 401 (k) plan. Rick expects people to enjoy their work and take satisfaction in making homes and businesses more attractive.

Green Machine customers may be found from southern Massachusetts to southern Connecticut with an emphasis on the Greater Hartford area. The company also does work for the town of Bloomfield (town green and Filley Park, for example) and maintains two public gardens on a volunteer basis (Loeffler Road at Simsbury Road and Cottage Grove at Blue Hills Avenue). An efficient office staff greets the public and

helps everything function smoothly. In season, company employees may work at 700 homes in a week's time. They offer lawn care and fertilization, tick control, landscaping, hardscaping, irrigation, lawn mowing and maintenance, commercial property management, and commercial snow and ice management. The company is accredited in organic land care and has ten other current state licenses and certificates. Its phone is 860-243-9000, and its web site address is

www.greenmachinect.com. This longtime Bloomfield business, a local success story, celebrates its 45th anniversary this year.



Green Machine headquarters
Company photo

Thanks to Rick Zito, Sr., Greg Zito, and Angelia Jarvis, who all contributed to this article.