Grow That Local

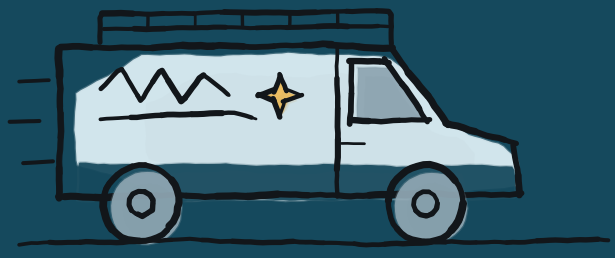
a free guide

The landscaper storm and season playbook

What to post, text and mail before the spring rush, through heat and storms, and into the snow months.

For landscaping business owners planning their busy and slow months.

- 9 short sections in 6 parts
- 36 things you can do in the next 24 hours
- An example in every section
- Sources for every figure



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Before you start

Landscaping has the clearest calendar of any trade. Grass starts growing, the phone rings, and a few weeks later most homeowners have picked their crew for the year. Then come heat, dry spells, storms that drop limbs, leaves, the first freeze and, in many places, snow.

This guide takes you through that year one moment at a time. Each section says what homeowners search for and worry about right then, gives you a post, a text and a postcard to copy, and ends with a checklist you can finish in 24 hours.

Three rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number has a public source you can check, listed at the end. When we didn't have one, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. None of them are real customers, yards or results.
- Texts go only to customers who've agreed to hear from you by text. Say who it's from, and stop the moment someone replies STOP or asks you to. The FCC says consent is needed for automated texts to cell phones and can be taken back at any time, in any reasonable way (FCC, fcc.gov).

The search phrases in each section are examples of how homeowners word things. To see your own area's pattern, look up "lawn care" or "landscaping" for your state in Google Trends (trends.google.com). It shows interest on a 0 to 100 scale, compared with all searches in that place and time, not a count of searches (Google Trends Help, support.google.com).



Part 1

Six weeks before spring

1 Set your spring date from the last freeze, then count back

The moment. Mid to late winter. Your crews are on snow or off for the season, and spring feels far away. It's closer than it looks.

NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information publish a map of the average date of the last spring freeze (32°F or below) for every part of the country, built from 30 years of weather records (1991 to 2020). NOAA is clear that averages aren't forecasts: each year can be earlier or later (NOAA NCEI, ncei.noaa.gov). Your last freeze date is a good anchor for spring cleanups, first mows and irrigation start-ups. Six weeks before it is when your marketing starts.

What homeowners search and worry about. Not much yet. A few early planners search "lawn care service near me" or "spring cleanup cost." Most are thinking about snow. Your current customers are the ones to reach now, before anyone else does.

Example: what to text (made up), to every current customer.

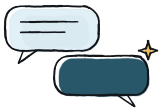
> Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. We're setting spring routes now. Want to keep your same day this year? Reply YES and you're on. Reply STOP to opt out.

Example: what to post (made up).

> Spring routes are filling for [town]. Current customers get first pick of days through [date], then we open to new yards on the streets we already mow.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look up your area's average last spring freeze on NOAA's map and write the date down.
- [ ] Count back six weeks. Put "send re-sign texts" on that date in your calendar.
- [ ] Count how many open slots each route day has for spring.
- [ ] Write and save your re-sign text and your "spring routes filling" post.



Part 2

The spring rush

2 The first warm weekend: the phone goes from quiet to too busy

The moment. The first warm Saturday. People step outside, look at the yard and pick up the phone. For a few weeks, you'll get more calls than you can price.

GTL estimate: most homeowners pick their mowing company for the year in a short window, between the first warm weekend and the first few cuts. Our reasoning: grass growth forces the decision, and few people switch once they're on a schedule.

What homeowners search and worry about. "Lawn mowing service near me," "spring cleanup," "mulch installation," "how much does lawn care cost." The worries: will anyone call back, and will they actually show up every week?

Example: what to text (made up), sent when you miss a call.

> **Sorry we missed you, we're out on a route. Text us your address and what you need (mowing, cleanup, mulch) and we'll send a price today.**

Example: what to post (made up).

> **Spring cleanups booking now on [street area] and around [town]. Send your address and we'll price it from the map the same day.**

Example: when a route is full (made up).

> **This route is full for spring. Want to be first on the waitlist if a spot opens?**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back on your business line.
- [ ] Decide who answers price requests and how fast. Aim for same day.
- [ ] Set a sign-up limit for each route day, so you don't promise yards you can't mow on time.
- [ ] Start a simple waitlist on your phone or in a spreadsheet.

3 Irrigation start-up: the spring text every sprinkler yard needs

The moment. Right after your last freeze date. Every yard with a sprinkler system needs to be turned on, checked zone by zone and set for spring.

There's a real reason to check. A leaky or broken system can waste up to 25,000 gallons of water and $280 over a six-month watering season (EPA WaterSense, Sprinkler Spruce-Up, epa.gov). That's a line homeowners understand.

What homeowners search and worry about. "Sprinkler start up," "sprinkler repair near me," "why is my water bill so high." The worry is a broken head or a stuck zone they won't notice until the lawn browns.

Example: what to text (made up), to every irrigation customer.

> **Time to wake up your sprinklers. We'll turn the system on, check every zone, fix broken heads and set the timer for spring. Want us to book you? Reply YES, or STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to post (made up).

> **Turning on sprinklers this week. If a zone isn't spraying or one spot is always soggy, let us know and we'll check it while we're on your street.**

Do it in 24 hours

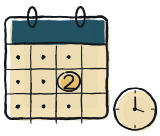
- [ ] List every customer with a sprinkler system. Your crew knows which yards have heads.
- [ ] Pick the week you'll send the start-up text, just after your last freeze date.
- [ ] Add irrigation start-up and repair to your website and Google profile services.
- [ ] If your state licenses irrigation work and you hold a license, put the number on your site.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 25 customers texted

Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Win-back texts: growthatlocal.com/services/win-back-texts



Part 3

Heat, dry spells and storms

4 A heat wave or a dry spell

The moment. A week of heat in the forecast, or no rain for weeks. Lawns brown, new plants wilt, and your crew is working in the worst of it.

The National Weather Service's HeatRisk forecast shows heat danger for your area up to seven days ahead, on a scale from 0 (little or no risk) to 4 (extreme) (NWS HeatRisk, wpc.ncep.noaa.gov). Use it two ways: to plan early starts and water breaks for your crew, and to post before the heat arrives.

What homeowners search and worry about. "Lawn turning brown," "how often to water grass in heat," "new plants wilting," "is my lawn dead or dormant." The worry is that the money they spent in spring is dying.

Example: what to post (made up).

> **Hot week ahead. Water early in the morning, deeply and less often, and raise your mower height a notch. A lawn that browns in the heat is often dormant, not dead. Ask us before you replace it.**

Example: what to text (made up), to customers with new plantings.

> **Hi [first name], [business] here. Big heat coming this week. Your new shrubs need a deep watering every couple of days until it breaks. Want us to check the sprinkler timer while we're there? Reply STOP to opt out.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Check the HeatRisk forecast and move route start times earlier on hot days.
- [ ] Post your watering tips the day before the heat starts.
- [ ] Text every customer with new plants or a fresh install from this season.
- [ ] Offer sprinkler timer checks on routes that week.

5 After a storm: limbs down and yards a mess

The moment. The morning after high winds or a big thunderstorm. Branches are in yards, debris is in beds, and people want it gone before the weekend.

What homeowners search and worry about. "Storm debris cleanup," "tree limb removal near me," "yard cleanup after storm." They worry about cost and whether a big limb is dangerous.

Be clear about what you do and don't do. If a limb is on or near a power line, tell the homeowner to stay away and call the utility. If a tree is split or leaning, and you're not set up and insured for tree work, say so and refer them to an arborist. Being honest about your limits is what makes them call you for the rest.

Example: what to post (made up).

> **Lots of branches down on the west side after last night's storm. We're booking yard cleanups this week: limbs cut up and hauled, beds and lawns cleared. Anything touching a power line, call the utility first, not us.**

Example: what to text (made up), to maintenance customers.

> **Hi [first name], [business] here. Hope everyone's OK after the storm. If you've got branches down, we can clear them on your mowing day this week. Reply YES and we'll add it. Reply STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to mail (made up). You don't need to. Your trailer on the street doing cleanups is the ad. Leave a door hanger on the neighbors of every storm cleanup.

Do it in 24 hours (after the storm)

- [ ] Post that you're booking storm cleanups, with the power line warning.
- [ ] Text maintenance customers in the hit area.
- [ ] Decide your cleanup price per load or per hour before the calls come.
- [ ] Put door hangers on the trailer for every storm cleanup stop.



Part 4

Fall: leaves, the first freeze and winter sign-ups

6 Six weeks before the first fall freeze

The moment. Late summer. The first fall freeze sets your deadline for irrigation blowouts, the end of mowing and the start of leaf season.

NOAA's map of the first fall freeze shows the median date for each area: the date by which a freeze has happened in five of every ten years, based on 1991 to 2020 records. NOAA calls these maps a generalization, not a promise (NOAA NCEI, ncei.noaa.gov).

What homeowners search and worry about. "Lawn aeration," "overseeding," "sprinkler blowout," "leaf removal service." The worry: will the sprinkler lines crack over winter, and who'll get the leaves before the HOA complains?

Example: what to text (made up), to irrigation customers.

> **First hard freeze is usually around [date] here. We'll blow out your lines so nothing cracks over winter. Reply YES for a spot, or STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to post (made up).

> **Fall aeration and seeding dates open for [town]. It's the best time of year to thicken a thin lawn. Leaf cleanups booking for late October and November.**

Example: what to mail (made up). A postcard to your route streets: "Leaves, aeration and sprinkler blowouts. One crew, one visit, on the street you already see us on."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look up your area's median first fall freeze on NOAA's map and write the date down.
- [ ] Count back six weeks. Put "send fall texts" on that date.
- [ ] Save the blowout text and pick the week you'll send it.
- [ ] Price leaf cleanups now so your crew can quote on the spot.

7 Sell winter before winter: snow and holiday lights

The moment. September and October. Your mowing customers are still seeing you every week, and that's when to sell them what you do in winter.

GTL estimate: most commercial snow contracts are signed before the first snowfall. Our reasoning: a property manager can't risk an unplowed lot, so they lock in a crew in fall, and good crews are full by the first storm.

What homeowners and managers search and worry about. "Snow removal service near me," "snow plowing contract," "holiday light installation." Managers worry about slip-and-fall claims. Homeowners worry about being stuck in the driveway.

Example: what to text (made up), to your mowing list.

> **We're taking a small number of snow and holiday light customers this winter. Current lawn customers get first pick. Want a price for either one? Reply STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to send property managers (made up). A one-page sheet: services, equipment, areas served, a certificate of insurance, and a sample storm report with time-stamped photos of every plow and salt visit.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide which winter services you'll offer and how many customers your crews can handle.
- [ ] Add snow removal and holiday lights to your website and Google profile.
- [ ] Send the winter text above to your mowing list.
- [ ] List five property managers to approach before the first snow.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A profile check-up with 10+ fixes

So your profile shows winter work in winter. Google Business Profile is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Google Business Profile: growthatlocal.com/services/google-business-profile



Part 5

The winter months

8 The first snow, or the quiet weeks if you don't plow

The moment. December to February. If you plow, the first snow is your storm day. If you don't, it's your quietest stretch, and the time to fill spring.

What homeowners search and worry about. If you plow: "snow removal near me," "driveway plowing." If you don't: "landscape design," "patio ideas," "landscapers near me" from people planning spring projects. Both groups worry about who'll be available when they need it.

Keep your Google profile open if you work in winter. Google asks businesses closed for seven days or more in a row to mark themselves "Temporarily closed" (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). If you sell snow, lights or pruning, you're open. Say so.

Example: what to post (made up), if you plow.

> **First snow of the year. Crews were out at 4am on our contract lots and driveways. Every visit is photographed and sent to the owner. Still taking a few driveways on the north side.**

Example: what to text (made up), if you don't plow.

> **Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. Planning anything new for the yard this spring? We're booking design visits in February, before the rush. Reply YES for a time, or STOP to opt out.**

Example: what to mail (made up). In late January, a postcard to the streets around last year's projects: "Patio, beds or a new lawn this spring? Book your design visit in February."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide if you'll stay open this winter and set your Google hours to match.
- [ ] If you plow, post a photo after the first snow.
- [ ] If you don't, text last year's project customers and quotes that went quiet about spring design visits.
- [ ] Ask winter customers for reviews. Spring shoppers look at the last three months.



Part 6

Your year on one page

9 A landscaper's month-by-month plan

The moment. Any slow afternoon. Put the whole year on one sheet so the next text goes out on time even in the rush.

This one is for a made-up landscaper in a place with real winters. In warmer places, shift spring earlier and swap snow for pruning and design work.

Months	What's happening	Post	Text	Mail
Jan to Feb	Snow, or quiet	Snow photos, or spring design ideas	Re-sign texts, six weeks before the last freeze	Spring design postcard
Mar to Apr	Spring rush	Spring cleanups, routes filling	Irrigation start-ups, missed-call text-back	Route-street postcard
May to Aug	Mowing, projects, heat	Watering tips before heat waves	New-planting care texts	Door hangers around projects
Sep to Oct	Fall work, winter sign-ups	Aeration, seeding, leaves	Blowouts, snow and lights offers	Fall services postcard
Nov to Dec	Leaves, lights, first snow	Storm and snow updates	Light takedown bookings	Holiday card to customers

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Copy the table and change the months to match your last and first freeze dates.
- [ ] Put each row's first action on your calendar, six weeks before that row starts.
- [ ] Share it with your crew leads so everyone knows what's coming.
- [ ] Set a reminder to check it on the first of every month.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your ad, designed and shown on the card

Ready for your spring rush. Neighborhood postcard is $400 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Neighborhood postcard: growthatlocal.com/services/neighborhood-postcards



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you do these today, next spring starts before the grass does:

- [ ] Look up your last spring freeze and first fall freeze on NOAA's maps (sections 1, 6).
- [ ] Write and save your re-sign text (section 1).
- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back (section 2).
- [ ] List every customer with a sprinkler system (section 3).
- [ ] Copy the month-by-month table and fill in your dates (section 9).



Where to go next

This guide comes from The Landscaper Marketing Playbook, our free guide to the whole job of getting more landscaping work: your website, your Google profile, reviews, posts, routes, postcards and the seasons.

Two free tools go with it. Is your business ready for busy season? gives you a score and the gaps to close first. Your slow months shows how much work you're short in winter and how many jobs fill the gap.

To see the months people near you search for a landscaper, read When Your Town Searches for a Landscaper: Your Busy Season Calendar.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does this work for landscapers every month. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Win-back texts. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted. Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Win-back texts — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
Bring past customers back for their next job. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted.

Websites — **from $1 a month · 7-day full refund**
A fast, good-looking site that turns visitors into calls. Free sample: a preview of your new site.

Google Business Profile — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Show up in the map when neighbors search for what you do. Free sample: a profile check-up with 10+ fixes.

Review requests — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
More 5-star reviews, without the awkward asking. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent.

Social media posts — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Fresh posts every week, made from your real job photos. Free sample: two weeks of posts, ready to go.

Email newsletter — **$50 a month · 7-day full refund**
Stay top of mind, so past customers call you first. Free sample: your first newsletter, written.

SEO — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Climb Google for the searches that bring in jobs. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes.

Neighborhood postcard — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Your ad in mailboxes across nice neighborhoods. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card.

Monthly report card — **free**
See how you stack up against local competitors. Free sample: your first report card, this month.

Text us at (423) 924-2014, or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Sources

Every statistic above, with where to check it:

1. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, "When to Expect Your Last Spring Freeze": average last spring freeze (32°F or below) from the 1991 to 2020 US Climate Normals; averages are not forecasts. ncei.noaa.gov (sections 1, 9)
2. US EPA WaterSense, Sprinkler Spruce-Up: a leaky or broken system can waste up to 25,000 gallons of water and $280 over a six-month irrigation season. epa.gov (section 3)
3. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, "When to Expect Your First Fall Freeze": median first fall freeze date (a freeze in five of ten years), from the 1991 to 2020 US Climate Normals. ncei.noaa.gov (sections 6, 9)

Rules, tools and guidance cited (not statistics):

- FCC, Stop Unwanted Robocalls and Texts (consent for automated texts to cell phones; consent can be revoked at any time in any reasonable way): fcc.gov (before you start)
- Google Trends Help, how Trends data is normalized (0 to 100, relative to all searches in that place and time): support.google.com (before you start)
- National Weather Service HeatRisk forecast (0 to 4 scale, seven days ahead): wpc.ncep.noaa.gov (section 4)
- Google Business Profile Help, special hours (up to 6 days in a row) and "Temporarily closed" for 7 or more days: support.google.com (section 8)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. The search phrases in each section are examples of common wording, not measured search volumes (all sections). Reasoning: they're how homeowners describe these jobs; Google Trends shows the real pattern for your area.
2. Start spring marketing six weeks before your last freeze date (section 1). Reasoning: re-sign texts and route planning need a few weeks, and the spring window for picking a crew is short.
3. Most homeowners pick their mowing company for the year in a short spring window (section 2). Reasoning: grass growth forces the decision, and few switch once they're on a schedule.
4. Answer spring price requests the same day (section 2). Reasoning: in the rush, homeowners ask several landscapers at once and book whoever prices first.
5. Most commercial snow contracts are signed before the first snowfall (section 7). Reasoning: property managers can't risk an unplowed lot, so they lock in a crew in fall.

want it done for you?

Every part of this guide is something we do.

Each one starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay. Text us at (423) 924-2014 or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Grow *That* Local