

I Am A Landscaper: Ben Collinsworth

The logo for 'Turf' features the word in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'u'.The logo for 'Tree Services' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf icon is placed above the 'e' in 'Services'. Below the main text is the tagline 'Taking Tree Care to New Heights' in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for 'Turf DesignBuild' features the word 'Turf' in a small, orange, sans-serif font above the word 'Design'. 'Design' is in a black, sans-serif font, and 'Build' is in a large, bold, orange, sans-serif font.The logo for 'PLOW' is in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly slanted to the right.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

Ben Collinsworth, owner and founder of Native Land Design in Austin, Texas, has built his man-and-a-mower business into one that exceeds \$10 million in annual sales and employs 200 people from the community. Even when he's not working, Collinsworth says he is very "production oriented" and doesn't spend much time sitting around. He goes to the gym regularly and always finds projects around the house that need to be done. Of course, with three young kids – all under the age of 11 – Collinsworth says he stays very busy spending time with his family. We recently caught up with Collinsworth to find out a bit more about what makes him tick.

✖ When I get a chance to travel, I enjoy meeting up with other landscape friends around the country. Our peer group does it every quarter. We used to just travel to one another's offices, but now we try to pick a location where we all meet up. We've been to Montana and did some fly fishing; to Los Cabos, which we linked with a National Association of Landscape Professionals event; and to Colorado to mountain bike. We try to mix business with a little bit of down time to relax.

I constantly get asked how I am doing this as a professional career when it's something the guy down the street is doing, too. It's up to us individually to present ourselves professionally and change the perception. When most people think of landscaping, they think of the guy that charges \$25 to cut their grass. They don't think of the company that manages large projects or huge HOAs.

It doesn't matter where you're going; it's the people that define the experience. Our peer group is a great group and that helps me get a lot out of our trips. I also travel with my family four or five times a year, even if it's just a short getaway.

Fast cars are my guilty pleasure. I've done all the car experiences and had the opportunity to drive some incredible cars. Austin is a really cool town

for cars. We have Circuit of the Americas here, which is the only race track for Formula One Cars. It's also a beautiful place that you can rent cars at for a driver experience.

I've got a couple Shelby Mustangs that can go pretty darn fast. Here in Texas we have the fastest posted speed limit road, which is 85 mph, and it just so happens to run between my house and the airport.

We're creating jobs in our community and putting out a good payroll. In fact, we're the third largest payroll producer in our city, but people are absolutely shocked to find that out. They simply can't wrap their head around the idea of a landscaper being that large.



At the end of the day, if people don't get it, I'm OK with that. I used to constantly fight it, but I've come to terms with the fact that some people just don't get it. Whether they understand the level of professionalism or not, I'm proud to be lumped in with the blue collar, hardworking professionals out there who are "just cutting the grass." I started out as the guy who cut neighbors' lawns, and I'm proud that those are my roots. It's a good, honest living based on hard work.