

IRRIGATION &

JUNE 2019

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COMMUNICATION + COLLABORATION = SUCCESSFUL IRRIGATION

KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN BETWEEN LANDSCAPE AND IRRIGATION PROFESSIONALS IS CRITICAL IN CREATING NEW, WELL-FUNCTIONING LANDSCAPE PROJECTS.

+ INSIDE

Her career has opened doors for others, p. 20

What every distributor wants you to know, p. 28

Tips for taking ticks out of the equation, p. 38

Find out why drip irrigation is growing.
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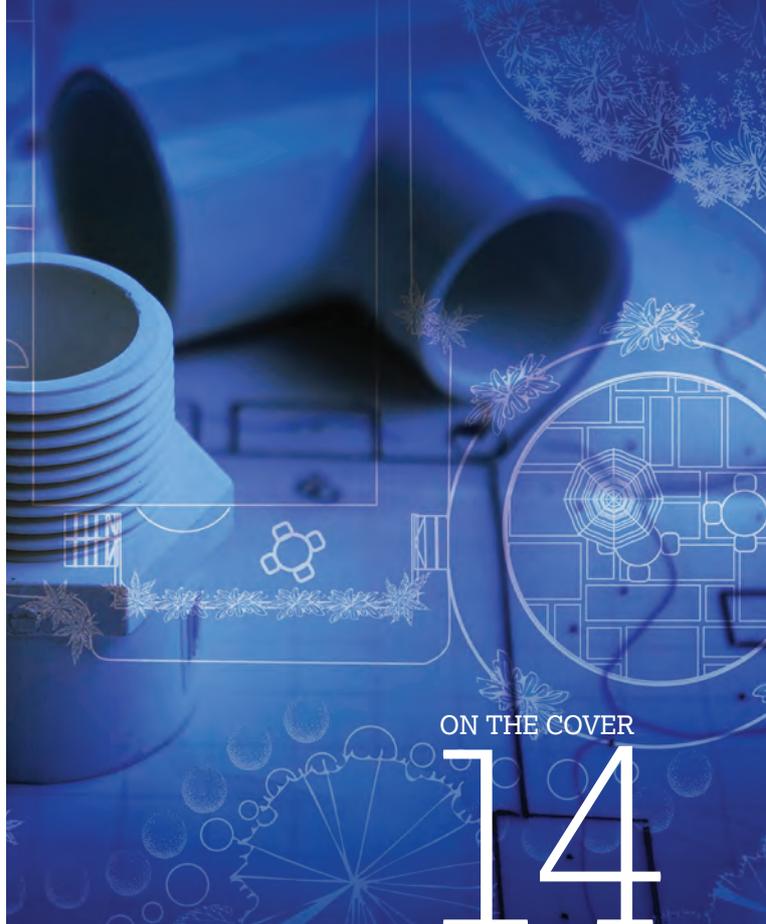
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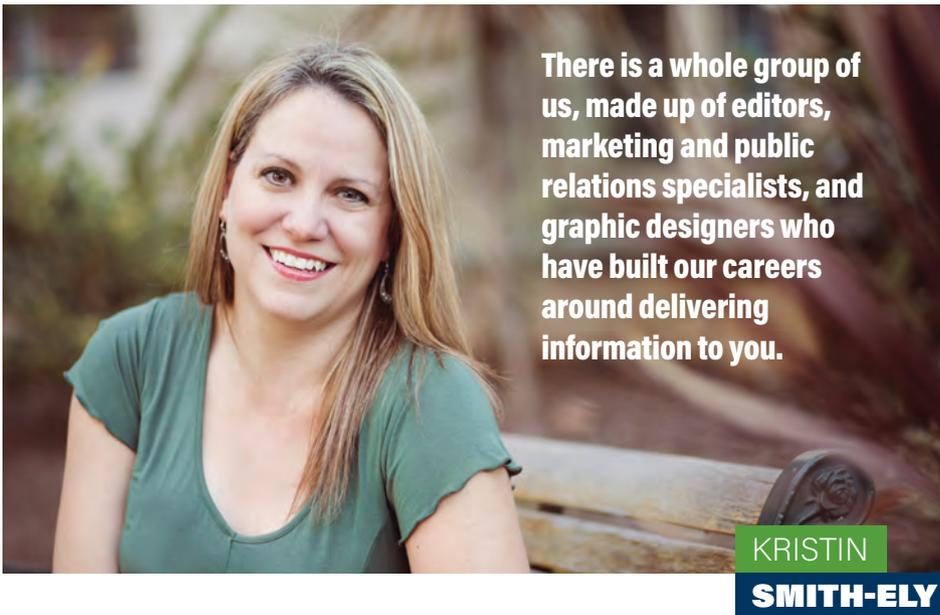
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The latest news

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There is a whole group of us, made up of editors, marketing and public relations specialists, and graphic designers who have built our careers around delivering information to you.

KRISTIN SMITH-ELY

Working for you

Most likely, you subscribe to a number of newsletters, magazines and promotional emails about landscape and irrigation. You read green industry news online or in print and see advertisements and messages from manufacturers of mowers, power equipment and irrigation supplies on a constant basis.

But did you ever stop to think about what goes into all those messages you receive and who is behind them?

Believe it or not, there is a whole group of us, made up of editors, marketing and public relations specialists, and graphic designers who have built our careers around delivering information to you. Many of us belong to the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association.

I recently returned from TOCA's 30th Annual Meeting, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Nearly 60 green industry communications professionals attended. And while we each work for our various different companies, we all share a common goal — to reach you, the landscape, irrigation and maintenance professional.

As a publication that serves the green industry, *Irrigation & Green Industry* wants to understand what matters to you so that the information and articles we share will be helpful. We also want to make sure we're communicating that information effectively and accurately.

At the meeting, we heard from broadcasting industry legend and Carolina Panthers announcer Mick Mixon who shared some great advice on conducting interviews.

We also got a behind-the-scenes look at the Quail Hollow Club during the Wells Fargo Championship golf tournament. It was impressive learning how the grounds crew spends the wee hours of the morning making sure the greens, bunkers and sand traps meet the high standards of the PGA Tour.

TOCA also honors the efforts of its members with awards. In IGIN's first year of entry, we came away with several awards for editorial content and design. I hope this is just the beginning of the great things we can accomplish, but we can't do it without you.

We always want to know what we can do better and what topics you want us to cover. Please contact us with your ideas. 🌿

IRRIGATION & green industry™

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INVESTORS CORNER

SiteOne acquires Canadian landscape distributor

SiteOne Landscape Supply Inc., a wholesale distributor of landscape supplies based in Roswell, Georgia, has announced the acquisition of Fisher's Landscape Depot, a distributor of hardscape and landscape supplies with two locations in western Ontario.

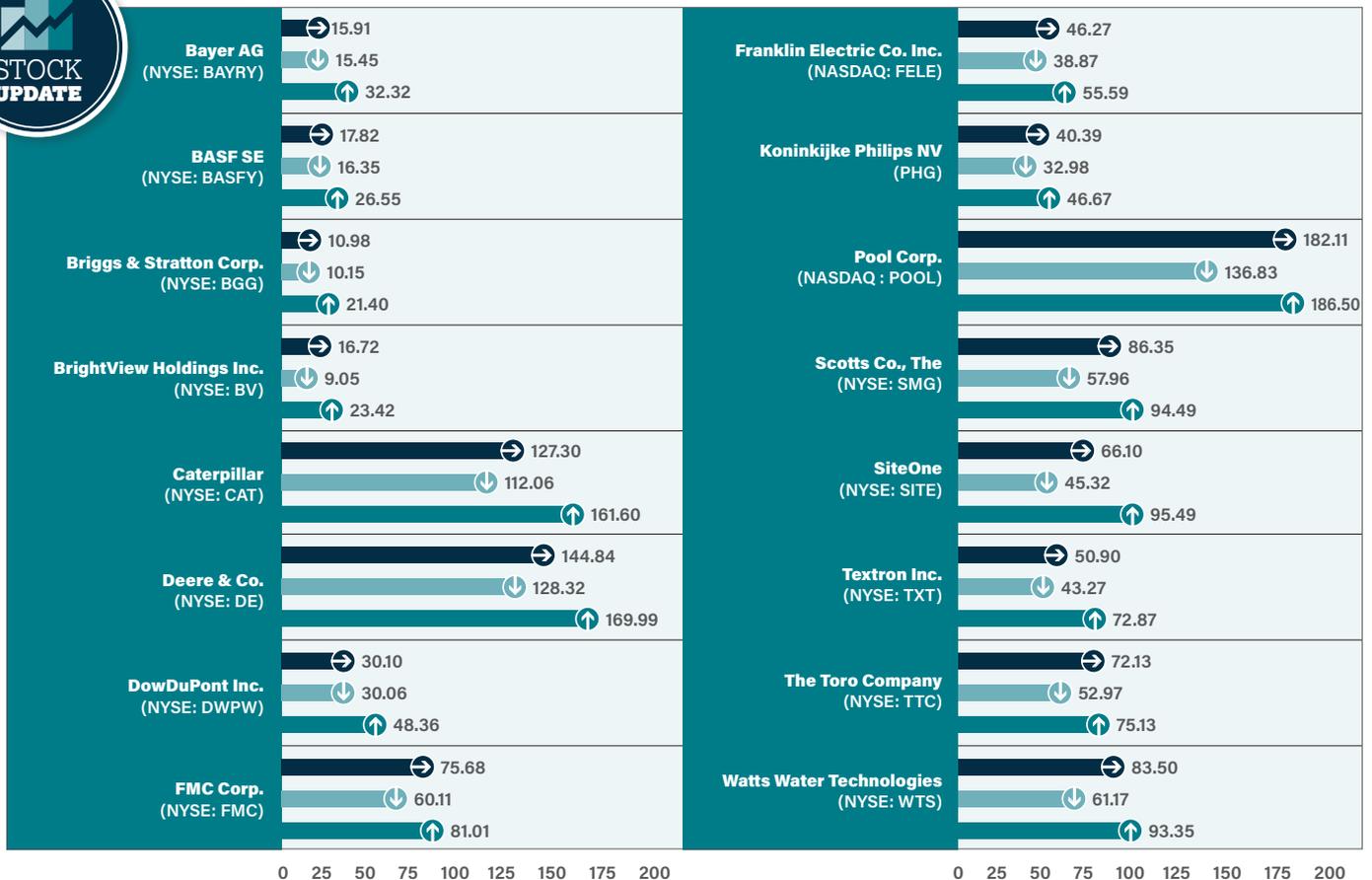
"Fisher's Landscape Depot is a natural fit with SiteOne as they add hardscapes and landscape supplies to our existing product offerings in Ontario," says Doug Black, chairman and CEO of SiteOne Landscape Supply.

"Fisher's Landscape Depot is a natural fit with SiteOne as they add hardscapes and landscape supplies to our existing product offerings in Ontario." — Doug Black

"Fisher's Landscape Depot has an extremely talented and seasoned team committed to delivering exceptional customer service, and we are excited to have them join the SiteOne family," adds Black. "This is our fourth acquisition to date in 2019 as we continue to expand the number of markets in which we provide a full range of products and services to our customers."



SiteOne Landscape Supply is the largest wholesale distributor of landscape supplies in the United States and has a growing presence in Canada. Its customers are primarily residential and commercial landscape professionals who specialize in the design, installation and maintenance of lawns, gardens, golf courses and other outdoor spaces. 🌿



↔ Last trade (5-15-19) ↓ 52-week low ↑ 52-week high; Source: Bloomberg.com

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Pest Control

Weed Man adds mosquito control to services

Weed Man, a lawn care franchise company based in Oshawa, Ontario, has announced the addition of mosquito control to its list of services.

Weed Man says it can now better protect its customers, their pets and their lawns from the annoyance of mosquitoes — notoriously known for carrying and transmitting harmful diseases such as Zika and West Nile.

The newest offering also allows the franchise to better meet all its customers' needs and provide them with a one-stop-shop for all their lawn care services, according to the company.

"The Weed Man promise has always been to treat every lawn as if it was our own, so we have been working hard to roll out this new service to continue being our customers' first choice for a healthy, pest-free lawn worth enjoying," says Weed Man COO Jennifer Lemcke. "Our franchisees have matched our enthusiasm, and consumers will soon start to see the offering available to them."

Administered by properly trained service technicians, Weed Man's mosquito control service utilizes specialized equipment to strategically and safely target mosquitoes where they are currently or could be living to reduce their population on properties.

Weed Man is currently releasing marketing materials for this service and select franchise locations will be implementing the mosquito control in the 2019 season.



Suppliers

IPS Corp. acquires T. Christy Enterprises

IPS Corp., Gardena, California, the parent company of Weld-On Adhesives Inc., has announced its acquisition of Anaheim, California-based T. Christy Enterprises, a manufacturer of solvent cements and adhesives and a provider of a broad range of accessories. Red Hot Blue Glue, Christy's flagship product, is used by landscape contractors.



"This acquisition further solidifies the relationship that Weld-On has had with Christy's for over 40 years," says Janet Reilly, president of Weld-On. "It is a testament

to the value of Christy's customer relationships, the quality of their products and the caliber of people that make up their organization. The Weld-On team is very excited to continue to bring even greater value and service to our customers by providing a wider and more diverse offering of cements and accessories that Weld-On and Christy's together bring to the market."

Jon Christy, president of Christy's, adds, "Being a part of the IPS family of businesses gives Christy's access to an enhanced global reach, significant research and development, and a world-renowned customer and technical support system. We couldn't be more excited to renew and leverage this relationship with Weld-On to provide industry-leading cements, primers and accessories and world-class customer service and technical support to all of our customers."



QUICK TAKES

BrightView appoints two to board

BrightView Holdings Inc., Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, has appointed Jane Okun Bomba and Mara Swan as independent members of its board of directors. The appointments of Okun Bomba and Swan expand the size of the board to eight members, four of whom are independent.

Jane Okun Bomba is president of Saddle Ridge Consulting. Mara Swan is executive vice president of global strategy and talent at ManpowerGroup.

Connecticut landscaper pleads guilty to tax evasion

A Guilford, Connecticut, landscape business owner has pleaded guilty to tax evasion.

Louis Pocograno, 58, is the owner of Poco and Son Lawn Care LLC, a landscaping and snowplowing business based in Guilford. He has agreed to pay the IRS restitution of \$33,383 and an additional \$250,364 in back income taxes and employee taxes respectively. He faces up to five years in prison.

Snowplow rodeo held at Buffalo airport

Snow removal professionals took their skills to the rodeo in May ... the Snowplow Rodeo, that is. Despite the 70-degree temperatures, the event, which is part of the annual Snow Symposium, took place May 1 in Buffalo, New York.

Rodeo participants went through a timed obstacle course at Buffalo Niagara International Airport in a competition to see who would win the title of "World's Best Snowplow Driver." James Scripture from Bangor, Maine, won the coveted title.

Landscape

Golf industry celebrates National Golf Day in Washington

The golf industry celebrated National Golf Day, May 1, an annual event that celebrates the game's \$84.1 billion economy, nearly \$4 billion annual charitable impact, and many environmental and fitness benefits, according to We Are Golf.

More than 200 golf industry leaders gathered in Washington, D.C., April 30 for National Golf Day's third annual Community Service Project. This year's project focused on beautification and preservation between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument.

Coordinated by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Lawrence, Kansas, the volunteers laid sod, raked, edged, overseeded, aerated, mowed, mulched and spruced up gravel paths

across 17 projects along the National Mall. The four hours of work saved the U.S. National Park Service nearly four months of labor costs.

Golf industry leaders also participated in a record-high 244 meetings with members of Congress representing 41 states to discuss the game's economic, social and environmental contributions to the U.S.

"The game of golf is growing and evolving, and it is important that we come together collectively in Washington to share stories of impact the game is having on business and communities across the United States," said Greg McLaughlin, CEO of World Golf Foundation.

"So many golf courses in the U.S., including courses in my district, are public



facilities operating as small, locally owned businesses," said Massachusetts Rep. Bill Keating. "National Golf Day highlights the industry's importance to American society, including business, recreation, hospitality and tourism. Anything that brings people together is great, and golf brings people together."

Suppliers

Michigan mulch company sells business to customer

A Michigan business owner was so successful at his two businesses that he didn't have time to run both of them. According to an article in the *Midland News*, Matt Gimlet, owner of both Midland Mulch and M&M Stump Removal decided he wanted to focus his energy on his stump business only.

He mentioned it to one of his clients, Mike Cohoon. Cohoon is co-owner of Mac Services, a snow and ice removal and landscaping company, with Joel Marshall Jr. The two business partners decided Midland Mulch would be a good fit with the other businesses they own, so they purchased it from Gimlet.

Cphoon told the *Midland News* the two thought the mulch business would be "something interesting and fun that we could add to the array of things we do."



Landscape

The Big Apple is turning green

The New York City Council has passed the Climate Mobilization Act, part of a suite of measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The new law will require all newly constructed buildings, both commercial and residential, to have green roofs and/or solar panels installed going forward. This could be a boon to local landscape contractors who build or maintain green roofs.

In a press release, the nonprofit organization Green Roofs for Healthy Cities called this "a historic win for all New Yorkers as well as the larger green infrastructure community."

Upon the bill's passage, Rafael Espinal, NYC Council Member, 37th District, said "Today, we are passing a bill that won't just make our skyline prettier — it will also improve the quality of life for New Yorkers for generations to come."

Espinal has been at the forefront of the push for a greener New York City. "My legislation ... makes New York the largest city in the nation to pass such a law," he continued. "We've already seen the revolutionary benefits of green roofs in action thanks to places around the city like Brooklyn Steel, the Barclays Center, the Javits Center, the USPS Morgan Processing and Distribution Center and many others."

Green roofs cool down cities by mitigating the urban heat island effect, cut energy costs, absorb air pollution, reduce stormwater runoff, promote biodiversity and provide soundproofing, according to Espinal.

In its press release, Green Roofs for Healthy Cities stated, "The Climate Mobilization Act is the largest single act to cut climate pollution of any city. In a densely packed metropolitan area of over 7 million residents, commercial and residential buildings are the largest source of emissions and sit at the center of the policy change. The act will set emissions caps with the goal of reducing emissions by 2030. Depending on the size and property assessments of the buildings, owners will be able to meet targets ranging from a cut of emissions by 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 for larger buildings."





BY JEFF CAROWITZ

Why customers leave

Call it the season startup stumble: Companies that normally excel at customer service suddenly struggle as soon as the season gets busy. When the phone is ringing constantly and priorities are shifting it gets harder to be good and consistent.

In our business, there's no way to avoid those busy times. However, better preparing for when things really start hopping and understanding what can happen when they do can make a real difference. Not doing so risks alienating even long-time clients.

What makes a customer leave? Many contractors fail to ask this question and focus their marketing efforts on finding new ones. In the short term, the impact of customer loss and churn shows up in places like Google reviews where departing clients blast their frustrations. (Don't ignore these. Even a few bad Google reviews can really hurt your ability to get new clients.) In the longer term, losing those former buy-like-clockwork clients can lead to disaster when the market slows.

Here are a few of the most common reasons why landscape customers leave based on survey research:

Negative emotional experiences. Customers are emotional about their homes. Perhaps you can recall some who got agitated over a simple repair. It wasn't a big deal to you but it was really important to them. Combine an important project with indifferent attitudes and broken promises and you've got a bad review in the making.

Often there's a story-behind-the-story of how a project ended up in your lap. Maybe there was a marital dust-up about an unkempt landscape. Clients can be on edge when they call, so handle them with care.

No recognition of customer longevity or loyalty. Your best customers know they're important to your business, based on the volume of work they bring or their loyalty, season after season. When they're treated like newcomers, it stings.

Here are a couple of tips that will help prevent that: 1) Require phone personnel to ask, "Have we

been to your property before?" When the answer is "yes" followed by a recitation of a long history, the only appropriate response is: "Mrs. Jones, we sincerely appreciate your loyalty. It's great to have you as part of our customer family," and 2) Make sure everyone answering your phones knows the names of your most important clients by heart.

Loss of communication. Often, clients develop their initial relationship with the owner of a contracting company or a key estimator who did the first site visit. Later, they find that person is now too busy to provide the personal attention they enjoyed in the past. When customers feel set adrift they leave.

Lack of response. This one is obvious but important: answer the phone. Schedule appointments right away and notify customers about missed appointments and getting work rescheduled.

Creating new problems. Crew members who leave a mess, break things or damage plantings won't be welcomed back.

Work done incorrectly or left incomplete. There are two typical causes for this: 1) the customer's requests did not get recorded properly or 2) the technician did not follow procedures or cut corners. Ensure that customer requests are captured clearly and read through completely at the job site. Don't tolerate technicians who want to do things their way. Put a set of checklist-driven procedures in your rule book and remind your people that cutting corners always ends up in heartache.

Lack of "bedside manner." Techs who don't listen get bad reviews. Good customer service starts with the greeting. Require your techs to introduce themselves, hand over a business card and then ask "Can you tell me about the problem you're having?" Remember, they get paid to listen.

Doing these things will help keep your clients happy with your service for years to come. 🌱



In the longer term, losing those former **buy-like-clockwork clients** can lead to disaster when the market slows.



Jeff Carowitz advises landscape industry firms on marketing and business strategy. He can be reached at jeff@strategicforcemarketing.com.



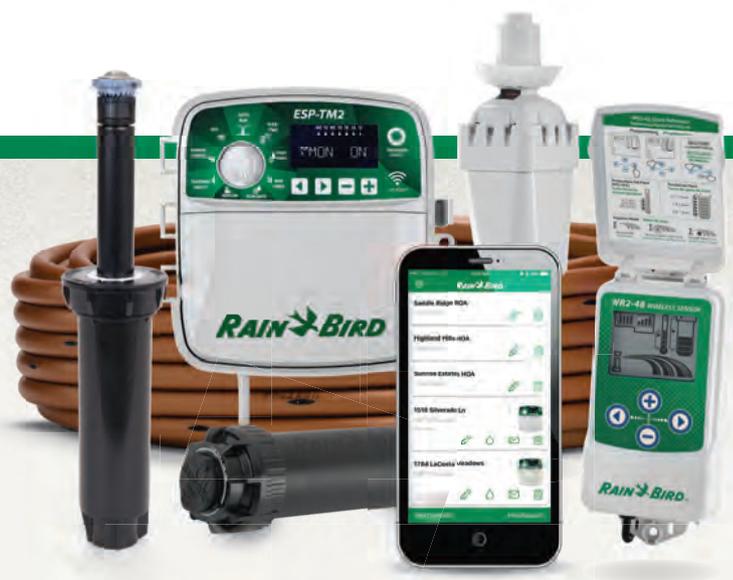
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BY KEVIN SMITH

How landscape lighting got smart



For years landscape lighting professionals have sought better ways of controlling lighting systems. Thanks to innovation, we've moved light-years beyond the simple on-at-dusk, off-at-dawn functionality to sophisticated Bluetooth and Wi-Fi-enabled app-based control systems. To paraphrase an old ad campaign, "We've come a long way, baby!"



Whatever lighting control system you're using, it's vital that your customers have a **complete understanding** of it.

Solid-state control. During the early '90s, outdoor lighting manufacturers developed some of the first solid-state lighting controls. Many of these devices used radio frequencies just as the older models of garage door openers did. These units had printed circuit boards that would support both low-voltage photocells and motion sensors. Some even had "panic buttons" that could be connected to a home's wiring. Later that decade, single controllers with multiple stations began to appear. This type gave you control over several transformers at once and also accommodated hand-held remotes.

Power line carrier systems. Shortly thereafter, power line carrier systems were developed, versatile automation systems that work through a home's existing wiring. A signal is sent through the cable from the control box to a receptacle or module in a transformer. These digital alarm-clock-style controllers could program eight different modules and also featured hand-held remotes. They were among the first controller systems to have computer interfaces.

Lighting control through the irrigation controller. By the late '90s, some lighting manufacturers began offering 24-volt relay modules that could be triggered through irrigation controllers. Since many irrigation controllers could handle multiple stations and programs, it was easy to add a lighting module. This gave the module's transformer the ability to be programmed to turn lighting on and off at different times and days during the week.

As irrigation controllers advanced, remote and computer-controlled options could be added. Many

contractors experimented with controlling the low-voltage side of the transformer with the relay by triggering the 24-volt module and running lighting cable through the switch side of the relay. Most of the 24-volt modules were rated to 15 amps. One could now run over 100 watts of 12-volt current through the switch side of the relay. Using the relay in this manner gave the contractor the ability to create different lighting zones with the cable coming out of the transformer.

Lighting control via alarm technology.

The new century saw several manufacturers introducing zone control. Based on alarm system technology, these devices consisted of three or four relays on a solid-state board that could be switched on through a photocell or digital timer. Remote controls let a user switch all the zones on at once or individually and motion sensors added security.

Further into the 21st century, more irrigation manufacturers added lighting to their product lines. Their expertise with irrigation control technology led to more advanced means of controlling lighting systems. Many of these new systems can be controlled through a central solid-state transformer or a home computer. Some offer color-changing fixtures and scene control.

Several lighting manufacturers have introduced Bluetooth app control for transformers, lamps and fixtures while others have focused on producing Wi-Fi-enabled module control, plug-in sockets and RGBW lamps. Most of these new products work through constantly updated smartphone apps.

Whatever lighting control system you're using, it's vital that your customers have a complete understanding of it. This means that you, the contractor, also needs to thoroughly understand the system you've chosen to install.

Many of the older systems mentioned here are still in operation today. If you find yourself in front of one, feel free to contact me or send a picture. We may use it in future articles. 🌱

Kevin Smith is the national technical support and trainer at Brilliance LED LLC, Carefree, Arizona, and can be reached at kevin.smith@brillianceled.com.

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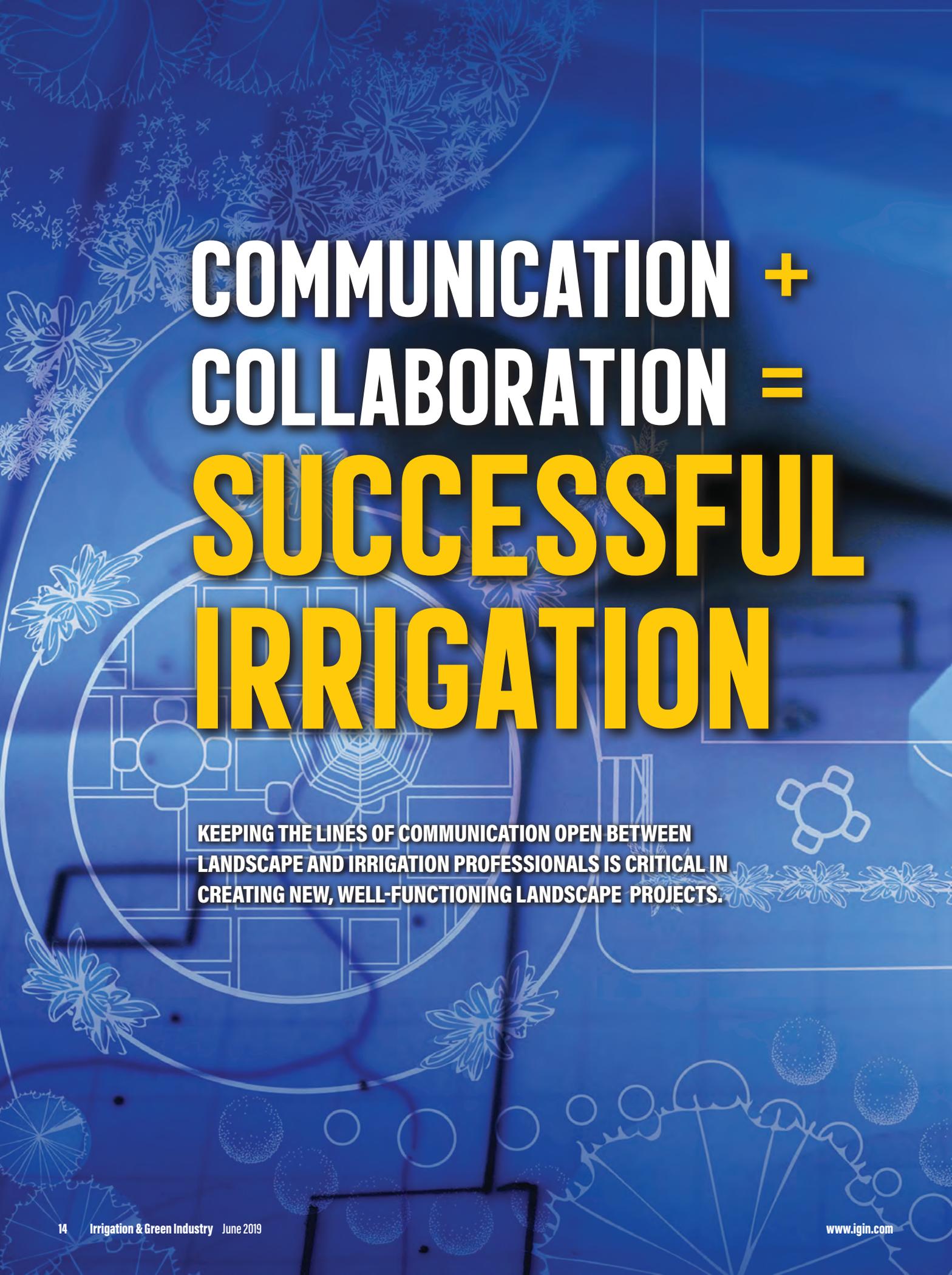
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**KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN BETWEEN
LANDSCAPE AND IRRIGATION PROFESSIONALS IS CRITICAL IN
CREATING NEW, WELL-FUNCTIONING LANDSCAPE PROJECTS.**

While searching for components for a bathroom remodel, I fell in love with a vessel-type sink. Unlike a traditional sink, it sits atop the vanity like a bowl. I thought I'd told the contractor how it should be installed. However, the message had not gotten through to the subcontractor who built the vanity nor to his workers. So, I was in for a rude surprise when I walked in on them just as they were dropping my fancy new sink into the big hole they'd cut in the vanity top.

Obviously, there was a communications breakdown here. My little sink problem was easily remedied, but when the project is much bigger, like a house, a commercial development or a government building, it's absolutely essential that all the professionals involved effectively communicate and understand what each other and the client are saying.

OH, YEAH ... HOW ABOUT AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM?

Landscape architects want the plant material they've chosen to install on a project to survive and thrive. So that this will happen, they'll specify the types of irrigation components they want: drip, micro sprays, conventional sprinklers, smart controllers. They sometimes will specify the brands of the components they want to use.

When things go well, that which is specified is exactly what gets installed — but then there are those other times. Part of the problem lies in when the different stages of a project are completed. Typically, irrigation is the very last thing on the list.

"In many cases irrigation is an afterthought for some landscape architects and contractors," says Dan Aeschliman, CID, president of Commercial Irrigation and Turf Inc., East Peoria, Illinois, a firm that designs, installs and maintains residential, commercial and golf irrigation systems.

"Yes, we're usually the last to come in," agrees Lisa Rudish, a design associate at EC Design Group Ltd., a Des Moines, Iowa-based irrigation design firm.

Ideally, she and the irrigation designers in her firm will establish a conceptual plan early on. "If we're doing the irrigation design for a big bank or mall development we need to get our sleeving materials in there and marked so the people starting from the ground up on the bare land know that in advance. Then, after the sod and plant materials have gone in, they need to be watered, so we get our stuff in and get things turned on right away."

Tom Whitlock is president of Damon Farber, a landscape architecture firm in Minneapolis that works on about 150 projects a year. "Depending on the scale of the project, often the irrigation won't be designed until the construction process is done. Usually the general contractor will sub it out to a construction firm or an irrigation construction firm and they'll develop a drawing that we will review."

BY MARY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS-VILLANO

WHEN EVERYONE COMMUNICATES

"I hate to sound like a cliché, but communication is everything," says Jim Davis, ASLA, CID, the owner of Landtech Design, an irrigation design firm in Indianapolis.

Often, a variety of subcontractors are involved in a project. A meeting between everyone involved just before the first shovel of earth is turned is the best way to avoid a "too many cooks" type of scenario like the one Whitlock describes: "The electrical contractor will put all of his wiring in to feed the site lighting, then the irrigation contractor comes in — and he ends up cutting all those electrical lines to install his pipe. Or, it happens the other way around; the electrical subcontractor comes in and cuts through all the irrigation pipes."

To avoid this sort of outcome, Whitlock says there needs to be good communication and coordination between the installing contractor, all the different subcontractors, and the landscape architect and irrigation consultant. "It's all about coordination and having the right people in the room."

Rudish says that when her firm gets connected with a landscape architecture firm, even if it's one they've worked with on hundreds of projects, the first step is to have several meetings. "They give us their base plan and we'll work with that," she says. "Then they'll make adjustments after they've met with the

property owner and we'll make our adjustments accordingly."

Whitlock says that preconstruction meetings are a routine part of his firm's quality control process. "And it shouldn't be just between the landscape architect and the irrigation designer. It means talking to the mechanical engineer who's working on providing the building's water source and the electrical engineer that's responsible for installing the control system."

... AND WHEN THEY DON'T

It's vital to talk through issues with all the contractors and subcontractors so that they understand why things are designed the way they are and get a good grasp on the whole project before they start working.

"For instance, we may be trying to preserve an existing tree and minimize the damage to a particular zone," Whitlock says. "But the subcontractor just sees a straight line going from point A to point B. They'll say, 'I don't understand why the irrigation is designed this way — why is the main line going around this area of the drawing? Why don't we just go along this line?' — and they'll go ahead and install and cut all the roots of the tree."

Whitlock adds, "[One of the scenarios we have seen over time] is where you know that there's not been proper coordination during the design process. So maybe the landscape architect and the irrigation consultant have done everything that they believe is right, but they haven't coordinated with the mechanical engineer."

"Say for instance there's an assumption that we're going to have a 2-inch water source coming out of the building, but the mechanical engineer only designed a half-inch one, so all the calculations and all the equipment that've been specified won't work. That's the kind of issue you can run into when there isn't proper coordination."

When communication and coordination is lacking, an irrigation installer can show up at a job site only to find that a concrete barrier has been constructed where pipes were supposed to go.

"That happens all the time," Rudish says. "Someone puts up a retaining wall with a big footing. When you call them on it, they'll say, 'We didn't know you needed to get your irrigation from here to the other side of that wall.' That's the kind of stuff we encounter a lot. Then we have to meet with the group and find a way to work around it and resolve the issue."

Whitlock stressed that the irrigation professional who does the installation needs to know enough to ask the right questions. Often there are gray areas as to what should be installed, and sometimes the installing contractor will go ahead and choose something without consulting the landscape architect.

"While we have some very good irrigation installers in our market, many of them are used to residential applications and don't know the right questions to

TAMING THE 'WILD WEST' OF LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION

Jim Davis, ASLA, CID, owner of Landtech Design, an irrigation design firm in Indianapolis recalls the time he was reviewing a commercial project on the penthouse of a building with an extensive green roof that needed an irrigation system. "Despite it being a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design project seeking Gold certification, the landscape architect didn't talk to an irrigation consultant."

But the system that was installed didn't come close to meeting the requirements. "The installers weren't irrigation experts, they were green roof installers," says Davis. "They didn't know they'd needed drip emitters, micro sprays and rotator heads, and had installed regular sprays with NPR nozzles and rotors. They also didn't have a base controller. Reviewing this, I said, 'Oh gosh, what have I gotten myself into?'"

Tim Malooly, CIC, CLIA, CID, president of Water in Motion Inc., Minneapolis, an irrigation consulting firm and a former Irrigation Association board member says, "Landscape irrigation is the wild west" and is a proponent of the IA's certification programs used to establish

competence among those who design and service landscape irrigation systems. More information about certifications available for landscape irrigation are at www.irrigation.org.



ask when it comes to commercial projects or they just assume things,” says Whitlock. “Then when we’re out there inspecting, we’ll find spray heads where there should have been drip emitters, like on a plaza where the owner holds events and now people are getting sprayed because the installer didn’t understand how the owner is going to use the site.”

DOING DUE DILIGENCE

Aeschliman says a good landscape architect will make an installer “jump through the hoops” and provide the right components. They’ll make them submit the products they’re planning to use and make sure the irrigation system’s demands won’t tax the capacity of the heads.

“There are some good irrigation consulting firms that focus on commercial and residential turf-type irrigation systems and they do a pretty good job,” continues Aeschliman. “There are some good small landscape architecture firms out there too and some bigger high-end guys that really do their due diligence. If they put together an irrigation design, you’re going to have to provide everything they specified, and believe me, they follow up.”

Patrick J. Beam, ASLA, CLARB (Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards), owns Beam Designs LLC, Dublin, Ohio. He also uses the term “due diligence” in describing how his firm makes sure that what they’ve specified is what will go in the ground. “You can see that in the bidding process,” he says. “They’re bidding based on cheaper components or something other than what you’ve specified and you can reject those substitutions before they’re installed.”

Rudish’s firm does a “punch sheet.” “That’s where we go through the whole system piece by piece and zone by zone, making sure the controllers are talking to the valves properly, that all the nozzles are working, all the heads are popping up and all the valves are opening properly,” she says. “After the design is done and the specifications are made, if the installing contractor has put the wrong products in and things are not up to the specs, they have to fix it. That’s not the owner’s responsibility. Only after a project is complete and everything is in good working order, working the way it was designed to, will we sign off on it.”

Whitlock’s firm won’t draw up the irrigation design but will produce what’s known as a “perfor-



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mance specification.” This involves drawing a line around an area on a site plan indicating, “We want this area irrigated.” Then his firm will provide specifications that outline the expected performance of the new irrigation system.

“That document will specify what sort of control system we want. This is especially important if there’s a sustainability aspect as far as water conservation or the performance of the system itself. Then, once those standards are in place and we get a general contractor on board the contractor will submit shop drawings that respond to the drawings that we created.”

“IN MANY CASES IRRIGATION IS AN AFTERTHOUGHT FOR SOME LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AND CONTRACTORS.”

— DAN AESCHLIMAN, COMMERCIAL IRRIGATION AND TURF INC.

Aeschliman says that when irrigation components aren’t strictly specified (and the installer’s feet aren’t held to the fire) the result is usually less than optimal. “The owner can end up receiving the cheapest thing that the installing contractor can build. That’s what it takes sometimes to get the bid low enough to get the job, but most of the time it works out very poorly for the owner. And it will cost more money in the long run, too, if it has to be redone or altered later on.”

But even when the specs are clear, they can still be ignored. “I’ve seen design specifications where a landscape architect will say you’re supposed to have this type of controller, valve or pipe — but the problem is that there’s no one to verify that those exact things get installed,” Aeschliman says. He adds that a landscape architect that’s truly managing a project will require the irrigation contractor to submit drawings that include all the architect’s specs. “But,” he adds, “many times the architect doesn’t do that.”

“The problem is that the folks that are saddled with construction administration don’t always know what to look for,” says Tim Malooly, CIC, CLIA, CID, president of Water in Motion Inc., Minneapolis, an irrigation consulting firm. “That includes the general contractor.”



EXPLAIN TO ALL CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS WHY THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM HAS BEEN DESIGNED THE WAY IT IS.



IRRIGATION CONSULTANT OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL: ESTABLISH A CONCEPTUAL PLAN EARLY ON.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Whitlock says for a project to be successful it’s important to include the irrigation consultant or contractor in the conversation from the very beginning “especially given the complexity of regulations, with all of the new requirements around water conservation and stormwater management.”

Consultation with a civil engineer and at times, a hydrologist, may also be needed to address all the various regulatory requirements in a creative way that takes aesthetics and the budget into account.

Permits can be another stumbling block. “When you’re dealing with a precious resource like water, you have certain limits,” says Rudish. “We’ve done irrigation systems on landfills; those have certain requirements that have to be incorporated into the specs. We have to qualify our contractors to make sure they know what sort of permitting is needed and all the different things that could be encountered. We have to know all the aspects of something to go forward with our bid documents.”

Malooly recently had a last-minute request from a developer who thought everything had been lined up for his project in the Twin Cities, “but the authority having jurisdiction said that their plans were woefully inadequate. All they had was a boilerplate description of a reuse irrigation system on civil and landscape drawings and a balloon around the areas of development to be irrigated by stormwater.”

Malooly says that unfortunately that sort of performance-based approach (minimal callouts on plans and skeletal written specs) is commonly practiced throughout the United States. But performance-based specifications just won’t pass muster when there’s a promise to manage stormwater based on low-impact development requirements and it’s time to obtain a permit. Then the client’s project will be delayed.

At that point, the pressure is on for an expert like Malooly to come on board as quickly as possible. That expert will have to do the required work so the required permits can be obtained and the project can move forward.

Once again, it comes down to communication. “That’s very important at the planning stages of a project, especially if it’s large and it’s going to involve water harvesting or reuse,” Malooly says.

There’s an outdated saying that goes, “One can never be too rich or too thin.” With regard to a construction project, we could revise that to say: “One can never have too much communication.” We can take that one step further and add “or too much landscape and irrigation expertise.” When landscape and irrigation experts come together and their advice is heeded, a successful project is usually the result. 🌱

The author is senior editor of *Irrigation & Green Industry* and can be reached at maryvillano@igin.com.

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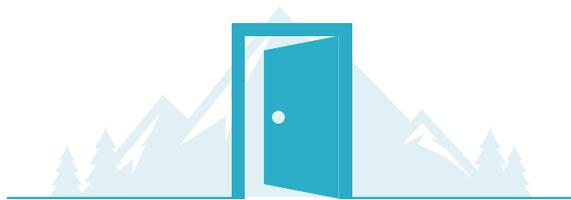


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Lynda Wightman, Hunter Industries' industry relations manager for irrigation and outdoor lighting, has worked tirelessly to promote the industry to others. And after 35 years, she plans to retire.
Photos: Mark Bryant



LYNDA WIGHTMAN

OPENING DOORS

Her 35-year career with Hunter Industries has helped pave the way for other women and young people to enter the landscape industry.

BY KRISTIN SMITH-ELY

Having entered the workforce in the early 2000s, it's hard to remember a time when I ever felt I couldn't aspire to or achieve anything I wanted in my career. Maybe I've been fortunate to have had

great employers who valued talent over whatever gender someone happens to be. If that's the case, it wouldn't have been possible without those women who fought so hard for workplace equality back in the '60s, '70s and '80s, proving that they were every bit as smart and capable as men.

How quickly we forget there was a time when women didn't have it so easy or had to prove themselves a little more than their male counterparts in the same job. While that was the way things were when Lynda Wightman entered the workforce some 50 years ago, she never let the fact that she was a woman stop her from pursuing her dreams of a career in irrigation, even though she was greatly outnumbered by men. She's proven that women can carve out successful careers for themselves in a predominately male industry, and she has blazed a trail for others to follow.

Those who know Wightman know that she always speaks her mind. That quality has proven beneficial over her long career at irrigation

and lighting manufacturer Hunter Industries, San Marcos, California. In those 35 years she's worn many different hats, been involved in several industry associations and traveled all over the world.

After such a great run, she decided it's time to retire and focus on her 12-acre property in Missoula, Montana, where she can enjoy the outdoors, take in the mountain views, garden, go fly fishing, work on the barn or just take a stroll.

As her time at Hunter winds down, she looks back on her many accomplishments and the opportunities they've afforded others, starting with when she first became interested in the landscape and irrigation industry.

"I was the first woman to go to work for the city of Reno's Parks and Recreation Department when I was 16," she says. "That's when I first got the bug to be in the landscaping, turf and horticulture industry."

Wightman's mother worked for the city and told her there were part-time openings, so she decided to find work there as well and was hired thanks to Title IX, which was enacted in 1972 to protect federally funded programs against sex discrimination.

She'll never forget her first day on the job. "Here I was, this 16-year-old spunky little blonde bouncing in with my backpack, saying



Lynda Wightman's love for landscape, horticulture and irrigation began when she was a teenager working for the Reno, Nevada, Parks and Recreation Department. She's carried that passion for the green industry through involvement in various associations and educational programs while at Hunter Industries. Pictured at her 12-acre Missoula, Montana, property, you can see how she finds ways to enjoy plants and work with irrigation even while at home.

'hi' to everybody." Her friendliness was not returned. "All of a sudden I realized that nobody there knew I'd gotten hired. They were all about 69 to 75 years old, just waiting to retire. They all picked up their playing cards and their cigarettes and went over to the other side of the room."

"I AM VERY HONORED TO WORK FOR SUCH A FANTASTIC COMPANY THAT LETS ME DO WHAT I THINK NEEDS TO GET DONE."

Although this "cold shoulder" treatment went on for another two months, it didn't stop her from falling in love with the work she was doing. After working there three summers in a row, she decided to take things a step further.

She headed off to the University of Oregon where she studied landscape architecture, horticulture and landscaping. After graduating, she returned to Reno and worked for a landscape company. "Because it was Reno and there was a downtime during the winter, my boss tried to keep me busy doing landscape designs." Wightman's mother, who had recently moved to Southern California, had a better idea.

She suggested her daughter work winters with her in SoCal and summers in Reno. After a few years of that routine, Wightman moved to San Diego year-round and headed up the irrigation division of a landscape firm until an injury on the job prevented her from continuing. She had sprained her ankle many times before playing sports, but this sprain was one too many. It required reconstructive surgery.

"For the next year and a half I had to go to physical therapy. It seems they had overcorrected my ankle problem, and I was told I couldn't do any more physical work," Wightman says.

Never one to be deterred, she went back to school to learn something less labor intensive. Using the money she was receiving from workers' compensation, she enrolled at Cuyamaca College in El Cajon, California. "Their irrigation program was fantastic, and I was able to get a job working for irrigation consultant Paul Morrison. We did irrigation design for a lot of the landscape architects in San Diego County."

The flyer that changed everything

Wightman still remembers vividly how she was first introduced to Hunter Industries. While her boss was out of town, she noticed a flyer in the mail for the Southern California Landscape and Turf Show to be held in Orange County that said, "We have this new sprinkler called the Hunter 075 Series."

This new sprinkler "was very intriguing to me but was very confusing too," she recalls. So, off to the show she went to try to figure out what it was all about.

There she saw Chuck Huston and Gard Craw trying to set up. It looked like they needed some help, so Wightman jumped in to lend a hand.

"Your literature is very confusing," she candidly told them. "I don't understand how to design with the product you are trying to put onto the market."

"That was in 1984," she recalls, "and by February 1985, I'd raised so many questions, they told me to come into the office and I was hired."

It was very early on in the company's history. "Hunter had only been around for a year and a half before I came on board."

Wightman immediately liked working for the company that started the landscape industry's "rotor revolution" with the introduction of its PGP gear-driven rotor sprinkler in 1983. "It was new, it was fun and it was challenging." She recalls how some customers would be surprised when they learned of her knowledge and experience in irrigation.

It didn't take long for Wightman to learn that the irrigation business "is all about getting to know the people and making them feel like you are there to help them." She's continued to do that in her many different roles with Hunter, stating that she's "had more business card changes and worn more hats than anybody else at the company."

Wightman says this all with a smile. "There are only about five or six of us who have been at the company as long as I have and that's very fun for me. I am incredibly honored to work for such a fantastic company that lets me do what I think needs to get done."

Over the years she's done everything you can imagine at Hunter, going from sales, to marketing, to education, to training and even product development. "You name it," she says, "I just do whatever needs to get done."

Her two passions

In her main role as industry relations manager, she's tasked with finding opportunities to grow the industry. She will tell you she's very passionate about two things: getting more women involved in the industry and getting the next generation as a whole more interested in it too.

"Workforce development is at its peak right now because we don't have people to hire," she says. "I don't think we've done a good job as an industry as a whole in predicting what's going to happen down the road, and now it's hitting us right in the face because none

"BECAUSE OF MY INDUSTRY RELATIONS JOB WITH HUNTER, I REPRESENT US IN EVERY ASSOCIATION THAT I CAN FIND GLOBALLY. I INTRODUCE HUNTER TO THESE ASSOCIATIONS AND, AT THE SAME TIME, HELP THE ASSOCIATION GROW."

of us were proactive in developing that next generation of employees."

She's made it her mission to work with students. That's given her an appreciation of what their instructors do on a day-to-day basis. She supports them by providing teaching materials and getting them involved with the Irrigation Foundation and its Faculty Academy.

"It's just something I'm very passionate about," she says. "Because of my industry relations job with Hunter, I represent us in every association that I can find globally. I introduce Hunter to these associations and at the same time, help the associations grow."

While Wightman is appreciative that Hunter allows her to focus on these efforts, she says there's still more to do. She's concerned that many college landscape, horticulture and irrigation programs across the country are cutting back or being eliminated. "It's happening everywhere," she says, "It is really, really sad."

A lack of awareness among students and their parents about the opportunities that are available in the industry is part of the problem, she says. "As an industry, we just haven't done a good job of getting the word out about irrigation careers."

Attempting to buck that trend is the Irrigation Foundation's Faculty Academy, which has grown exponentially over the years, according to Wightman. In addition to the college instructors that benefit from the program, it now teaches high school teachers without any background in the industry how irrigation. She was pleased that the 2018 faculty academies hosted 61 attendees, 31 whom were first-time attendees. Many of them were high school teachers.



NOT A "MAN'S WORLD"

Lynda Wightman, industry relations manager for lighting and irrigation at Hunter Industries, San Marcos, California, wants the green industry to get away from the stigma that it's a man's world by getting more women involved in it.

Hunter sponsors a Women's Forum each year at the Sports Turf Managers Association's annual conference, which she says despite the name is not just for women. "The purpose is to talk about issues that affect our lives." Topics have included health, management, public speaking and changing careers. Many men have attended the conferences and participated on panels.

Mentorship and interning programs can also attract women to the industry, says Wightman. She also sees opportunity at a grassroots level through the young girls that are in the National FFA Organization and 4-H clubs. "They are being taught not just about crops but also turfgrass, landscape materials and urban agriculture," Wightman says. "Our opportunity there is huge."

A people person

If you ask Wightman what she likes most about her job, she will unhesitatingly say the people. And that includes people from a host of industry associations. Wightman has been part of just about all of them, including the Irrigation Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Society of Irrigation Con-

sultants, the Sports Turf Managers Association, the National Association of Landscape Professionals, the American Sports Builders Association and the Professional Grounds Management Society. She's received many honors from them, such as ASIC's Sam Tobey Lifetime Achievement Award and STMA's Harry C. Gill Founders Award. She's also been inducted into the Green Industry Hall of Fame.

"I love being on boards for sure and seeing things get done for an association and its members," she says.

Those she works with inside the Hunter organization are also important to her — and the feeling is mutual. "It's so important to understand the purpose of the team and that you work together to help people be better at what they do," she says. "It's all about the relationships and the people."

She considers the man who hired her, Chuck Huston, who was Hunter's vice president of sales from 1983 to 2003, her mentor. He held a philosophy of "hang yourself as much as you can — but learn from it." In other words, you can make mistakes as long as you learn from them. Wightman says this attitude empowers employees.

"It gives a person the opportunity to go out on a limb and try something, manage it and embrace it, and if it fails, to look at why it failed, learn from it and try again," Wightman explains.

Change is good

It would be an understatement to say the industry and Hunter have changed a great deal since the introduction of that first rotor back in 1983. The advances in technology have been incredible, and there's no sign of it slowing down. Wightman has stayed up on all the advancements, although now you might find her asking herself jokingly, "Do I really want to learn about 3-D modeling for sprinklers?"

Technology isn't the only thing that's different at Hunter. When Wightman started at the company, she was one of a half-dozen employees; now there are around 3,000.

"There are changes happening every day, and I have to say change is good, whether I like it or not," Wightman remarks. "It's just one of those things you're going to have to get used to."

And how about living in Montana, where she's spent the last 12 years? She also spent six years in Connecticut before that, but "did not have much of a life other than driving to the Hartford airport." The company encouraged her to "get a life." She assured her Hunter colleagues she did have one and decided to move to Montana, which is also where she was born.

She's continued to work for Hunter that whole time even taking over a sales territory in the western part of Montana for a while.

Among her many takeaways after more than three decades in the industry is the observation that the irrigation distributors

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and manufacturers have a tendency to hire people away from each other instead of bringing aboard students who want to get into the business. “Every company needs to look at those candidates because that’s only going to help raise the level of exposure and the awareness of what we do,” she says.

Those who do find their way into the industry, like Wightman, certainly seem to love it. She got her first taste of it as a teenager and knew it was what she wanted to do with her life. Why? She cites many reasons: being able to work outdoors, to meet people and to make them feel good.

“You can see the results of your work, see people feeling very good about it. I love tackling a project, having a challenge and fulfilling it,” she says.

Wightman also enjoys the water conservation aspect of the industry, educating people about the importance of not overwatering. Of the many roles she’s held at Hunter, her time working in international sales was enjoyable. For three years, her territory was Israel where she says knowledge about irrigation and water is phenomenal. She’ll also miss working with the sales and marketing team where she’s made many friendships.

To be successful in the irrigation business takes professionalism, knowledge, an understanding of and a respect for what other people in the industry do, she says. It’s also about “honesty, transparency and caring about the people who work for you and about whom you work for.”

Wightman’s favorite quote comes from the poet Maya Angelou: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said and forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

“I honestly live by that,” she says.

Her last day at Hunter is Feb. 18, 2020. She’s retiring so she can stay at home more and get to some long-put-off projects that her heavy travel schedule hasn’t allowed her to tackle, like working in her garden or re-staining her barn.

“It’s time to bring someone else into my work responsibilities and share those before I leave so they can grow into their 35 years.”

Whoever does take on the role Wightman is leaving better have good luggage and a current passport. At one point, Wightman served on 12 different boards of directors and three boards of trustees and was always on the road attending one meeting or another — and loving it. Her successor will need to share that same passion.

The irrigation industry is certainly grateful for Wightman’s dedication to its future. Her accomplishments will surely continue to open doors for others, especially women and young people, for decades to come. 🌱

The author is editor-in-chief of *Irrigation & Green Industry* and can be reached at kristinsmithely@igin.com.



Find out what those who have worked closely with Lynda Wightman over the years had to say about her contributions in the online version of the article available at www.igin.com/lynda-wightman-opening-doors.

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GOOD IDEAS

Learn methods for testing your ideas so you'll know if you're making a solid decision.



By Tom Borg

One of the biggest challenges for any green industry business owner is learning a better way of doing something and sticking with it. It's always tempting to try a new approach to some aspect of our business, so we go for it. Initially, the new way works well and we implement it. We keep using it for a while, but eventually, for one reason or another we stop and go back to doing it the old way. Why does this happen?

One reason is that we haven't stayed with the new way long enough to create a permanent behavior change. Yes, the new way is more efficient and gets better results, but the old way had some benefits too. Maybe the old way was easier or didn't require as much thought. Regardless of the reason for going back to the old way, we must decide once and for all to stick with the new way, at least long enough until an even better way comes along.

Pick one new method of conducting some aspect of your business. Write it out on a 3×5 card, and post it in your office in plain sight. Commit to

using this new method for 30 days and consistently use it for that length of time. At the end of the 30 days, decide if a permanent switch is warranted.

To help you decide, use the Ben Franklin method. Take out a sheet of paper, and at the top of the page, write down the decision you're trying to make. Draw a line underneath that sentence; then draw another line down the middle of the page. At the top of the column on the left, write down the words, "Reasons for using the new way." At the top of the column on the right, write down the words, "Reasons for not using the new way."

Now write down as many reasons under each heading as you can think of. Let the column with the most reasons decide for you. On page 27, there's an example of a decision chart listing the pros and cons of implementing a new inventory system.

Franklin's system can help make deciding easier. Writing down the "reasons for" and the "reasons against" something on paper allows you to see the matter objectively. Ultimately, you'll have to decide if a change is worth making in the long run.

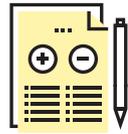
There's another method I share with my green industry clients that can help you make better decisions and stick with them. It was invented by business consultant Nido Qubein.

Before I share this method, let me preface it with a question: Have you ever been faced with a tough business decision, one that involved a substantial amount of risk? Perhaps it was a decision that wasn't purely black or white but with several shades of gray to it — not an easy decision, but one that had to be made.

It's often been said that with risk comes opportunity; the greater the risk, the greater the opportunity. In order to make a good decision about an opportunity when it presents itself in the form of a risk, one needs to have a strategy. This is not the time to shoot from the hip or react without totally thinking things through; that could end badly. It takes a logical and balanced approach, one that allows you to look at the situation from a number of different angles, so you can make not just an intellectual choice but an emotionally balanced one too.

USE THIS DECISION-MAKING APPROACH WHEN CONSIDERING:

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- terminating a manager or employee.
- creating a new staff position.
- investing in training or in coaching for your managers or employees.
- raising the salary of a key manager or employee.
- creating a new division or department.
- making a major equipment purchase.
- closing a branch location.
- opening a new branch location.
- moving your headquarters to a new facility or a different location.
- entering a new market.
- reducing your company's menu of services or products.
- expanding your menu of services or products.
- raising your fees or prices.



Franklin's system can help make your decision easier. Writing down the **"reasons for"** and the **"reasons against"** something on paper allows you to see the matter objectively.

HERE IS AN EXCELLENT FORMULA FOR MAKING TOUGH DECISIONS INVOLVING A GREAT DEAL OF RISK.

The first part consists of three questions you must ask yourself:

1. What is the best thing that could happen if I take this risk?
2. What is the worst thing that could happen if I take this risk?
3. What is the most likely thing that will happen if I take this risk?

ONCE YOU'VE ANSWERED THOSE THREE QUESTIONS, THERE ARE TWO MORE YOU MUST ASK:

1. If the best thing happens, will it get me closer to my goals?
2. If the worst thing happens, could I live with it?

If you answered "yes" to both of those questions, then go for it. It'll probably work out in your favor. But if you answered "no" to either one, do not go for it. It'll most likely lead to poor results that you won't be happy with and may even prove disastrous.

APPROACHING A TOUGH, RISKY BUSINESS DECISION BY ASKING THOSE FIVE QUESTIONS WILL

- enhance your ratio of successes.
- build your self-confidence in facing future challenges.
- have you working smarter, not harder.
- help you become an action-oriented leader.

Give it a try and let me know how it goes. I'd love to hear from you. 🌱



Tom Borg is a team performance and customer experience expert who works with small businesses and organizations in the green industry to improve customer acquisition and retention. He helps these organizations through his consulting, speaking, training and mentoring. He can be reached at 734.404.5909 or tom@tomborg.com, or visit www.tomborgconsulting.com.

EXAMPLE: IMPLEMENTING A NEW INVENTORY SYSTEM



REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTING IT

- It's faster.
- It's more accurate.
- It breaks things down into appropriate segments.
- We can save it in our computer files.
- We can e-mail it to the appropriate people.
- It saves us time.
- It makes us more efficient and profitable.



REASONS FOR NOT IMPLEMENTING IT

- We're not completely familiar with it.
- We'd have to read the manual.
- Some of us don't have the patience to learn it.



MAKE YOUR DISTRIBUTOR **YOUR BEST ALLY**

An irrigation and landscape supply distributor shares how developing a good rapport with yours can benefit your business.

Edited by Kristin Smith-Ely

A relationship with a distributor is one of the most important relationships you will have as a landscape or irrigation contractor. Distributors are the ones who can help make sure you have the equipment and supplies you need to get the job done on time and the right way. They also are known to give advice and offer training. To take advantage of that, you have to be willing to take the time to build a good rapport with them.

Distributors across the country can lament the woes of having to deal with unprepared landscape professionals who expect the distributors to magically move mountains for them. We thought it would be helpful to hear directly from one of them how you can have an effective working relationship with a distributor and get the most from your experience.

Turf Equipment and Supply has been in business since 1979 and has four branches serving the Mid-Atlantic market. “We work with contractors, engineers, consultants, landscape architects and end users,” says Tim Cleary, manager of the landscape products group.

Prior to becoming manager, Cleary worked in the field performing irrigation installation and service for a contractor. He then owned his own irrigation contracting company for a while before getting into the products distribution side of the green industry.

Cleary has 35 years of experience, which he draws on when his customers come in with needs and questions about the projects they’re working on. Every segment and subcategory of the green industry — irrigation, landscape lighting, drainage, water features, outdoor living and more — fall under his purview. We asked him how contractors could maximize their experience with their local distributors, and Cleary answers our questions in this Q and A.

Q: How can a landscape contractor get the most from his visit to a distributor?

▶**A:** Plan ahead — two words that can mean a myriad things, but they're so important for a contractor/distributor partnership to work. Find a distributor you can trust and whose company culture aligns with yours. Partner with them and they can be a valuable resource for your company.

Q: How important is it to have a good rapport with your distributor?

▶**A:** It really depends on your size, level of experience and type of business. For some, it's more important than others. Experienced contractors with large operations can be very self-sufficient. But small-to-mid-sized companies can really use the resources of a distributor. Having a great business relationship with a distributor will help your company be successful. Distributors really want to provide the best service possible as contractor success and growth is key to distributions' success. Develop a relationship of trust with your distributor so you can share what is ahead for your company and they'll be better prepared to help.

Q: What are the most common reasons for landscape contractor visits? Are they usually planning for the entire season or on a project-by-project basis? Is one of those approaches better than the other?

▶**A:** A large percentage of what we see is last-minute chaos and a scramble to fulfill project needs — whether it be for a design, submittals, products, operations and maintenance manuals or record drawings. Distributors can be much better resources if they have advance notice.

Q: What are some common misconceptions landscape professionals have about their local distributor?

▶**A:** Funny true story — one day I was on-site with an irrigation contractor on a very hot, humid summer day. He says, "One day I want to have a job just like yours!" I'll bite — I ask, "Why is that? What do you think I do all day?" The contractor responds, "You drive around all day in an air-conditioned truck and smoke cigars." I still laugh about that to this day.



"A large percentage of what we see is last-minute chaos and a scramble to fulfill project needs ... distributors can be much better resources if they have advance notice."

— Tim Cleary

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“The best people in the industry are the ones who make the commitment to come to training — it’s usually the same group. The ones who should be there, the ones who need to be there, are the ones who make the excuses and never attend.”

— Tim Cleary,
Turf Equipment and Supply



A good relationship with a distributor can be a valuable asset to your business. When distributors are kept apprised of your upcoming project plans, they can be ready with the supplies you'll need.

Other misconceptions: they think we have all products at all times; that we're just sitting around, waiting for their call or that we have all kinds of lucrative projects we're doling out. So yes — sometimes their expectations are unrealistic, but many times, that's a result of equally unrealistic expectations coming from their clients. We're now living in an "on-demand" world and that has affected our industry just as it has other industries.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR GOOD CONTRACTOR/DISTRIBUTOR RELATIONS

-  **DO** build a friendly rapport with your distributor.
-  **DON'T** think you're the only customer that's important.
-  **DO** give your distributor advance notice of upcoming projects and product needs.
-  **DON'T** assume that everything you need will always be on hand, especially at the last minute.
-  **DO** take advantage of offered training.
-  **DON'T** project your clients' unrealistic expectations onto the distributor.
-  **DO** share your future plans for your business with your distributor.
-  **DON'T** fail to listen to the distributor's good advice.

Q: How involved do you get in helping contractors plan out their needs for a specific project?

▶**A:** We can be involved as much as necessary with the contractor. Every contractor has his or her own method of estimating and installing, so the conversation needs to focus on products, processes and techniques that are comfortable for the contractor.

Q: Do you find some contractors are more knowledgeable than others? What do you do to help educate your customers?

▶**A:** There is a gap in knowledge many times stemming from lack of industry experience or a lack of opportunity to grow in the business. We try to host training events in response to customer requests or what we think the market is needing. The best people in the industry are the ones who make the commitment to come to training — it's usually the same group. The ones who should be there, the ones who need to be there, are the ones who make the excuses and never attend.

Q: What are some growing trends you are seeing in terms of product demand?

▶**A:** Manufacturers are creating product demand by concentrating on the contractors, specifiers and end users. There seems to be less loyalty to brands. With electronic media, customers are doing their research before they even inquire about purchasing a product. But distributors are still providing local access to the products as well as the support needed.



**BRILLIANCE
METAL WORKS
OLYMPIC**

Q: When are you the busiest and how do you handle those busy times?

►**A:** Our season usually starts in March and runs through December. March can be dicey weather-wise in our area, but people have so much cabin fever by then that they just have to get out and start working.

As far as the days go, it's busy early in the morning, as customers are trying to get products for that day's work. Another run comes midday when customers break for lunch.

There's another rush at the end of the day when they're grabbing a few forgotten items to finish a job or planning for the next day and grabbing materials.

Q: How is this season looking for you compared to other years?

►**A:** The 2019 season is starting strong and looks robust. The weather can factor in as it did the last few years with all the rain the Mid-Atlantic area received.

Q: What do you do during the off-season to keep the company's doors open?

►**A:** The off-season is one our busier times. Between hosting training, planning for the upcoming season, attending industry events and most importantly, taking some time off, the off-season goes quickly! 🌿

Tim Cleary is manager of the landscape products group for Turf Equipment and Supply.



Turf Equipment & Supply snapshot:

Year started: 1989

Locations: Jessup, Maryland; Fairfax, Virginia; Frankford, Delaware; and West Chester, Pennsylvania

Products distributed: irrigation, lighting, water gardening, drainage, fountains, aerators, tools and allied products

No. of employees: 115



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While distributors such as Turf Equipment and Supply Co., do their best to plan ahead and keep the shelves stocked, it is important for the landscape contractor to plan ahead too.



BY SARAH BUNYEA

DRIP MAKES *EVERY DROP* COUNT

From a Texas ranch home to a 50-story Chicago high-rise, drip irrigation sustains unique landscapes of all shapes and sizes.



With its ability to efficiently water virtually any space in the landscape, drip irrigation is growing as a valuable method for keeping plants and green spaces healthy.
Photo: Hunter Industries

It's a beautiful summer day, the sun is shining and the sprinklers on a lawn pop up out of the ground, spraying a lush, green lawn with droplets of life-giving water. This is what the majority of people, including contractors, probably picture when they think of irrigation.

Most don't automatically envision the more silent and stealthy method of watering — drip irrigation. It may not be as satisfying to watch in action on a hot summer's day, but as many contractors have discovered over the years, drip irrigation is an equally effective way to irrigate landscapes.

Drip irrigation has become an increasingly sought-out option by both property owners and landscapers for its ability to conserve water and precisely irrigate unique shapes in the landscape. This growing market segment shouldn't be ignored by any irrigation professional.

The basics

How does a drip system save water? Instead of gallons per minute, like a sprinkler system, drip delivers water in terms of gallons per hour. Because it delivers water slowly, directly to the root zones of plants, less of it is lost to evaporation and runoff, so less of it is needed.

A drip irrigation system is composed of valves, filters and pressure regulators and then some sort of water transport like PVC or polyethylene tubing. A number of lateral lines are attached to a single line through headers, and the laterals are then fitted with emitters to disperse water.

Dripline can be purchased with emitters already inserted at regular intervals, or they can be purchased without emitters so you can insert them exactly where you want them to go. Some dripline also includes strips of copper or herbicide to deter root penetration.

A growing market

While drip has been around for decades, Andy Hulcy, founder of Andy's Sprinkler, Drainage and Lighting, says his company's use of and promotion of this type of irrigation have increased significantly over the past 10 years. And it's not surprising. The company operates seven locations in Texas and one in North Carolina — areas often affected by watering restrictions brought on by frequent droughts.



DID YOU KNOW?

Homes and businesses using drip systems are often exempt from watering restrictions or may qualify for installation rebates.

“The demand for drip irrigation goes up dramatically during drought conditions,” Hulcy says. “That’s usually driven by the fact that the watering restrictions make it so that people can hardly keep their landscapes alive.”

He explains that a couple of years ago Texas was in the midst of a long, terrible drought, and draconian watering restrictions meant that residents could only water one day a week, every other week. But people who had drip irrigation systems were allowed to water several more days per week because of these systems’ greater efficiency.

Homes and businesses employing drip systems are often exempt from watering restrictions or may qualify for hefty rebates for installing them. This combination of incentives and potential water savings makes drip an attractive option for many clients.

Texas has been making up for its drought lately, as it’s experienced a wet period over the last couple of years. “When that happens,” Hulcy says, “the demand for drip drops. We don’t get calls for it. But once it gets really hot and dry, then we specifically advertise for installing drip or converting to drip because that’s when people are most interested in it.”

Hulcy says drip systems can definitely conserve water — as long as they’re correctly installed. “Be-



Drip is a perfect solution for irrigating small or unique spaces in landscapes, like flower beds, vegetable gardens, planters, sloped areas and plantings near retaining walls.

cause we’re in the repair business, we see a lot of drip that isn’t working for people because it wasn’t installed properly — like having the wrong emitter spacing or gallons per hour for the type of soil condition.”

He says that some contractors are installing drip to be competitive with the cost of sprinklers — and are cutting corners in the process. “If you do it properly, it’s going to be more expensive to do a drip system than it would be to do a spray system. But the idea behind that is the money you’ll save in water over time will offset that upfront cost.”

He finds that clients are often surprised by the cost of a drip system because they assume it just involves running some dripline on top of the ground. They don’t take into account that, just like any other irrigation system, it still requires buried pipe, valves and electrical components such as an irrigation controller. Added to the cost of the dripline are the filters and pressure regulators drip systems must have.

But despite the greater initial investment required, Hulcy finds that the potential water savings a drip system promises for the future is still a big draw for his clients.

Other applications for drip

Drip is primarily used to water flower beds, gardens and planters, and it’s a great solution for irrigating virtually any small or unique areas in landscapes, such as narrow strips, oddly shaped areas, slopes and plantings near retaining walls.

Drip can also be used to provide supplemental irrigation when necessary. To preserve valuable parts of a landscape like shrubs and flowers, Hulcy’s installers will often add drip to flower beds that are already incorporated into spray zones.

Most clients don’t realize it, but drip systems can be used to irrigate lawns. Dripline can be installed on new construction before a lawn is planted or sodded, or it can be trenched into already-established turf.

Hulcy says his company has installed subsurface drip irrigation under some lawns despite encountering difficult soil conditions. “In North Texas, we have really heavy clay soil. The challenge with that is to evenly distribute the water around everything.” He explains that within that heavy clay, there will often be pockets of sand or a different type of fill dirt

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A tasty trend on the rise that is appealing not only to the appetite but to drip irrigation is edible landscapes. These minifarms are more popular than ever. We’re not talking about mere backyard garden plots with a few veggie plants — these are entire landscapes that incorporate edible native plants such as fruit trees along with pollinator habitats, medicinal herbs and water features.

Edible landscapes increase the diversity of insect populations, create habitats for birds and other wildlife and provide ideal conditions for the millions of microbes that make up healthy soil.

It’s not only health-conscious millennials who want them. Add their parents and grandparents to that list of age groups wanting these delicious designs in their backyards. It’s a great way for entire families to embrace a healthier diet and another possible market for you as their irrigation contractor.

As more individuals become enthralled with incorporating edible gardens in their landscapes, knowing how to install drip irrigation systems is a useful skill to have. Drip irrigation takes the work out of keeping these fruits and veggies alive. After all, drip was originally used in agriculture and remains a tried and true way to grow food in one’s own backyard.



from when the lot was leveled off during the home's construction, making the even distribution of water more complicated.

Taking drip to new heights

Thanks to drip irrigation, shrubs and flowers are flourishing atop buildings in our country's biggest cities. Not only are these rooftop gardens more and more common, urban high-rise residents are beginning to expect them, says Phil Cleland, president of Chicago Specialty Gardens.

It was 20 years ago that Cleland discovered the niche market for creating rooftop oases. Thinking they were fascinating spaces to work with, he pursued these kinds of projects, and they now constitute 70% of his company's business. "When I first started doing this, it was a really odd sort of thing to have a garden on the top of your apartment house or condo roof. But it's really come to be more of a trend for the everyday homeowner public," says Cleland.

Cleland's enthusiasm for these spaces is obvious, conveyed in the way he speaks about their many benefits. "If you have a rooftop garden that's three stories or 20 stories up, you're above the noise and above the

din. You then have some space to walk around, and you can green it up, light it up, barbeque up there, you can do all sorts of stuff," says Cleland.

The team at Chicago Specialty Gardens designs and builds elevated landscapes that include outdoor kitchens and eating areas, fire pits, water features and landscaping. The plants in these projects are typically arranged in a series of elevated beds and planters. Drip irrigation is the most efficient and practical way to sustain these landscapes in the sky, according to Cleland.

Homeowners aren't the only clients desiring these spaces. Businesses are also installing them so their employees can take their breaks in a more serene environment and escape the busyness of the corporate world. Cleland says there has also been a huge proliferation of bars, restaurants and hotels that are installing rooftop gardens in Chicago.

The growing demand for rooftop green spaces has opened up a whole new market for drip irriga-

“Demand for drip irrigation goes up dramatically during drought conditions.”

— Andy Hulcy, Andy's Sprinkler, Drainage and Lighting

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THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

It's not just rooftop gardens that are growing in popularity atop many skyscrapers across the country. Another growing trend is incorporating a living wall or vertical garden in landscapes. One company that manufactures these systems is WallyGro. Based in Kansas City, Missouri, its vertical garden wall product uses a drip irrigation system to water miniature planters placed in rows that make up the vertical wall.

A 1/4-inch supply line runs horizontally through each planter with an emitter delivering water to each container. Adaptable to both interior and exterior spaces, these products are creative and captivating tools landscape designers can use to incorporate plants into unique spaces.

tors. "Generally, it's much windier the higher up you go, so using spray heads in these areas doesn't work very well," says Cleland. "The spray gets blown below or onto adjoining surfaces, like furniture. So, we use drip pretty exclusively for our projects."

One of the challenges, though, is providing drainage. Cleland explains that his installers use a rooftop deck pedestal system as a base for their projects. The pedestals are deck supports that elevate concrete or wood tiles.

Runoff that flows through the bottom of planters hits the surface of these tiles, finds a joint between them and drops down to the membrane roof, a material that prevents water from pooling and leaking into the building below. The water then exits via the roof's existing drain. These pedestal systems also hide irrigation driplines beneath the tiles, so tubing isn't visible.

Maintenance

Drip systems are typically easier to repair and maintain than sprinkler systems, Hulcy says. That's because the dripline and emitters aren't buried deeply in the ground. Knowing that a drip system needs to be repaired, however, is trickier. A broken sprinkler head gets a homeowner's or groundkeeper's attention right away; but with drip, the first indication of a problem is often browning or wilting plants or grass.

That's where a flow meter comes in. If the amount of water going through the system is lower or higher than normal, it will notify the smart controller, which in turn will send an alert to the caretaker's smartphone. While flow monitoring technology has been available for a long time, Hulcy says it's really just begun to take off on the residential side. Where he'd once found installing flow meters to be expensive and labor-intensive, the advent of wireless models has made them more affordable and easier to install.

Irrigation systems in the colder parts of the country need winterization, and drip systems are no exception. Extra care must be taken, though, not to blow them out with too much air pressure, so the

emitters don't pop off the dripline. The backflow device and irrigation controller, if outdoors, should be brought indoors for storage during the cold season.

Even with winterization, driplines can split and emitters can crack over the winter. Spring startups should include an inspection of all components.

The future looks bright

Climate experts are predicting drier days ahead with more frequent and prolonged drought conditions. The resulting watering restrictions put into place by cities, plus the creation of more unique, hard-to-irrigate landscape spaces, means more people will be turning to this highly efficient method of irrigation. Whether it's to provide a water supply for the herb planters surrounding an outdoor kitchen or the greenery scaling a living wall, or if a property owner simply wants to save some bucks on the water bill, drip is a great solution.

Hulcy anticipates that the popularity of drip will only grow, especially with the large numbers of people flocking to major Texas cities like Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and Houston. "The population is growing faster than the water supply can keep up with. All the major cities in Texas are growing exponentially fast, and that's going to stress the water systems," says Hulcy. With the amount of irrigation combined with consumer water use, he says, "Something's got to give, and it's probably going to be landscapes. Drip is a perfect solution for that."



Colorful annuals, birch and redbud trees, and boxwood hedges offer condo residents a green escape. Photo: Chicago Specialty Gardens.

There will always be a demand for lush, green lawns irrigated by sprinklers. But times are changing, and it's important to learn how to use different methods that can meet the growing demand for more efficient and cost-effective ways of watering landscapes. Rather than looking at exploring drip as a total change of direction, see it as merely another tool in your toolbox, something that will only help you and your business in the long run. 🌿

The author is digital content editor of *Irrigation & Green Industry* and can be reached at sarahbunyea@igin.com.



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TAKING OUT TICKS



These tiny critters are more than mere nuisances. Here are some tips for keeping them from attaching themselves to you, your crew members and clients.

BY PHILLIP MEEKS

Tick. A harmless enough word when applied to the sound a clock makes, but when uttered in an outdoor context, the mere hearing of it can induce shudders. For those of us in the green industry, the occurrence of these blood-feasting parasites is as routine as sunburn or muscle aches.

If a person wading through grass and shrubbery day after day didn't encounter a tick from time to time, it would border on the miraculous. The fact that they are so common makes it tempting to dismiss them and the dangers they can pose.

According to Purdue University, an estimated 899 species of the genus *Ornithodoros* are found around the world, with some 90 found in the U.S. Not all ticks lurk in the grass. Several species are only found in animal nests, dens or caves. But there are still plenty of species that prefer the kinds of habitats where landscapers, lawn care professionals and arborists spend their time.

The life cycle goes like this: A larvae emerges from an egg and immediately seeks a bird or animal host. It feeds until fully engorged, drops off and molts into a nymph. It then seeks a second host, and



after getting its fill of blood, drops off and molts into an adult. The third blood meal will be its final one, after which the female lays its eggs and dies.

Tiny so-called “seed ticks,” often thought of as a unique species, are just ticks in their larval stage. Ticks are arthropods, eight-legged creatures; with a magnifying glass, larvae can be distinguished from nymphs and adults by the presence of only six legs.

From a prevention and control standpoint, the same protocols will apply regardless of the species, but from a human health perspective, correctly identifying which species are present in an environment is important.

Ticks and human health

Of course, the worst thing about ticks is their role as vectors of disease-causing viruses, bacteria and protozoa. According to www.eXtension.org, a database of information from land-grant universities, Lyme disease is now present in 46 states and Rocky Mountain spotted fever in 40.

Those two maladies get the most ink, but they’re not alone: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists a number of additional tick-borne diseases, including babesiosis, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis, Southern Tick-Associated Rash Illness, Heartland virus disease, Tick-Borne Relapsing Fever, tularemia, Colorado tick fever, Q fever and Powassan encephalitis.

Not all species of ticks carry every disease, so the specific risk depends on which species has bitten someone. Lyme disease, the most commonly diagnosed tick-borne illness, is only associated with two tick species: the blacklegged tick (also known as the deer tick), *Ixodes scapularis*, and the western blacklegged tick, *Ixodes pacificus*. Both of them can transmit anaplasmosis, while the deer tick can also transmit babesiosis.

Southern Tick-Associated Rash Illness is often confused with Lyme disease as the accompanying rash is similar to Lyme’s “bull’s eye.” Sufferers also experience headaches, fever and muscle aches. STARI is transmitted by the Lone Star tick, *Amblyomma americanum*. The bite of that particular species can also pass along a molecule that causes Alpha-gal syndrome, an allergy to red meat.

An unwelcome newcomer

It had been nearly a century since an invasive tick had shown up in the U.S., but as anyone who has dealt with or studied invasive plants and insects knows, it was only a matter of time. The Asian long-horned tick, *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, was confirmed in New Jersey in 2017, and since that initial discovery has been found in New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina and Arkansas.

This species can reproduce asexually through parthenogenesis. It’s not only a threat to people’s pets

but to the livestock industry, as a single animal can be infested with thousands of these parasites, leading to weight loss and anemia from the sheer loss of blood. It’s known to be a vector of human pathogens in its native range, but fortunately, so far no U.S. specimen has shown the presence of disease organisms.

Protecting your crew

There are things we can do to help keep ticks off ourselves and our crews, such as wearing long pants and light-colored fabrics while working. Ticks will gravitate toward those places where clothing grips skin the tightest, so tucking in pant legs and shirt tails will make it harder for them to find their way to ankles and waistlines.

The navel, groin, hairline, armpits, ears and the backs of knees are other spots on the body where ticks like to attach themselves. Encourage your employees to do a tick check on themselves in those body areas and their clothing after every shift. Removing ticks within 24 hours of attachment greatly decreases the chance of infection with a tick-borne microbe.



There are several repellent chemicals on the market, but permethrin is the ingredient of choice. It shouldn’t be applied directly to skin. Spray it on clothing according to the directions on the label or consider clothing that’s pretreated with it.

Janine Robertson, marketing and public relations manager at Insect Shield LLC, Greensboro, North Carolina, says of the company’s permethrin-treated apparel, “The protection stays on the clothing, not on your skin, and repels ticks, including those that can carry Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses and lasts for 70 washings.”

Permethrin is U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-registered, with no restrictions for use, and also protects against mosquitoes, ants, flies, chiggers and midges.

Insect Shield recommends using permethrin spray on boots. Ticks crawl upwards, Robertson says, so boots and socks offer great initial protection.”

Products containing 20% to 30% DEET (diethyltoluamide) are also effective, but some people are allergic to it. Picaridin, a pepper-derived alternative to DEET, has a lower toxicity and fewer occurrences of allergic reactions and has been shown to provide four to eight hours of protection. Botanical products such as oil of lemon eucalyptus or citronella may also have some value.

Many consider ticks as strictly a summer concern, but they can be active year-round. So don’t let

REMOVING TICKS WITHIN 24 HOURS OF ATTACHMENT GREATLY DECREASES THE CHANCE OF INFECTION WITH A TICK-BORNE MICROBE.



When spraying for ticks, concentrate on tall grassy areas, woodland edges and wood and brush piles where they tend to congregate.

your guard down when engaged in pruning or clean-ups on warmer winter days.

Tick management in the landscape

Be aware that anywhere birds and mammals like to hang out, such as berry bushes or other wild-life-friendly plantings, ticks will probably be present too. Tall grasses, woodland edges and wood and brush piles are hot spots for tick populations as are locations with dense ground covers. If you offer tick management services to your clientele, such areas should be the focal point. It's neither practical nor recommended to do a blanket treatment of an entire lawn or landscape.

"Everyone in our area routinely checks for ticks after being outside, particularly if we have been working in the woods or in pachysandra," says Sean McNamara, manager of Redding Nursery in Red-

ding, Connecticut. "I have found that pachysandra is the number one plant for picking up ticks in a yard."

Ticks require lots of moisture and humidity, so practices conducive to increasing air flow and drying like mowing and removal of leaf litter make a landscape less hospitable for them.

A quick way to check for tick populations or to demonstrate their presence to your clients is to attach a 3-foot-by-3-foot sheet of white cotton, corduroy or flannel fabric to a pole and then drag it across tall grass and vegetation. The ticks will grab onto the fabric and can then be easily collected and identified.

Chemical treatment at the landscape level should focus only on those areas where pets or wild hosts are likely to frequent such as edges or fencerows. Bifenthrin, carbaryl, permethrin and pyrethrin are active acaricidal (tick-killing) ingredients that are often recommended, but before using any of them, consult with your state's Cooperative Extension Service for specific chemical recommendations and the timing of applications for your region.

McNamara says, "We have a significant Lyme Disease problem in Fairfield County, and there are many companies here offering tick-spraying services with a trend toward 'organic' or 'all-natural' treatments. Though many people equate those terms with 'safe' and 'nontoxic,' our philosophy is that fewer sprays of a chemical are better than multiple sprays with less effective organic treatments, as every application even of supposedly natural products can still have a negative impact on beneficial insects."

He adds, "We get good control of tick populations with just one or two sprays of a synthetic pyrethroid. This allows us to do a better job with fewer sprays than we'd have to do with an 'all-natural' formula. We feel this is a better value for the customer and better for the environment."

LANDSCAPING FOR TICK PREVENTION

Use these tips for tick-conscious landscaping your clients will thank you for:

1. Remove leaf litter.
2. Clear tall grasses and brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.
3. Place a 3-foot-wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
4. Mow lawns frequently.
5. Stack wood neatly and in a dry area to discourage rodents.
6. Keep playground equipment, decks and patios away from yard edges and trees.
7. Suggest fencing to discourage deer, raccoons and stray dogs from entering yards.
8. Remove debris such as old furniture, mattresses or trash from yards, as they give ticks places to hide.

(Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)



PEST CONTROL

Application timing is also very important, according to McNamara. Most of the spraying his crews do are at the nymph stage of the tick life cycle from mid-May through late June.

"This is the most dangerous time, as nymphs are very small and difficult to detect," he says. "For our customers who get two sprays, we do one in April for overwintering adult ticks and a second in June for the nymphs. It's very rare that we would do a third spray."

Lab work

Your local Cooperative Extension office should be the first point of contact for the identification of a tick species. If you, your employees or clients should find a tick attached to their skin, it's a good idea to have it analyzed for any pathogens.

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A SOLID UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT TICK SPECIES ARE LIKELY TO BE FOUND IN YOUR AREA.

The University of Massachusetts, Amherst Laboratory for Medical Zoology can test ticks for more than 20 potential pathogens. Visit www.tickreport.com for instructions.

Another testing facility is Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Collected ticks can be frozen, bagged and mailed to either of these labs with an accompanying form and a fee. A report with information about any pathogens that were detected will be sent to you. Information is available at sites.wp.odu.edu/tick-team.

Anyone who spends time outdoors should be concerned about ticks. But they're not something to panic about, nor should you make drastic changes to the environments they're found in.

It's good to have a solid understanding of what tick species are likely to be found in your area and what diseases they may carry, as well as the steps you can take to minimize the chance of getting bitten.

Even if tick spraying is not on your company's menu of services, protecting yourself and your crews from exposure should not be ignored. 🌿

Phillip Meeks is an educator in the areas of natural resources, agriculture and horticulture. He resides in the mountains of southwest Virginia and can be reached at pmeeks@vt.edu.

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Irrigation Association News

Are you ready for Smart Irrigation Month?

With July right around the corner, the green industry joins the Irrigation Association, Fairfax, Virginia, to celebrate Smart Irrigation Month. The annual campaign is intended to raise public awareness about the benefits and importance of using efficient irrigation practices.



This year's theme is "Smart Irrigation in Action." Landscape and irrigation professionals and companies are encouraged to participate by sharing with their local and online communities how they actively practice smart irrigation.

For resources, social media graphics and other ideas on how to participate, visit www.smartirrigationmonth.org.

Calling all irrigation students and faculty



E3 winners are able to attend the Irrigation Show and Education Week for free. Here they can participate in networking events, take classes and walk the show floor.

Want to win a free trip to the 2019 Irrigation Show and Education Week? The Irrigation Foundation, Fairfax, Virginia, is now accepting applications for its E3 program. The program is open to students and faculty in the irrigation field. Applicants selected for the program will receive an education and travel award for the week-long event in Las Vegas, Dec. 2-6.

At the Irrigation Show, E3 winners are provided the opportunity to take education classes, walk the trade show floor and attend networking sessions.

Visit the www.irrigationfoundation.org to learn more about the program requirements and application process.

Irrigation Foundation awards 21 scholarships

The Irrigation Foundation, Fairfax, Virginia, has announced the winners of its 2019 Irrigation Foundation scholarship program. The program awarded 21 scholarships to deserving recipients studying and pursuing careers in the irrigation field. The annual program, started in 2016, has awarded 57 students since inception.

The scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500, were awarded based on the candidate's letter of intent, financial need, resume, list of irrigation courses and letters of reference.

This year's 21 scholarship winners are enrolled in associate to graduate programs with an irrigation focus. All the recipients have a passion for irrigation and are well on their way to careers in the irrigation industry. To view the list of winners, visit www.irrigationfoundation.org.

The 2020 scholarship program will open this fall with a deadline of Feb. 15, 2020.



GIE+Expo 2019 opens registration

Registration is now open for GIE+Expo 2019. The industry's largest annual gathering is set for Oct. 16-18 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Kentucky. Early bird registration is available online for \$15 through Sept. 5.

GIE+Expo is sponsored by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Alexandria, Virginia; the Professional Grounds Management Society, Forest Hill, Maryland; and the National Association of Landscape Professionals, Fairfax, Virginia.

According to Kris Kiser, managing partner of GIE+Expo and president of OPEI, the combination of new products, demos, networking opportunities and dynamic education makes the show a must-attend event for industry members.



"GIE+Expo is the place to be for landscape professionals and dealers who want to take their company to the next level," says Kiser. "Plan to land in Louisville this October for the industry's biggest show — it's the place to be if you're in the outdoor living and equipment business."

The show floor opens for all attendees at 3 p.m. Wednesday, which includes a welcome reception until 7 p.m. Thursday hours for indoor and outdoor exhibits are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Friday, the indoor exhibits will be open 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., and outdoor exhibits will be open 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"Never Fly Solo," featuring Lt. Col. Rob "Waldo" Waldman is the keynote for the event. Waldman motivates business owners and crew members alike to trust their wingmen, making it a must-see for all. It is set for Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2-3 p.m.

GIE+Expo registration includes several opportunities to win prizes. Attendees will have the opportunity to win both cash and product prizes valued at up to \$20,000. Entries for the Fabulous Friday Giveaway and UTV Giveaway are included with show badges, and many exhibitors plan giveaways for attendees who visit their booths during the show.

For more information and online registration for the trade show and education program, visit www.gie-expo.com.

Hardscape North America Awards now open



The Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute, Chantilly, Virginia, has announced it's now accepting submissions for its 2019 Hardscape North America Awards categories.

The HNA Awards recognize residential and commercial hardscape projects in the U.S. and Canada, including walkways, patios, driveways, commercial plazas, parking lots, streets and more.

Winning and honorable mention awards in 18 categories will be given to hardscape installation contractors. Designers and product manufacturers of winning and honorable mention projects will be recognized at the 2019 HNA trade show during the HNA Awards Recognition Presentation and will be featured in *Interlock Design* magazine, on the HNA website, on social media and in other industry publications.

The deadline for submissions is Sept. 5. Projects entered by Aug. 12 will receive a discount, and members of ICPI, the National Concrete Masonry Association and Brick Industry Association will receive additional discounts for submissions.

For more information or to submit a hardscape project, visit www.hardscapena.com.

ASLA celebrates women in the landscape design profession

Leaders from top architecture and design organizations celebrated women in design at an event co-hosted by Washington, D.C.-based The American Society of Landscape Architects and The American Institute of Architects.

The "Women in Design" event acknowledged the contributions and accomplishments of women in the design field and is part of a series on the importance of expanding diversity in the profession.

"Unfortunately, the design professions are not immune to the kind of racial, ethnic and gender inequity we see in other fields. While there are some incredible examples of women leaders in landscape architecture, women are unfortunately underrepresented in top jobs and projects," says Nancy Somerville, Hon. ASLA, and its executive vice president and CEO.

"The American Society of Landscape Architects is committed to bringing diversity and social equity to our field. Discussions like this one make that possible, and I was proud to sit beside these incredible women leaders to keep the dialogue going," she adds.



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1 MR16 LEDs. FX Luminaire, San Marcos, California, has introduced its new MR16 Eco LED lamp family, intended to provide a high-quality, economical choice for lighting professionals working with limited budgets. They're available with two outputs, two beam angles and one color temperature option.

The lamps have sturdy, lightweight aluminum housings engineered for optimal heat management to prolong LED life. A snap-ring design ensures that optical components remain secure during handling. The lamps have zoning and dimming capabilities when used with a Luxor Low-Voltage Cube lighting controller.

Unlike standard MR-16 and ZD MR-16 lamps, MR-16 Eco lamps are not available pre-installed in FX Luminaire fixtures. Each lamp has a three-year warranty and a 30,000-hour field life.

 **FX Luminaire**
www.fxluminaire.com



2 Biobased herbicide. BioSafe Systems LLC, East Hartford, Connecticut, has announced that its Axxe Broad Spectrum Herbicide product has earned the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Certified Biobased Product label.

To get it, a product must come from a renewable source, such as plant, animal, marine or forestry feedstocks.

Axxe is a sustainable herbicide formulated with ammoniated pelargonic salts. Its active ingredient, ammonium nonanoate, is a plant fatty acid that penetrates the cell walls of weeds, disrupting its cellular functions, killing them within hours of application.

It can be applied around structures and leaves no residue.

 **BioSafe Systems**
www.biosafesystems.com



3 Gas hedge trimmers. Husqvarna, Charlotte, North Carolina, has introduced four new gas-powered hedge trimmers with higher cutting capacities due to a special knife design and gear ratio. Features include two-stage air filters, multiposition handles and open blade guards.

They're lighter than previous models and are balanced so the center of gravity is close to the axis.

The single-sided 522HS75S has a 30-inch high-capacity, high-speed professional cutter knife and leaf catcher.

The three double-sided trimmers include the 522HD60S with a low vibration level and a 24-inch cutter knife; the 522HDR60S, with a 24-inch cutter knife, a high-torque gear and high capacity blades for shaping thick hedges and the 522HDR75S, which has a 30-inch cutter knife, high-capacity blades and a high-torque gear for cutting dense overgrowth.

 **Husqvarna**
www.husqvarna.com

SUPPLIER IN THE NEWS

Winsupply acquires irrigation supplier Baron Distributors

Winsupply Inc., Dayton, Ohio, a supplier of residential and commercial construction and industrial supplies and equipment, has acquired Baron Distributors, a wholesaler and distributor of turf, landscape, golf and agriculture irrigation and landscape supplies with four locations in west Texas and New Mexico.

Baron Distributors has two locations in El Paso doing business as Baron Supply and Baron Irrigation Supply and single locations in Las Cruces and Albuquerque, New Mexico, doing business as Sierra Irrigation Supply and Sierra Supply, respectively.

The four locations will operate under the Winsupply brand: Winsupply of North El Paso, Winsupply of South El Paso, Winsupply of East Las Cruces and Winsupply of South Albuquerque. Four individuals who previously served

as branch managers with Baron Distributors are planning to invest as co-owners, with Winsupply as majority owner of each location. They will have autonomy in decision-making.

“Baron Distributors has established a highly successful, growing group of irrigation distributors in the three southwest locales over its 25-year history,” says Monte Salsman, president of Winsupply Local Company Group. “We see continued growth and strong veteran leadership from the four who are investing personal equity in ownership of their respective locations.”





4 Flow sensor. Creative Sensor Technology, Rochester, Massachusetts, is now shipping to distributors its new ELF (enhanced low flow) sensor, able to measure flow rates from 0.2 gallons per minute up to 20 gpm. One sensor can measure the water demands of small drip zones as well as multizoned residential and commercial landscape sites.

Less than 12 inches long, the unit can be installed in hard-to-reach areas and will fit in a valve box. A solenoid may be attached to its downstream threads, creating a flow sensor/master valve combination. The lightweight impeller features a wear-resistant and self-cleaning bearing, and the electronics are encapsulated in epoxy for underground installation.

It's available in a ¾-inch PVC version with socket connections or a 1-inch glass-filled nylon (Noryl) version with male NPT-threaded connections.

 **Creative Sensor Technology**
www.creativesensortechology.com



5 Stump cutter. Vermeer, Pella, Iowa, has introduced the SC70TX stump cutter, equipped with a 67-horsepower Caterpillar turbocharged Tier 4 Final/Stage IIIB diesel engine that delivers power to the 23-inch cutter wheel (part of the Vermeer Yellow Jacket cutter system), letting it spin at up to 1,560 rpm.

The transport speed of 65 feet per minute lets an operator maneuver quickly from stump to stump. The undercarriage system's 4.3 psi of ground-bearing pressure allows the machine to track quietly and smoothly. The unit's rubber tracks have a tread design that helps reduce the risk of turf damage while turning.

The SmartSweep control system automatically adjusts the cutter wheel sweep speed to reduce engine stress. The wheel stops the moment an operator lets go of the control handles. A remote control is optional.

 **Vermeer**
www.vermeer.com



6 Noncaustic lime. First Saturday Lime, Okarche, Oklahoma, manufactures an insoluble hydrated lime that doesn't react with moisture on skin or in water, making it stronger than quarry or barn lime, but safe and noncaustic unlike regular hydrated lime.

It's both a pest repellent and a pest killer, as it dries out ants, mites and fleas and their eggs and larvae. When used around a structure, insects view it as inhospitable. It reduces and prevents algae growth in standing water and kills and repels breeding mosquitoes. Nontoxic in water, it can be used to correct pH in ponds.

When used on lawns, it neutralizes hydrogen byproducts from fertilizer making it up to 50% more effective, according to the company. It is designed to last indefinitely, even in extreme weather such as high winds or flooding.

 **First Saturday Lime**
www.firstsaturdaylime.com

SUPPLIER IN THE NEWS

New platform helps people find green industry professionals, services

Landscape Go, a West Point, Georgia-based platform that connects residential and commercial property owners with landscape and outdoor professionals and related service providers in their town or in the surrounding area recently launched. It serves not only landscape and lawn maintenance contractors, but also irrigation professionals, landscape architects, hardscape and grading contractors, sod farms and pool, water feature and outdoor living area builders as well as wholesale and retail plant nurseries.

The concept behind Landscape Go is to make it easy for people looking for any of the professionals or services listed above to find a local provider.

"We're extremely excited to present the landscaping industry with a high quality platform that is effective and affordable for industry professionals and extremely easy for the

people who are seeking those professionals," says Andrew Fears, founder and CEO.

Fears says he founded Landscape Go because he was "tired of the misrepresentation of the landscape industry by other online platforms. Landscape Go allows thousands of property owners to find the professionals they need within seconds. This platform was created to specifically cater to landscape industry professionals and the property owners looking for them. We're here to serve the landscape industry and all the hard-working professionals in it." For more information, go to www.landscapego.com.



●● **PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**



7 Cordless coffee maker. Makita USA Inc., La Mirada, California, has a new Cordless Coffee Maker, great for early mornings on the job site. A single cup takes five minutes, and it can brew up to three 5-ounce cups of coffee on a single charge of an 18-volt LXT lithium-ion battery (sold separately).

It can also run on the company's 12-volt CXT lithium-ion battery. It's a nice addition for contractors who already own batteries and chargers for other Makita cordless tools.

No paper filters are needed. You simply add the correct amount of ground drip coffee or a premeasured single-serve pack and water.

The compact unit comes with an 8-ounce removable water tank, a measuring spoon, a Makita coffee mug with lid and a permanent drip filter.

 **Makita USA**
www.makitatools.com



8 Spreader attachment. Ryan, Johnson Creek, Wisconsin, has announced a new electric spreader attachment manufactured by Spyker for the Lawnaire ZTS stand-on aerator. This attachment allows aeration and overseeding with the same machine.

The spreader's hopper holds up to 120 pounds of material, so operators can complete large tasks with fewer refills. Variable speed control is standard, mounted within arm's reach of the operator platform, allowing for easy control of a spread swath of up to 16 feet.

Using the AccuWay adjustment cable, an operator can adjust material flow forward or backward, maintaining a balanced spread pattern. An exclusive mounting kit, custom-designed to fit on the Lawnaire ZTS, allows simple, accurate, secure attachment without any need for cutting, drilling or fabrication.

 **Ryan**
www.ryanturf.com



9 Top dresser. Earth and Turf Products LLC, New Holland, Pennsylvania, has introduced the Model 45HP top dresser, which the company claims is the first human-powered compost spreader.

The 30-inch-wide walk-behind will spread screened compost with up to 25% moisture content on lawns and small turf areas. The unit's three-wheeled design makes it maneuverable even in tight quarters.

The unit features a 4.5-cubic-foot hopper capacity to keep reloading to a minimum. A reciprocating patent-pending screen design produces an even, full-width 1/8- to 1/4-inch-thick spread pattern in just one pass.

 **Earth and Turf Products LLC**
www.earthandturf.com

SUPPLIER IN THE NEWS

Kubota and Titan form exclusivity agreement for Goodyear R14 crossover tire

Titan International Inc., Quincy, Illinois, and Grapevine, Texas-based Kubota Tractor Corp./Kubota Canada Limited have announced an exclusivity agreement to put Goodyear R14 crossover tires on select Kubota compact tractor models. It's a move that further strengthens the longstanding relationship between two industry leaders in compact tractors and compact tractor tires.

Prior to entering into the agreement, Kubota conducted significant testing on the Goodyear R14 tire, which features a new-to-market hybrid tread design combining elements of an ag tread (R-1), turf tread (R-3) and industrial tread (R-4). The results from slip and vibration testing showed the R14 tire as being the ideal fit between an R-1 and R-4.

According to Kubota, that's where the industry needs to move. "The vast majority of compact tractors are being sold

with R-4 tires, but there's a drawback when it comes to traction," says Jacob Sherman, Kubota product manager, compact tractors.

"After testing the R14, we knew it could perform equally as well in the variety of snow, field, yard, loader and pasture applications our customers expect from our machines," continues Sherman.

"We're really proud of the research and development that went into this R14 tire," says Scott Sloan, ag product manager for Titan and Goodyear Farm Tires. "We knew there was a serious unmet need when it came to tire versatility in the compact and subcompact market."

For more information, visit www.titan-intl.com/R14T.



Keeping “fields of dreams” green

Green fields and efficient sprinkler systems might not sound like the typical components that support spinal cord injury research and awareness, but for the Travis Roy Foundation, they were important in aiding its overall mission.

The Travis Roy Foundation hosts an annual Wiffle ball tournament in Essex, Vermont, to raise money for spinal cord injury research. For the three fields in this one-of-a-kind facility, the foundation needed a smart irrigation and pump control system to keep the fields green and lush. Goulds Water Technology, Orlando, Florida, was selected to provide an efficient system to maintain the fields all season.



Fenway Park

Field of Dreams

Wrigley Field



The problem

The Wiffle ball park is comprised of three full-scale replicas of famous baseball parks: Wrigley Field, Fenway Park and the one from the movie “Field of Dreams.” “Little Wrigley,” as the Wrigley replica is called, features ivy and a chalk-style scoreboard. “Little Fenway” is complete with its very own green monster and mini Citgo sign in left field. And the “Little Field of Dreams” is surrounded by cornstalks.

“We host the tournament entirely on all three fields, and that’s a lot of grounds to maintain and keep green,” says Pat O’Connor, tournament director. “I have been responsible for the fields for the past 17 years. It was very labor-intensive since I had to drag hoses around the field to properly water everything.”

O’Connor consulted with local well drilling, irrigation and lawn maintenance dealers and contractors to find a solution that was good for the fields and would allow O’Connor to dedicate more time to other matters of the foundation.



The solution

Spafford and Sons Water Wells in Jericho, Vermont, was selected to help lead the installation of the new sprinkler, pump and pump monitoring systems. The Spafford team installed a GWT Aquavar SOLO 2 constant pressure system with a NEMA 3R enclosure and a 1.5-horsepower 18-gpm GS four-inch submersible pump.

“By coupling the GS pump with the Aquavar SOLO 2, we are able to help ensure constant pressure control and monitoring to optimize performance of the entire system,” says Chris Preston, residential water product manager, Xylem AWS.

Summary

In its 16-year history, the Travis Roy Foundation has raised more than \$4.6 million for spinal cord injury research and grants. With the new GWT pump system, the Wiffle ball park can stay in top shape all season and not just when the area receives sufficient rainfall. This allows the Travis Roy Foundation to focus on increasing participation in tournaments and advocacy for spinal cord injury research.

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●● BRANCHING OUT



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GET READY FOR A WET, HOT AMERICAN SUMMER

If you've looked at this year's summer weather forecast, you may be having déjà vu. Many parts of the country experienced an extremely rainy summer last year, and the forecast for summer 2019 doesn't look much different. Get ready to live in a swamp for the next couple of months because *Farmers' Almanac* predicts big storms, rain, humidity and heat in much of the country:

- **New England, the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast:** muggy and wet
- **Southeast:** sweltering, thundery
- **Midwest:** scorching and showery
- **Southwest and West:** sizzling, average precipitation
- **Great Lakes and Ohio Valley:** normal temperatures and stormy
- **Pacific Northwest:** dry with average temperatures



Trending topics

HERDS OF HELPERS

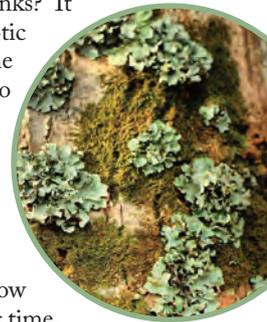
An eco-friendly landscaping solution that's become trendy over the past few years is "goat scaping." Various entities from schools to local government cities to individual homeowners are renting herds to help clear land. With seemingly bottomless stomachs, these animals can chomp down quite a bit of vegetation. The goats are capable of eating about 8 to 10 pounds of food per day.

One unique benefit is goats are able to consume plants that humans are allergic to, like poison ivy and poison oak. They also have the ability to navigate areas that are too steep or rocky for humans. Herds are even being employed in areas like California as a part of a creative approach to preventing wildfires from spreading from trees and plants to homes and businesses. Who knew fire prevention could be so kid-friendly?

What's growing on the side of my tree?

Have you ever wondered, "What's that stuff growing on tree trunks?" It is an organism called lichens. Lichens are epiphytes — a symbiotic relationship between an algae and a fungus. It uses the tree or the palm trunk as a support, and it's a good sign: It means there is no pollution around. Here are four fun facts about them:

- 1 Shape:** Lichens appear in many different forms, from little bluish-greenish spots to pieces that are protruding. They can be tall and thick or remain close to the trunk.
- 2 Growing space:** Lichens can grow on a variety of trees from the trunks of royal palms to oak trees. They even grow on rocks or even cars that have been stationary for a long time.
- 3 Color:** Lichens can have various different colors. They have been found in silver, green, orange, yellow, red and brown. When wet, they are usually a bright green to olive gray.
- 4 Space travel:** Scientists have encapsulated lichens and sent them into space, brought them back to earth and examined them. The lichens did not change whatsoever. They stayed alive and not affected by space travel.
(Source: BrightView Landscapes)



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