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For that Special event, try some lawn art

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Have that special event or Grand Opening for one of your best customers. After all the planting, edging, mowing you might consider painting some lawn art. Whether it is festive or seasonal occasion, a nicely painted logo in a featured part of the turf can set a joyous mood.

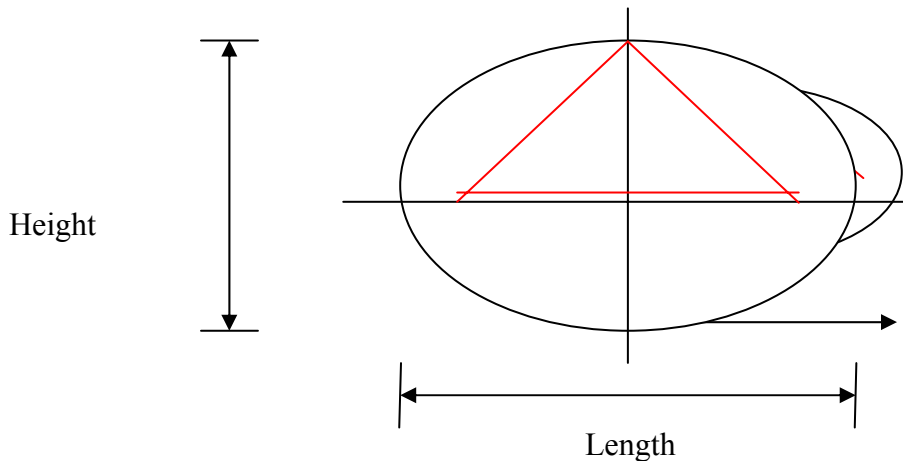
There are several techniques for laying out a design in a lawn. If possible choose a location with a slight upward slope and visible from the main entry way. Stencils can be made from a poly tarp (White is easier to project and mark on). A local sign painter can layout a design with a felt pen, cut little half moons with a razor knife at desired corners and features. After positioning the stencil in the chosen location, use an inverted spray can,(spray chalk is also available) and spray in the cut outs. Use white for white lines, Red for Red and so on. If the same color is used, it can be very difficult to spot the proper dots and fill in. Connect the same color dots, using a hand held holder or long extension will give you better control and accuracy. Light coats of paint will give better coverage and insure you have enough paint to finish the job.

Another method is a grid technique, where gridded lines are drawn across the text of logo and give a number sequence with a scale relationship to the size to be painted on the lawn. By using spray chalk, mark dots on the top, bottom and both sides. Connect the dots with string and use an inverted can of the selected color and mark spots at the reference grids and fill in.

Majority of the time there is not enough time or money to make a stencil, so be creative and use string, cardboard and other objects to freehand. I have a piece of cardboard that is half shape of a bell, and I have also used it for the base on an angel. Most logos are made of shapes, circles, squares, triangles, stars and ellipses. A circle can be made by picking a center point, wrapping the measuring tape around the long extension and run the wheel on the ground all the way around. Squares can be made from using the 3-4-5 method and stars can be made by using a 7-6 ratio.

Ellipses can be made from using a simple formula. For this, create an axis, measure and mark the desired length and height. Using half of the length, measure from the top of the vertical axis to each lateral axis. Tie a string connecting both the new end points and the one top point. Remove the

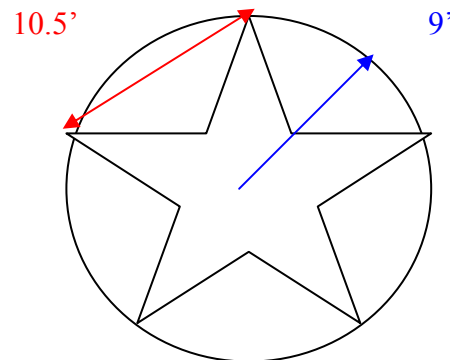
top pin and use your aerosol hand painter to follow the taut string around until the ellipse is complete.
 (See diagram. Editor's note, red is the string connecting all of the points)



A 5 point Star can be developed in a couple of ways. The angle is 72 degrees if you are able to acquire that measurement. It also has five lines of equal distance.

One of the easiest methods is to use a tape measure from the middle of the star. This will be the radius point to measure the point of the star. Mark one point to start with and measure to the end of the radius to the next point of the star. The best way to describe the process is using a 7:6 ratio. Multiply the radius of the circle by 7 and then divide by 6.

For example, on a circle with a 9-foot radius, you'd have $9 \text{ feet} \times 7 = 63 \text{ feet}$ divided by $6 = 10.5 \text{ feet}$. Start at the top of the circle and measure to each side of the circle until the 10.5 foot mark intersects with the arc. Repeat from that point to the next 10.5 foot mark until each of the five points of the star is marked. (See diagram below.)



Borrow the football number stencils to help with date, ages and other numbered meanings. Black "40's" are probably the most popular statement lawn art design and easiest. Some of the other popular logos are graduations, seasonal, Christmas, Halloween and Birthdays. By using a piece

of cardboard with a square or rectangle cut out, a consistent size and spacing of text can be freehand. Use a string to line up the letters and use the edge as a spacing guideline.

Be careful of which inverted cans of paint that you use, as some of the propellant can discolor the grass. There are also different types of tips on the cans, a pin line style and a fan spray. A pin line can help layout the design and also can be used for fine highlighting. The fan tip will give a wider spray pattern and the width and coverage will vary as to how far from the grass it is sprayed. Caution, Black or other dark colors can also be harmful to the grass blades if the area is exposed to hot direct sunlight. The availability of an airless or compressed air sprayer can allow you to paint larger areas and get better paint coverage. Pump up sprayers are also convenient if many colors are used and are less expensive. The drying time is usually longer as more volume of paint is applied with a small amount of pressure. Replace the cone style nozzle with a flat tip to create a sharper edge and more even fill in. 2 X 4's can be used to form a straight edge and paint lids can help make smaller circles.

For longer lasting logos, start mowing more frequently before the event and mow a little lower just before painting. For logos that you would like to remove faster, keep mowing height consistent and more a little lower to remove the painted grass and apply a liquid iron or fast release fertilizer a couple of weeks before the event.

Doug Phillips of Abby's Pizza, based in Eugene, Oregon, had me paint their logo on the burm of the 10th green at Roseburg Country Club to highlight their 25th anniversary of their golf tournament. Now it is what he can do top last years Lawn art.

Be creative, have fun and take lots of pictures.

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