aesthetically-pleasing display elements, and if you plan to use DDE, you'll need to install SHARE.EXE before running *Windows*.

The folks at Peachtree have been turning out accounting software long enough that we feel no inclination to question the functionality of *Peachtree Accounting for Windows*. This program stands above the others in this review in its ability to provide detailed audit trails, control such minutiae as customer-specific discount schedules, and recover from problems— there's disk-based error logging. There's also a forms designer, comma-delimited data import/export, and the ability to maintain payroll tables manually, and simply. *Peachtree Accounting for Windows* is even ready and licensed for network use, right out of the box, and automatically formats your dates properly based on whether you use an American state or Canadian province in your company's setup information.

Even so, this program is just too difficult to learn and use. The Quick Start Guide makes too many assumptions about the accounting expertise of its readers, setting up *Peachtree Accounting for Windows* is a real chore, and the menus are atrocious. We aren't sure whether to be more annoyed by specific examples like the need to go through a selection called "Accounts Receivable Reports" between "Print" and "Invoices", or a generally sloppy feel and appearance; the Maintenance menu has fourteen widely disparate choices, which are grouped neither by function, alphabetical priority, nor even the length of their names—it's just a mess.

Fully installed with the *SmarText* runtime, *Peachtree Accounting for Windows* uses a bit over 5.5 megabytes of disk space—4 MB of that taken up by the hypertext tool. You can unload *SmarText* by issuing a special deinstallation command, and that's fortunate; everything goes in a single directory. No icons are created by the installation program unless you install *Peachtree Accounting for Windows* from Program Manager, and the process makes several changes to your system: two *SmarText*-related .INI files are left in your *Windows* directory, a *Peachtree Accounting for Windows*-specific section is placed in WIN.INI, an entry is added to SYSTEM.INI that is significant only to users running *Windows* on a network, and the file WBTRCALL.DLL is installed to make use of *Peachtree Accounting for Windows*'s *BTRIEVE* data engine possible.

The parting thought is this: before you touch a copy of *Peachtree Accounting for Windows*, make sure you take really good notes.

Teknon Accounting 1.31
Teknon Corporation
8603 E. Royal Palm Road
Scottsdale AZ 85258
602-596-1500
$249

QuickBooks
Intuit
P.O. Box 3014
155 Linfield Avenue
Menlo Park CA 94026
800-624-8742
$139.95 ($179.95 w/QuickPay)

M.Y.O.B. 3.0
Teleware Inc.
300 Roundhill Drive
Rockaway NJ 07866
201-586-2200
$249

Peachtree Accounting 5.0
for Windows
Peachtree Software
1505 Pavillion Place
Norcross GA 30093
800-247-3224
$99

Excel 4.0
Microsoft Corporation

Last year, Microsoft released *Excel 3.0*. Probably as much as anything, it was responsible for the sudden and explosive acceptance of *Windows*. Certainly, it was the most universally-praised piece of applications software ever. **Was** is the operative word. With version four, *Excel* has ascended to new heights in the world of software stars, and the competition has an even more distant target to shoot at than before.

One thing, and only one, is distressing. In the quest to become as close to all things to everyone as it can, a full installation of *Excel* has grown to occupy more than ten megabytes of disk space, including a main executable file over 2.7 MB in size—up from 1.2 MB. Far from being a mere spreadsheet, *Excel* is now more of a development environment that happens to have a powerful mathematical engine at its core. This is not a bad thing, but if you allow the helpfully customizable installation program to establish residency for everything in the package, the ancillary code bogs down *Excel 4.0* during load to the point that it takes nearly three times as long to start as version three.

In its last release, *Excel* introduced us to the ToolBar, an idea that spawned Lotus' SmartIcons, WordPerfect Corporation's Button Bar, and a host of other implementations for instant access to often-used features. As great as it was, it was static, and users wanted more. *Excel 4.0* lets you change what's on your main ToolBar, make it go away entirely, and create alternates or use the ones that ship with the product. Whatever tools you choose, the ToolBars can be placed anywhere on screen. *Excel 4.0* has also improved on version 3.0's ability to translate *1-2-3* 2.x macros properly, and now imports the formatting from that program's accompanying WYSIWYG files accurately.