

Contractor Focus: Lincoln Landscaping, Inc.

Michael E. Kolenut, President of Lincoln Landscaping Inc., grew up in Hawthorne, NJ. His first experiences in the industry were when he worked for Goffle Brook Farms and Garden Center, working retail, the landscape crew, and of course Christmas, where he handmade all the wreaths for over 10 years. The oldest of six, Mike's work ethic was set in early.



Mike attended William Paterson University, graduating in 1977 with an Economics degree. He started Lincoln Landscaping in 1974, to pay for his college expenses and in part to overcome a great physical challenge. Mike was paralyzed in an accident and after two years of intensive therapy, he started the company to get back into the shape he was in prior to the accident.

Incorporated in 1981, Mike's wife Colleen came on board to manage the finances of a growing company.

Environmental stewardship and learning how to manage the landscape, has long been a passion of Mike's. He first became interested in Organics after his association with Blue Meadow Farms owner, John Meeks. Shortly thereafter, Barry Draycott, owner of Tech Terra Environmental, began a series of workshops educating landscapers on the Organic process and how to make it work. As a friend and mentor, Barry began Mike's journey of a cross country mission to take every worthwhile class at colleges throughout the country and countless workshops with the top educators in the field. He honed his craft and is now considered to be one of the top "Pure Organic" companies in the NY, NJ metro area. Lincoln Landscaping is a NOFA registered Organic Company and Mike has the distinct honor to teach a portion of the NJ Organic Land Care program at Rutgers University, where he helps other landscapers who are trying to learn a better way to serve their clients. Mike's passion has also taken him into athletic field management.

Mike's son, Kris Kolenut is now the General Manager of Lincoln Landscaping. He too grew up in Bergen County, NJ and has been helping his dad for as long as he can remember. Kris says, "In high school I had some other job experiences (supermarkets, restaurants, etc.) but none of those ever felt right. Once summer hit, it was back to landscaping." After high school Kris spent a few more years working with his

father, and really got an opportunity to learn how it all works. But Kris wanted to learn more.

After moving around the country and experiencing the northwest and southwest, he found himself just outside of Asheville, North Carolina where he was fortunate to get a job at a therapeutic wilderness program for teenagers. This incredibly challenging and rewarding job opened Kris' eyes to the power of our spiritual connection with nature.

For the next few years, Kris became dedicated to helping people get out and form a bond with their environment. He guided canoe, kayak, extended backpacking/camping trips, fly fishing, you name it.

During that time, he also attended Brevard College and graduated with a degree in Wilderness Leadership and Experiential Education. After school he was still guiding, but also spent a lot of time working as a landscaper, farmer, and doing invasive species management in some of the most beautiful terrain in the country.

Kris says, "I had been very proud of my dad for all the great work he had been doing for a while. I was working at a large brewery down in North Carolina on their grounds crew and was able to get them set up with a composting system, a 250 gallon compost tea brewer, and a turf management plan. My father helped me along the way with advice and put me in touch with his community of people and I was just so inspired by all the work they are doing."

Lincoln Landscaping offers complete integrated pest management and weed control strategies, offering Organic application models that result in dense, vibrant turf. In addition to organic lawn care, maintenance and consulting, Lincoln Landscaping offers landscape design/build and hardscaping to residential, commercial and municipal clients.

For more info, visit www.lincolnlandscapinginc.com.

