

IRRIGATION & green industry®

JULY 2021

THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR LANDSCAPE, IRRIGATION AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTORS • WWW.IGIN.COM

Stretching out \$SAVINGS

Updating to **smart controllers** on 18 miles of L.A.'s Metro Orange Line made a **big difference**.



+ INSIDE

Don't boss your crews, lead them, p. 24

Meet the next generation of pros, p. 32

Protect the lawn from fall weeds, p. 40

Changing the Landscape Awards:
Irrigation winner, page 36

A SMARTER WAY TO WORK AROUND A TOUGH SITUATION



NEVER TUNNEL UNDER OR CUT THROUGH A SIDEWALK TO INSTALL A FLOW SENSOR AGAIN! When hardscape is in the way, the Wireless HC Flow Meter delivers critical flow data without labor-intensive trenches or costly wires. Simply pair the wireless transmitter and receiver with any HC Flow Meter to enable reliable flow-monitoring capabilities for your Hydrawise control system.

For the ultimate in control and cost savings, **upgrade your Hydrawise system with the Wireless HC Flow Meter.**



<https://hunter.info/WHCflow>



RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL IRRIGATION
Learn more. Visit hunterindustries.com



Wireless HC Flow Meter



Reliable flow and electrical monitoring with Hydrawise

IRRIGATION & green industry®

July 2021 | Volume 25 | Issue 6



20

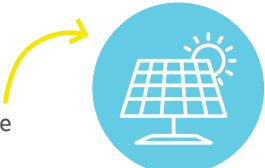


36



Features

- 14 Cover Story: Stretching out savings**
Updating to smart controllers on 18 miles of L.A.'s Metro Orange Line made a big difference.
- 20 Close-up Profile: Ben Collinsworth**
The general manager of Yellowstone Landscape explores robotic and battery technologies.
- 24 Stop bossing your crew around**
Support your employees by building around objectives and delegating effectively.
- 26 Solar, software and savings**
New trends in smart irrigation controllers take advantage of technology.
- 32 Growing into the role**
Look to the future with the next generation of pro landscape leaders.
- 36 Installing from design**
Sinc Contractors brought multiple water sources together in a single system.
- 40 Defend the lawn**
Beat fall weeds with strong maintenance practices and proper chemical applications.



page 18
Focus on sustainable solutions for Smart Irrigation Month.

In this issue

- From the Editor 4
- Market Watch 6
- Green Business Brief 8
- Marketing Matters 10
- Night Lighting..... 12
- Associations in Action..... 44
- Product Spotlight..... 46
- Ad Index 49
- Branching Out 50

Show your growth

Brag about boosting your revenue with the Watch Us Grow: 2021 Industry Standouts program: www.igin.com/watch-us-grow





It doesn't matter whether your company is large or small, we want to highlight how you've made your business successful.

KYLE BROWN

Photo: Nikki Avramovich

Show off your success

One of the ways that irrigation work differs from other landscape projects is that even after the job is done, most of the evidence is underground, out of sight. An irrigation system is judged more by what it provides in water savings and a lush landscape than the quality of well-planned pipelines.

That's part of why it's important to recognize success where we can. I'm excited to share our next winner of the Changing the Landscape Awards: Irrigation category, which you'll find featured in this print issue. While the entries for this category might not have been as visually dazzling as some of the Landscape entries, everyone who entered should be extremely proud of their work. There were so many creative solutions and intricate designs in this set. I think irrigation professionals often show some of their best work when problem-solving in the field.

This month is also the perfect time to talk about our next upcoming project, Watch Us Grow: 2021 Industry Standouts. This program celebrates professionals who provide irrigation or landscape lighting services who have seen company growth in the past year.

One of the biggest ways Watch Us Grow: 2021 Industry Standouts is different from

other benchmarking programs and industry lists is that we're not looking only for the highest earners or the biggest names. What's more important to us is the increase in revenue for irrigation or landscape lighting work for the past year and the story behind it. It doesn't matter whether your company is large or small, we want to highlight how you've made your business successful. I'd be really thrilled to hear from more compact companies that have made headway in the last year in either sector.

Also, did I mention that sharing your company's growth enters you into a contest for a DJI Mini 2 quadcopter drone, provided by program sponsor Heritage Landscape Supply Group? Just another reason to submit that application.

Several of the best success stories for both irrigation and landscape lighting will be featured in a series of company profiles in an upcoming print edition full of tips and insights alongside other benchmarking data.

Find out more about how to enter your company by July 16 at www.igin.com/watch-us-grow. Just because much of your incredible work stays underground doesn't mean you can't brag about your company's growth. Share your story and let us help! 🌱

IRRIGATION & green industry

The business magazine for landscape, irrigation and maintenance contractors

Irrigation & Green Industry is published 10 times per year by the Irrigation Association
8280 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr., Ste. 630
Fairfax, VA 22031
T: 703.536.7080 • F: 703.536.7019

Publisher
Deborah Hamlin

Associate Publisher
Trisha Klaus

Editor-in-Chief
Kyle Brown
330.353.8874
kylebrown@igin.com

Senior Editor
Anne Blankenbiller

Digital Content Editor
Sarah Bunyea

Business Development Director
Stephanie Clark
703.472.5810
stephanieclark@igin.com

National Sales Representatives
Central U.S.
Tom Schoen
952.905.3214
tom.schoen@bock-assoc.com

East, West, International & Classifieds
Tara Schelling
215.588.5811
taraschelling@igin.com

Creative Director
Sean Burris

Database Coordinator
Andreina Orozco-Rodriguez

IGIN Advisory Council
Sharon Vessels, chair
David Cray, vice chair
Judy Guido, past chair
Eric Santos, board liaison
Alexis Bookman
Perry Bruggeman
Bruce Moore Jr.
Dawn Norris
Tessa Norton

Founder
Denne Goldstein

Irrigation & Green Industry (ISSN 1521-7620 [print] and ISSN 2689-8675 [online]) is published 10 times per year by the Irrigation Association, 8280 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr., Ste. 630, Fairfax, VA 22031. Subscriptions are free to qualified landscape and irrigation professionals; publisher reserves the right to determine qualification. Subscribe online at www.igin.com/subscribe. Nonqualified subscription rates: one year: \$55; two years: \$80; one year surface mail foreign: \$95; single copy: \$8. Copyright 2021. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be produced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Irrigation & Green Industry, 8280 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr., Ste. 630, Fairfax, VA 22031.

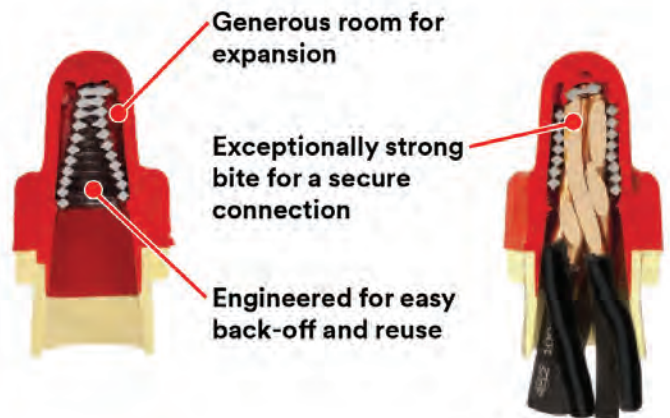
Follow us!





The difference is in the connector!

- Conical Spring has sharp points that bite into the copper conductors of the wire for solid connection.
- The tip of the Conical Spring has a small arm that prevents it from spinning when removing the connector from the wires.



3M Direct Bury Splices — DBR/Y-6 and DBO/B-6

We consider these water-resistant* connectors the absolute best for landscape irrigation (both conventional and 2-Wire) and outdoor lighting applications.

- 600-volt rating. Can be used in virtually any irrigation or lighting splice
- UV-resistant – Can be installed above or below ground
- Can be safely used in virtually any country - UL listed for the USA and Canada. Also Meets Directive 2006/95/EC and IEC standards EN61984:2009, EN60998- 1:2004 and EN60998-2-4:2005.
- Long history of performance – this family of connectors has been successfully used in landscape irrigation and lighting applications since 1985.
- Proudly made in the USA by the 3M Company.



Paige[®]
irrigation
& landscape lighting
<http://www.paigewire.com>

Available from Paige Electric Co., LP
(Master Distributor for 3M)

Paige#	3M Model#	Connector Color
270672	DBR/Y-6	Red/Yellow
270674	DBO/B-6	Orange/Blue

*Not for continuous submersion in water
*3M is a registered trademark of the 3M Company

INVESTORS CORNER

Caterpillar and the Caterpillar Foundation donate \$3.4 million

Deerfield, Illinois-based Caterpillar Inc. and the Caterpillar Foundation, the company's philanthropic arm, announced a series of relief efforts to support countries struggling with a significant rise of COVID-19 cases.

"Supporting communities in need around the world aligns with the Caterpillar Foundation's strategy and our company's values," says Jim Umpleby, Caterpillar chairman and CEO. "Through partnering with relief organizations, the generosity of our employees and the Foundation's platform, we are helping fight the spread of

COVID-19 and give frontline workers resources to act quickly and save lives."

The Caterpillar Foundation is giving \$1 million to help India's health system deliver care to families and communities by funding medical equipment and critical medical supplies. In addition to the Foundation's efforts, Caterpillar India is providing an initial contribution of \$1.4 million. Independent Cat dealers are also contributing oxygen solutions to address the shortage.

In Brazil, the Foundation is donating \$250,000 to help coordinate with local

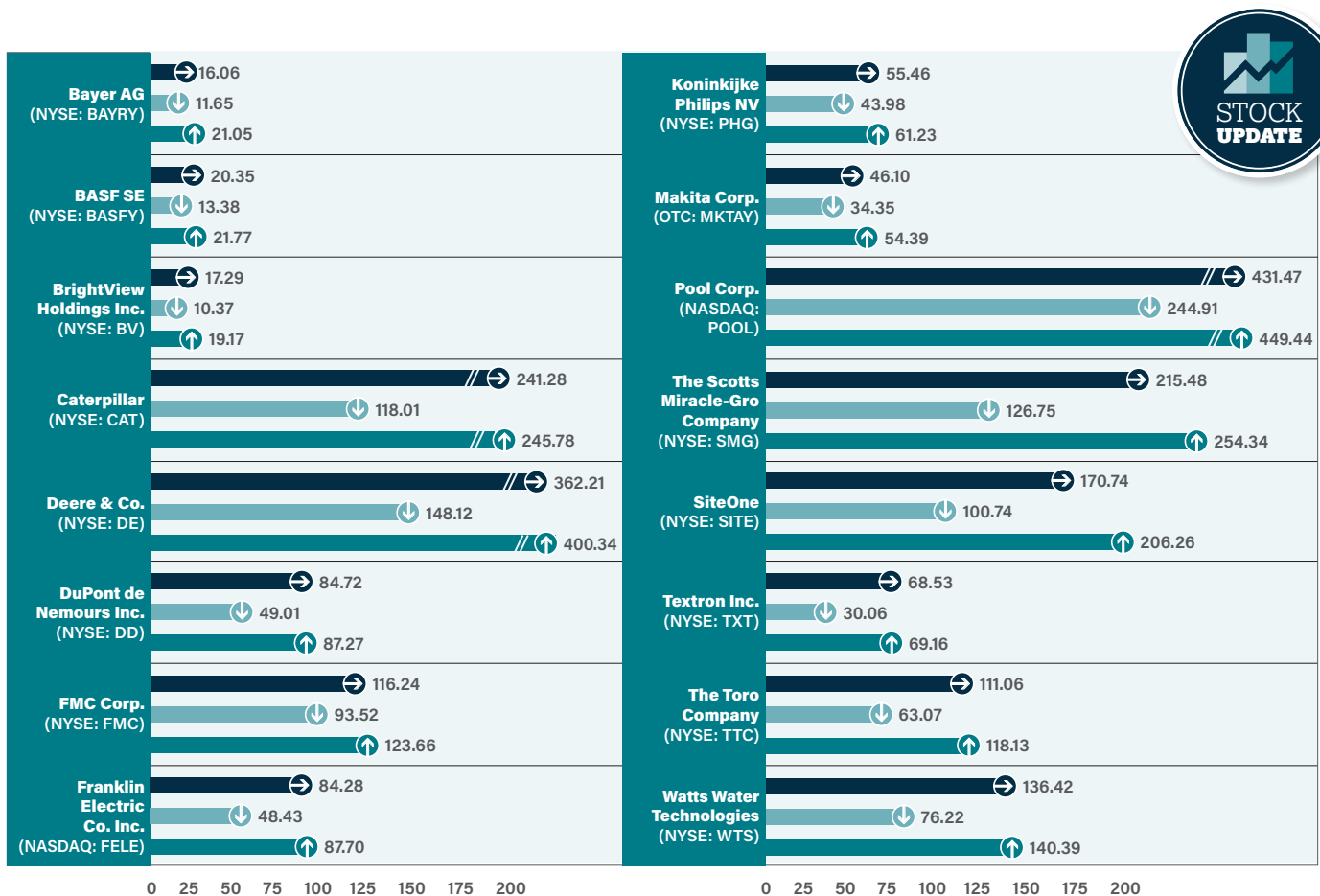


partners to deliver essential medical and basic service supplies to hospitals and communities.

The Caterpillar Foundation, through its partnership with the U.N. Foundation and the World Health Organization Foundation, is supporting the COVAX initiative to promote equitable access to COVID-19 vaccinations with a \$500,000 gift. This partnership will help increase access to vaccines across the globe, including in India. Additionally, to continue the emergency relief work and address vaccine hesitancy, particularly among rural, Black and Hispanic communities in the United States, the Foundation is investing \$250,000 to support the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative's COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative, "It's Up To You." 🌱

"Supporting communities in need around the world aligns with the Caterpillar Foundation's strategy and our company's values."

- Jim Umpleby, Caterpillar



➡ Last trade (6-1-21) ⬇ 52-week low ⬆ 52-week high; Source: Bloomberg.com



**CONNECT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS
AND THEIR SMART IRRIGATION
SYSTEMS FROM ANYWHERE.**

ALL FROM THE CONVENIENCE
OF YOUR BACK POCKET.

Monitor, adjust and receive notifications for multiple sites from anywhere with the B-hyve Pro™ app and smart HRC 400 Wi-Fi/Bluetooth controller. Now you can finally manage your work the same way you manage everything else — from your phone.



INTRODUCING
THE HRC 400 CONTROLLER WITH
THE B-HYVE PRO™ APP.

BHYVE.HYDRORAIN.COM





This month's online exclusives

Visit www.igin.com to read these new articles, only available on our website.

Running on empty

The East Coast landscaping industry responds to the fuel shortage.

Pandemic provides public support for pesticide regulation

Recent opinion poll shows acknowledgment of both federal and state laws.

Hiring

Rain Bird names regional manager for Southeast Asia

Rain Bird, Azusa, California, appointed Mark Donohue as its new regional manager for the Southeast Asia market.

In his new role, Donohue will manage the development of Rain Bird's sales organization in Southeast Asia, and he will be tasked with growing Rain Bird's golf, landscape and agriculture businesses in all Southeast Asian territories, excluding Japan and Korea.

Donohue joined Rain Bird as a regional manager for Canada in 2016. Over the past five years, he built a landscape sales team, expanded the company's distribution network and delivered business results. In recognition of his efforts, Donohue received a 2020 Rain Bird Achievement Award for Long Term Growth Orientation.

Before joining Rain Bird, Donohue spent five years as the national sales manager for ITW Construction Products, Canada in Markham, Ontario. Currently based near Toronto, Donohue and his family will relocate to Singapore as soon as pandemic travel restrictions allow.



Photo: Rain Bird

Manufacturers

Toro Irrigation partners with Gentile & Associates

The Toro Company, Bloomington, Minnesota, partnered its irrigation and lighting business with Gentile & Associates Inc., a manufacturer representation firm with expertise in commercial landscape irrigation. The G&A team will represent Toro- and Irritrol-branded commercial irrigation offerings, which includes drip and low-volume irrigation products, high-efficiency spray bodies and nozzles, and central control and commercial controller systems.

This partnership centers on expanding Toro's commercial irrigation presence across Southern California and Hawaii through G&A specifier and landscape architect relationships and professional sales team.

"We are very excited to partner with Gentile & Associates and look forward to the unquestionable benefit their presence will bring with-in of our sales organization," says John Torosian, national specification sales manager for Toro. "The G&A team brings experience, professionalism and capability to the team, and we're thrilled to have them on board."



Legal

Bayer presents five-point plan to address potential future Roundup claims

Bayer, Leverkusen, Germany, announced a series of actions it plans to implement following the denial of the motion to preliminarily approve the Roundup class settlement agreement, designed to address potential future litigation, by Judge Vince Chhabria of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

The five-point plan includes the following:

1. The company will create and promote a new website with scientific studies relevant to Roundup's safety and request that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approve corresponding language on Roundup labels. This will include a reference link to the label for all Roundup products that will take consumers and professional users to a website the company will maintain and promote containing scientific studies relevant to the safety concerns at issue in the litigation.
2. While the company will remain in the residential lawn and garden market, it will immediately engage with partners to discuss the future of glyphosate-based products in the U.S. residential market, as the overwhelming majority of claimants in the Roundup litigation allege that they used Roundup lawn and garden products. None of these discussions will affect the availability of glyphosate-based products in markets for professional and agricultural users.
3. The company will look into solutions for future claims settlements and an independent science advisory panel. The company will explore alternative solutions aimed at addressing potential future Roundup claims. The company also will explore the creation of an independent scientific advisory panel comprised of external scientific experts to review scientific information regarding the safety of Roundup. The results would be released publicly and added to the website, actions that reflect both the company's confidence in the safety of Roundup.
4. Ongoing efforts to settle existing claims will be reassessed. The company will continue to be open to settlement discussions, as long as claimants are qualified and resolutions can be reached on appropriate terms.
5. While not new actions, the appeals of the Hardeman and Pilliod cases will continue through the legal process and can also help manage future liability risk.



Irrigation**SiteOne launches irrigation controller recycling program**

Photo: SiteOne Landscape Supply

SiteOne Landscape Supply, Roswell, Georgia, is launching a program designed to save money and the environment during Smart Irrigation Month. With the new “Upgrade. Save. Recycle,” program, contractors who bring in an old controller will receive an immediate 15% discount on a smart, Wi-Fi-enabled irrigation controller.

The program helps the environment by making it easy to upgrade less-efficient units to the current generation of smart and Wi-Fi-enabled controllers, which save a significant amount of water. Each branch location has a drop-off box to make it as simple as possible to recycle old

controllers and keep them out of landfills.

“Our new program allows contractors to experience the benefits and efficiency of smart controllers firsthand, while also feeling good about making a difference for our environment and community,” says Luis Andrade, irrigation category manager for SiteOne Landscape Supply. “We are proud to offer a wide variety of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-certified WaterSense products that are designed to encourage water efficiency, and we continue to work with our suppliers to introduce new eco-friendly products and programs to help the environment and improve customer experience.”

Branding**Blount rebrands as Oregon Tool**

Blount Inc., Portland, Oregon, unveiled a new corporate name that honors its heritage: Oregon Tool. The global manufacturer of professional-grade cutting tools and equipment selected Oregon Tool as its new name to harness the power of its pioneering origin story.

OREGON TOOL

The company was founded by Joe Cox in 1947 in the basement of his Portland home. He designed a new saw chain that was modeled after the timber beetle larva’s alternating C-shape jaws and started the Oregon Saw Chain Corp. to produce it.

“We are certainly proud of where we’ve been and where we are, but we’re even more excited about where we’re going as Oregon Tool,” says Paul Tonnesen, CEO of Oregon Tool. “Because Oregon is the undisputed leader in the global bar and saw chain market, we are confident the inspiration and momentum inherent in the name Oregon Tool will help our organization achieve our goals in the years ahead, including aggressive growth across brands and launching into adjacent categories.”

Tonnesen says the brands and products will remain the same and will operate under the umbrella of Oregon Tool instead of Blount.



Photo: Takeuchi-US

Manufacturers**Takeuchi recognizes Cobb County Tractor for high sales volume**

Takeuchi-US, Atlanta, honored Cobb County Tractor, Marietta, Georgia, for having the highest sales volume of all Takeuchi dealers in North America during 2020. As a Takeuchi equipment dealer, Cobb County Tractor supplies the consumer, construction, landscape and agricultural markets in Marietta and the Metro-Atlanta area.

“The owners and staff at Cobb County Tractor have an innate understanding of what their customers need to be productive and efficient,” says Steve DePriest, southeast regional business manager for Takeuchi. “They combine that expertise with extensive product knowledge to direct customers to the Takeuchi machines that will help them achieve their goals — and their results speak for themselves. We’re extremely pleased with the job they’ve done representing the Takeuchi product line.”

**QUICK TAKES****Nominations are open for 2021 Green Industry Hall of Fame inductees**

The Green Industry Hall of Fame is now accepting nominations for 2021. This honor seeks to recognize the contributions of exceptional individuals who have been in the green industry for more than 20 years and have made significant changes that impact the industry in a positive way. The nomination deadline is July 5, 2021.

Top Gun Facility Services acquires Emerald Isle Landscaping

Denver-based Top Gun Facility Services, a portfolio company of Osceola Capital, acquired Emerald Isle Landscaping, expanding the company’s suite of services into the Denver commercial landscape market.

Beehive Brick & Stone joins the Heritage family of companies

Heritage Landscape Supply Group Inc., McKinney, Texas, acquired Beehive Brick & Stone, a family-owned distributor of pavers, natural and manufactured stone, brick and other complementary landscape products. Beehive operates two locations: a showroom in Sandy, Utah, and an inventory yard in Salt Lake City.

Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply opens new location

Phoenix-based Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply opened a new location in Indio, California. It will service a variety of green industry professionals, such as irrigation and landscaping contractors, golf course superintendents and sports fields managers.



BY STACIE ZINN ROBERTS

A room full of ‘Smart People’

In marketing and in life in general, I believe it’s critical to surround yourself with people who know things that you don’t know. It’s what I call my “Room Full of Smart People” rule. Let me illustrate.

You’re sitting in a room full of folks who have come together for a meeting on a particular topic. It soon becomes completely obvious that you’re the only one there who knows anything about the subject matter. Oh, boy. So, instead of a conversation, it soon becomes a question-and-answer period, a picking of your brain, a monologue. No fun, right? You might as well have stayed home and written a manifesto on the topic because nothing you don’t already know is going to come about from this meeting.

Now, consider another scenario. You’re in a room full of experts, each one with their own informed professional perspective. The conversation is lively. Perhaps there’s a debate. Someone grabs a Sharpie and attacks a whiteboard with enthusiasm.

Which meeting would you rather attend? The second one, right? The Room Full of Smart People.

Bringing together a group of “Smart People” in your company is a way to make sure you’re bringing the best ideas forward for your operation, your customers and your bottom line. While it’s great to have your own personal vision for the business, everyone has blind spots. It takes a group of people who are able to look at things from multiple perspectives to cover as many angles as possible. Associating with people of different ages, backgrounds and life experiences can help you get a tighter grip on what your customers’ likes and needs might be, especially if your customer target audience is older, younger, or different from you in some way. Diver-

sity in hiring is not just about social equity, it’s good business because it offers you a varied point of view.

Hiring Smart People will help you develop and implement fresh ideas and could actually make it even easier to continue hiring quality employees. As your employees notice that you really listen to suggestions and are open to other opinions, it’ll build a more open culture in your business that’s attractive to potential hires looking for growth.

I’ve got a few Smart People in my back pocket, folks I’ll call upon as the need arises, and not all of them work for me. While it’s good to have those other perspectives on-staff, sometimes it’s helpful to have an outside voice who can speak to a tough situation without necessarily having skin in the game or their paycheck on the line. Mentors who don’t work for you but who understand your industry can offer invaluable insights. Mastermind groups through your Chamber of Commerce or similar organizations can help you get a handle on your local marketplace. Organizations like the Irrigation Association offer insightful resources, and the annual Irrigation Show and Education Week provides the chance to meet other business owners who are facing similar challenges to your own. Consultants who offer an expertise that you don’t possess, such as accountants, attorneys, computer/IT techs and marketing professionals can become secret weapons in your Smart People arsenal.

Running a business is tough enough. Doing it all by yourself can be exhausting. Whenever you have the opportunity, surround yourself with people who know what you don’t know. Cultivate those relationships. Be open to new ideas and new ways of thinking about your business. Believe me, it’s the quickest path to success. Plus, it makes the journey a whole lot more interesting. 🌱



Bringing together a group of “Smart People” in your company is a way to make sure you’re **bringing the best ideas forward** for your operation, your customers and your bottom line.



Stacie Zinn Roberts is an award-winning writer, marketing expert and founder of What’s Your Avocado? Marketing and Public Relations, Mount Vernon, Washington, which specializes in green industry marketing. She can be reached at stacie@whatsyouravocado.com.



SITEMASTER™

2-Wire Decoder Controller

**For use on large commercial,
industrial and residential sites.**

Easy setup and advanced diagnostics set the K-Rain SiteMaster 2-wire decoder controller apart from the rest. Sporting a large display screen, full on-screen keyboard and a 99 zone capability, the SiteMaster is the most simple and intuitive 2-wire decoder controller yet. Master *your* next site. krain.com #krain



K-RAIN | Designed for easy. Built for reliable.

BY KEVIN SMITH

Illuminating history



Throughout the world there are many historic buildings and monuments that require illumination. Many have been in place even before electric lighting was invented. I am sure you can think of several not far from your area or some you have visited over the years.

Historic structures always have unique facets reflecting the time of their construction. Many have been designed by famous architects. Much of the focus should be on its theatrical qualities. Just like any lighting job, we must always ask the question, “Why light?” Lighting historic structures requires that the designer create a balance between the architecture and the landscape. Here are a few things to consider in the design scheme.

Location. Historic structures can be in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, ambient light levels could be nonexistent. This means light levels must not overwhelm the structure or the surrounding areas. In urban areas, high levels of ambient light could pose a challenge. Both lighting scenarios require the use of precision beam angles and shielding. Doing this limits the potential for light trespass to neighboring areas.

Condition of the structure. The physical condition of the structure also needs to be taken into consideration in the lighting design. Some properties are constantly maintained and restored. This allows the visitors to experience the structure as it was in the period in which it was built. Some historic structures continue aging, revealing a rich patina. Consider the main focal points of the structure. What is the most important feature to illuminate? Identify the ideal Kelvin temperature or color to complement the structure and its surroundings.

Hours of operation & fixture placement. The hours of operation of a historic site have a lot to do with fixture placement. If the structure is closed during the evening hours, the lighting sources could be placed in a way to create focus on the structure. This might include the use of mounting poles and flood lights. To create the right effect, the fixtures may

need to be positioned in a visible area. If the area is closed to the public in the evening, no one will see the light source and will take in the view from a distance.

Take an alternative design approach when a facility is open during evening hours. The fixtures illuminating the structure need to be hidden to avoid glare. Louvered well lights recessed in the concrete can be used to graze the structure. You could try positioning higher light output fixtures from neighboring structures on the same property. Be sure to include area and path lighting in the design to allow visitors to travel safely.

Natural areas with wildlife. Historic structures can often be surrounded by natural areas, like open land, forests or wetlands. Conduct research to ensure the lighting is friendly to the natural environment. The wildlife that resides there can be directly affected by certain colors and Kelvin temperatures. Visit the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service at [fws.gov/offices](https://www.fws.gov/offices) to find details for your state.

Additionally, these areas may need to comply with dark-sky requirements. You can learn more from the International Dark-Sky Association at [darksky.org](https://www.darksky.org).

Working with planning departments. It is a good idea to work closely with the planning department for a historic site, should one exist. Discuss their wish list, budget and the lighting that the scenario requires. As we all know, the sky is the limit on what can be done. The overall goals for lighting and budget give you proper direction to design and implement a plan that meets the client’s expectations.

Giving back. Do you have a local historic monument that needs illumination? Perhaps it is a memorial to the veterans from your town or another spot that is meaningful to you. A good way to give back is to provide illumination to this area at little or no charge. Perhaps you could include a small plaque listing your company name. Maybe the organization could acknowledge you regarding the new lighting in a newsletter or social media post.

All historic properties have a story to tell. Help bring that story to life with the right lighting. 🌿



It is a good idea to **work closely** with the **planning department** for a historic site, should one exist.



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

KwikTap[™]

Professional Quality

A SUPERIOR **TOOL-LESS** SADDLE TEE
FOR POLYETHYLENE PIPE AND
PVC CLASS 160 & 200 PIPE



- PE: 3/4" to 1 1/2"
- Metric: 25mm & 32mm
- 3/4" & 1" Class 160 & 200 PVC pipe
- Outlets available: 1/2" & 3/4" FPT, Funny/Swing Elbow, Straight Adapter or 17mm Drip Adapter

- No Tools Required
- No Snaps or Straps
- Swing & Drip fittings pre-installed and are removable for onsite customizations

THE MOST SECURE FITTINGS ON THE MARKET



www.dawnindustries.com
800.321.7246

Patent Number 7150289



Stretching out \$SAVINGS

BY KYLE BROWN



Updating to smart controllers on 18 miles of L.A.'s Metro Orange Line made a big difference.



As drought concerns continue to increase especially in the western U.S., smart irrigation system upgrades are becoming more necessary to make the best use of the available water supply. That was especially true for the L.A. Metro department, Los Angeles, as it considered its Orange Line, an 18-mile stretch of right-of-way land that encompassed more than 1,000 zones.

Water costs had gone from about \$437,000 in 2014 up to \$748,000 in 2018, according to a project summary. The department was looking to save money and incorporate newer technology into the system to keep track of leaks and wasted water. The existing system was at least 10 years old already.

The request for proposal involved Tetra Tech Inc., Pasadena, California, which was working with Geosyntec Engineering Inc., Los Angeles, and L.A. Metro on water conservation. Bill Kabaker, president of Precise Landscape Water Conservation, Los Angeles, worked with both companies on the upgrade plans.

Woods Landscape Maintenance, North Hollywood, California, has had contracts with Los Angeles Metro for about 20 years mostly for maintenance work. The company does all its work with municipalities. Not only does it handle landscape and irrigation, it also does work with graffiti abatement and cleaning. The company, which has about 120 employees, is newer to irrigation services, having expanded into it about 10 years ago, but it has been in business for 45 years overall.

Jeff Woods, general manager, and Mario Accosta, supervisor, met with Kabaker and several vendors for suggestions and proposals and to discuss how best to do the project in a short timeframe “that would satisfy everyone, because they needed this done in that fiscal year,” says Woods. “They had the money to work with, and it was a ‘spend-it-or-lose-it’ type of situation.” Woods worked as the subcontractor on the installation while also retaining its maintenance contracts.

In looking at better water usage across the Metro’s lines, “one of the lowest-hanging fruits was the Orange Line because it entailed 28 controllers,” Kabaker says. Of the right-of-way areas for the line, it was the most significant consumer of water. L.A. Metro’s department was also looking into conserving water in its bus and rail-washing, but the concept was the same throughout. “You’ve only got so much water. How do you reduce that and still get the results you want, whether you’re growing turf or washing a bus?”

MAKING A PLAN

As an irrigated space, this section of the L.A. Metro Orange Line isn’t a typical landscaped area. It’s miles of roadside property planted mostly with drought-tolerant species such as rosemary and sage, says Accosta. Many trees are used alongside those, including sycamore and pine species. Since the plants were



Photo: Clean Gridly

already fairly water efficient, additional water savings would most likely need to come from updating the irrigation system itself.

Kabaker worked on the analysis, assessing water consumption and singled out the Orange Line as ready for an update. The plans called for converting master valves with hydrometers to provide flow sensing capabilities and chang-

ing conventional controllers for smarter models that could make better use of the water provided.

"I wanted to make sure the controller was smartphone-accessible," Kabaker says. "Consider that we're dealing with a system that's 18 miles long. If you had a leak, you might not see it for months. So flow sensing was an essential part of this."

To make certain that the controllers' expanded usefulness would continue past the installation, Kabaker made certain to include future communication fees in the ongoing maintenance plan budget. It was also important for him to start the work with Woods, who was the holder of the existing maintenance contract.

"He was involved every step of the way from reviewing the existing controllers and the main and master valves," Kabaker says. "We had a significant amount of communication time before this went out to bid."

"From my position, I would prefer to have the existing landscape maintenance company install the equipment for a number of reasons," Kabaker says. First, this would ensure that the current company doesn't feel threatened that someone else might complicate their processes. "And, they've got a vested interest in making sure this works, because they want to keep the contract."

Working with Woods up front also meant that there weren't surprises when it came to the updated system, Kabaker says.

When they first started on the update, they covered how the irrigation system currently worked, including the relays, timers and master valves, says Woods. But working with an older system meant infrastructure updates and creativity to update it effectively, especially for something that covered 18 miles with upwards of 1,000 stations.

Out of the list of controller locations, "some of them had one timer, some had two, some had three," says Woods. "Some didn't have the proper wiring."

One of the major goals in updating the area with newer controllers for Accosta was to figure out how to get the master valve and flow sensor to work with

multiple timers, he says. In some areas, the master valve wasn't near the timer at all, up to a block away. He spent time on-site working with the product representatives trying to find a way to make the project work. He ended up using a decoder, which would allow the master valve and the flow sensor to run at the same time. For stations with multiple timers, he used relays so that when one timer was running, the sensor would only read the flow from that one and switch to the other timer on its turn.

"It was challenging," Accosta says. "It took a lot of trial and error. About 90% of the stations were fine. But there were a few where we had to go from three controllers down to two controllers and double up on the amount of stations handled there and run extra wire."

Updating the stations also meant sometimes updating the actual enclosures, says Kabaker. They needed to make sure the new enclosures were waterproof, to start. They also had to add insulation to keep interior temperatures inside a range that wouldn't damage the effectiveness of the Wi-Fi communication. In some cases, they had to add new wiring and installed plugs for the updated controllers.

GETTING ALONG

On its own, working with municipalities takes a lot of effort to do well, says Woods. The bidding process can be cumbersome, especially when some bid documents can weigh in at more than 300 pages. It's reasonable for some to look at that and decide that they're better off working with residential and commercial customers.

But as a family-run business, Woods and his team break up the tasks of reviewing the project, determining available resources and developing a response, he says. That allows them to effectively calculate what the job's requirements are and try to bid competitively while still making a profit.

It's also important to have a clear idea not only of your own capabilities but of every piece of equipment that you'll want to use or you risk being listed as an incomplete bid, says Kabaker.

"Make sure that you've defined all the components that you need in this bid," he says.

All told, the project reduced water consumption for the Orange Line by 47 million gallons, says Kabaker. It was also revenue positive in six months. On top of those savings, the department was also able to take advantage of rebates for installing smart controllers, bringing in \$23,000.

"I was able to facilitate that on Metro's behalf," says Kabaker. "It was the first time they'd ever received that rebate."

Before updating with smart controllers that could connect via Wi-Fi to a phone or tablet, checking and programming all of the controllers took a huge amount of time, says Accosta. "If you have 48 stations (on that controller), you have to have somebody

It's really crucial to make sure that the manufacturers are engaged and receptive.

—Bill Kabaker, Precise Landscape Water Conservation



over at the valve. Then you have to run it from the irrigation timer, then they check it from there. Or you can run all of them and go down the line as it's running." But with a smart controller, Accosta is able to check and test the system from each station.

"It makes it much easier for one person to manage, as opposed to having one person at the controller and one at the valve," checking each area individually, says Woods. "It's so much more manageable."

The timers also automatically adjust to the weather, compared to previously being set manually. When the weather is cooler, it waters less than under hotter temperatures. In a drought-impacted region, that can be a crucial tool in smart water use, says Accosta. The system also provides direct alerts if there are flow issues. That used to require lots of hands-on time and effort or the luck of a passing motorist noticing a leaking output. It allows them to be more proactive with maintenance, saving even more water by catching leaks sooner.

With a retrofit this complex, being geared toward nailing down specifications and knowing the plan before attack is key to making sure the job goes smoothly. "I'm a Type A personality and detail-

oriented," says Woods. "I like spreadsheets, and I would update them (during the work) just about every five minutes." The L.A. Metro team was always eager to hear how things were moving along on a weekly basis, and with Woods' notes they were able to lay the roadmap to job completion out. Since the more difficult controllers would take more of a focus, Accosta's crew finished some of the easier controllers earlier to show that they were serious about keeping the project moving.

"Just as with most jobs, it was keeping the communication open across all the parties," Woods says.

Working with the manufacturer representatives, who came out to the site regularly, also made a huge difference in solving installation obstacles, says Kabaker. Having multiple points of view and expertise available is a useful resource whenever it's available.

"It's really crucial to make sure that the manufacturers are engaged and receptive," Kabaker says. Without the representatives' help on-site, "this project wouldn't have happened." 🌱

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

The crew worked closely with **manufacturer reps** to make sure the **controller upgrade** went smoothly.



FABRICS FOR EVERY REASON.



**DeWitt
Premier Straw**



**DeWitt PRO-5
Weed-Barrier®**



PRODUCTS FOR EVERY SEASON.



**DeWitt
Silt Fence**



**TYPAR® Premium
Landscape Fabric**

One Company. One Call. Over 600 Products!

- Accessories
- Aquatic
- Edging
- Erosion Control & Geotextiles
- Fencing
- Ground Covers
- Landscape Fabrics
- Pet Products
- Plant Protection
- Retail Support
- Shade Cloth
- Tarps
- Tree Care
- Wildlife Control

800.888.9669 • dewittcompany.com

Working smarter

By Rodric Hurdle-Bradford

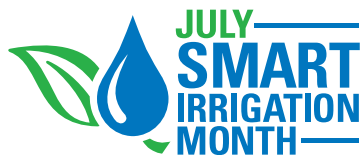
Influential industry members share why smart irrigation is important to them.

No matter what challenges irrigation industry professionals face, there are some aspects that endure year after year. That commitment to developing systems that provide healthy landscapes now and support future growth is at the core of this year's Smart Irrigation Month theme of "Smart irrigation. Sustainable solutions."

Smart Irrigation Month, sponsored by HydroPoint, is an annual initiative of the Irrigation Association, Fairfax, Virginia. It's celebrated throughout the month of July to communicate and market the economic, environmental and social benefits of efficient irrigation products, services and technologies in agricultural and landscape irrigation applications.

Irrigation professionals should share with their customers and communities how they achieve sustainable solutions using smart irrigation technology and practices. The IA has provided resources and tips for engaging the media and the public for use on social media. Go to www.smartirrigationmonth.org for these resources and more information.

We spoke with industry representatives about what smart irrigation means to them and how it influences their daily work.



www.smartirrigationmonth.org

California Water Institute | Fresno, California

Smart irrigation means different things to different people within the industry, and we tend to focus on healthy landscapes, technology and people. With this being the 17th year of Smart Irrigation Month, we are glad it is catching on across the industry. The communication of best practices of smart irrigation among industry peers is also important, whether that comes via social media, conferences, webinars, political engagement or placement with traditional media outlets. Everyone in the irrigation industry has a responsibility to communicate these practices.

Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply | Phoenix, Arizona

As stewards of the green industry, Ewing understands that the only way for the industry to have lasting success is through more adoption and awareness of the best smart irrigation practices. Smart irrigation means installing and maintaining irrigation systems that use water most efficiently. Smart irrigation accounts for hydraulic, landscape and evapotranspiration information to best create a unique irrigation system for that property. Ewing also promotes water smart products in over 200 locations across the United States, and we work to educate our customers on best water smart practices. We sell pressure-regulating spray heads, smart controllers and other smart irrigation products.

Hunter Industries | San Marcos, California

Hunter Industries has a wide variety of resources to implement smart irrigation and we focus on actual water use. Smart irrigation is about using water as efficiently as possible through smart practices and smart technology. The sustainable use of natural resources is important to Hunter Industries as we strive to minimize the use of water on our campuses and in the manufacturing process while providing our customers innovative products that focus on water conservation. We support the EPA WaterSense program that helps consumers identify third-party tested water-efficient products and services. Reducing our water use as an organization is driven by our corporate social responsibility initiatives, and we have a current goal of reducing our water use by 30% by 2030 from our 2019 usage.


Jenkins Landscape Co. | Hobe Sound, Florida

Our definition of smart irrigation is using every bit of technology and practices available to apply the correct amount of water on landscapes when needed. We have implemented smart watering practices on all our new construction and our retrofit sites, as we only install pressure-regulated heads on all the properties we maintain. When we install a new irrigation system, we try our best to keep the full-circle rotors on their own zone and the same with halves and quarters. When we need to have mixed radius rotors we change out the nozzles to a matched rate. With new controller technology, we use flow monitoring with the ability to view water use and change programs via phone and rely on forecasts for watering. As a family business with over 60 years of experience, we would love to see our next generation use even more smart irrigation practices across all aspects of operations.

Munro Supply | Grand Junction, Colorado

More smart products on the market are allowing everyone to practice smart irrigation across their whole breadth of operations. We recommend looking at smart products as an ongoing responsibility, not an annual task. Landscapers need to keep asking "What, how and where?" They need to plan using smart irrigation to produce a beautiful environment. We believe it is up to our industry to take the lead on smart irrigation.

Smart Rain | Centerville, Utah

Smart irrigation is the basis of everything we do and everyone has the opportunity to conserve and help out, especially with our extreme drought conditions. Everyone has a responsibility to conserve, and for us there are a few deciding factors that need to be implemented for true smart irrigation. You need good weather data that is real time and not historical data, a smart controller that runs on ET and a strategy that accounts for rainfall. There are a lot of missed opportunities for rainfall even when landscapers are using a smart controller. Finally, smart irrigation means protecting leaks and waste to maintain the highest operational efficiency. 

Rodric Hurdle-Bradford is associate editor for *Irrigation & Green Industry* and can be reached at rodric@igin.com.

JULY
SMART
IRRIGATION
MONTH

Smart irrigation. Sustainable solutions.

This Smart Irrigation Month, we're celebrating the solutions that irrigation professionals bring society through best practices and efficient technologies. Let's share with the world the importance smart irrigation has in global food production and sustaining landscapes.

#SmartIrrigationMonth sponsored by



 **Irrigation**
ASSOCIATION®

www.smartirrigationmonth.org



Ben Collinworth, general manager for Yellowstone Landscape, has spent his career looking for ways to integrate technology into landscaping. Photo: Gregory Taylor



Ben Collinsworth

THE CUTTING EDGE

The general manager of Yellowstone Landscape explores robotic and battery technologies.

By Kristin Ely

When Ben Collinsworth was looking for the right landscape firm to acquire his Austin, Texas-based landscape company, technology was a key consideration. Several companies expressed interest in buying Native Land Design, but it was Yellowstone Landscape that came out as the frontrunner.

Yellowstone Landscape, Bunnell, Florida, is one of the top five largest landscape companies in the U.S. with 45 branches in markets in the Southeast, Texas, New Mexico, Chicago and Columbus, Ohio. Two years ago, the company was interested in growing its presence in central and south Texas. Native Land Design was a perfect fit, not just for the footprint it had in the market but for its employees and tech and business savvy owner, Collinsworth. After the acquisition in 2019, Collinsworth became general manager for Yellowstone Landscape.

“Since then, I’ve worked with Yellowstone on acquiring other companies, special projects and growing the business in Texas,” says Collinsworth.

At the time of the acquisition, Native Land Design was using the landscape management software Aspire for its 300 employees. Yellowstone, which has 6,500 employees, was looking at implementing it across its branches. Collinsworth and the former Native Land Design team helped with the transition. That’s not all Collinsworth has helped with since he’s been a part of Yellowstone Landscape. His role encompasses just about anything the company may need.

“I really enjoy working with a team that our CEO Tim Portland put together. I am playing in any area they find fit,” Collinsworth says.

He’s helped with acquisitions and most recently he’s been spearheading Yellowstone’s research into robotics and battery-powered equipment.

“I’m spending a lot of time talking to robotics companies, interviewing and bringing them down to Austin and seeing their

products all across the country,” he says. “I work with some of the battery-operated equipment companies to see how we can transition some crews into battery, and I’m working with the IT team on some projects right now.”

AN EARLY ADOPTER

Collinsworth considers himself “a lifelong landscape guy,” starting like many in the business mowing lawns at 13 and continuing through high school.

When he enrolled at Texas A&M, he recalls one of the counselors asking him what he was good at. He remembered responding that the only thing he had ever done was landscape.

“Well, you could try horticulture and landscape architecture,” the counselor said. That’s exactly what he did.

“I fell in love with it pretty much from the first class,” says Collinsworth.

His roommate his senior year was an agriculture major and got a call for a job in Austin doing landscaping. Collinsworth ended up joining him after finishing his last semester. He worked for the company for a couple years, and when that company was acquired, Collinsworth decided to start his own company. He founded Native Land Design in 2001.

The company started out doing residential work and then slowly transitioned into larger construction projects. When the economy crashed in 2007 and 2008, Collinsworth transitioned to maintenance to make up for the lack of construction work.

“I pretty much dropped all the construction after 2008 and just focused on commercial maintenance and grew that until 2019,” he says. Years later he is proud of that decision saying it was well-timed and he took a huge gamble that paid off.

Collinsworth has long been an avid user of Apple’s Mac operating system. When he was considering different operating systems for Native Land Design a few years ago, there weren’t many software companies that appealed to Apple users, he says.

“Robotics aren’t meant to replace labor. They’re meant to fill in the gaps of labor where we don’t have people.

– Ben Collinsworth, Yellowstone Landscape

Native Land Design was one of the first companies to implement Aspire, a software for commercial landscaping companies. Larger landscape firms began looking at it, including Yellowstone Landscape.

“It was intriguing to me that Yellowstone was looking at it, so when I was interviewing different suitors that were going to purchase my company, that was a big part of why I liked Yellowstone,” Collinsworth says.

Yellowstone also liked that Native Land Design had already implemented the software and could help with its software rollout. “And that’s what we did,” says Collinsworth.

REVVED UP ABOUT ROBOTICS

Yellowstone has put Collinsworth to work in other tech areas of the company. He’s currently working with several robotics manufacturing companies, including Greenzie, Scythe, Zupt, Electric Sheep, Robin Autopilot and Husqvarna.

“What seems to be the model so far is the smaller companies are developing all the tech and then the bigger companies will come in and buy the company out and put the technology into production,” says Collinsworth.

Yellowstone tests the mowers the companies are developing, which range in size from 21, 30, 48, 60 and 72 inches with various levels of autonomy. Some of the robotic mowers don’t require any interaction, while others need to be taught how to mow a property and then they’ll retain the information for future mowing sessions, explains Collinsworth. Yellowstone lets these companies operate their mowers on its properties to help work out any issues.

“There’s a lot of really good companies developing robotic options for mowers. They develop prototypes that they want to get tested,” he says. “We’ll test it and tell them where it needs improvement. They’ll go back and fix it and let us try the new version. We help them develop a prototype that is production ready.”

Collinsworth coordinates with the robotics companies to make sure they have a branch of Yellowstone to work with. The robotics companies also meet with Collinsworth to provide updates on their timelines for production-ready units. As a result of this work, Yellowstone recently entered an agreement with a vendor to buy some robotic mowers.

“We plan to have them in production this summer, which will be really cool,” says Collinsworth. “It will be our first big robotics mowing internal tests



Collinsworth works with robotics manufacturing companies to test out new autonomous mower prototypes. Rather than looking at those machines as a replacement for workers, he sees them as a tool to be used alongside human employees. With autonomous mowers taking care of some of the easiest tasks, employees are able to focus their efforts on other work. Photos left and above: Ben Collinsworth

where we take the robotics and use them in real-life scenarios to see if we can utilize them over a broader spectrum across the company.”

Yellowstone’s interest in robotics is the same reason many landscape companies are looking at the technology: labor.

“We all have labor shortages. We all have problems finding people. If we can take robotics and put it out there to do the easiest tasks then we can scale our business without having to go out and constantly try to find new employees,” says Collinsworth. “Robotics aren’t meant to replace labor. They’re meant to fill in the gaps of labor where we don’t have people.”

BATTERY POWER

Battery-powered electric equipment is another area that Yellowstone is researching with Collinsworth at the helm. Before Collinsworth sold his business to Yellowstone, he liked a lot of the electric equipment on the market but says, “Unfortunately, a lot of them had run times with their batteries that weren’t feasible.”

That is changing, however, according to Collinsworth. “With a lot of these newer mowers, the batteries have impressive durations of six-, seven- or even eight-hour run times.”

Collinsworth is a big proponent of electric equipment since he embraces the technology in his own personal vehicle. He drives his Tesla Model X to and from work every day.

Collinsworth is working on INTEGRATING NEW TECHNOLOGIES into landscaping practices.

“If you ever drive a battery car, you’ll experience how different it is. It is so quiet. There’s no vibration, there’s no noise,” he says. “It’s the same with mowers. You still have bumps in the ground, but you don’t have emissions. You don’t have fumes, and you don’t have vibration.”

He adds, “You don’t have nearly as many problems in a day and you also don’t have any parts. You don’t have to change your oil. You don’t have to change air filters. You don’t have to replace all this stuff that breaks on a regular basis on a gas-powered machine.”

Collinsworth says the emissions, less parts and less time in the shop are the main reasons Yellowstone is considering moving some of its crews to battery-powered

equipment, including mowers and hand-held equipment.

“We’re going to have a crew that can run big battery mowers, and they’re going to have a full gamut of all the blowers, weed eaters, trimmers, chainsaws and anything else they need,” says Collinsworth.

He says he’s pleased with the larger battery-powered mowers he’s seen from Greenworks and Mean Green Mowers. Makita and Stihl are two companies Yellowstone is working with for battery-powered handheld equipment.

REFLECTING BACK

Being a landscape business owner for 17 years before joining Yellowstone taught Collinsworth a few things. He went through ups and downs with Native Land Design and says the most important part of owning a landscape business is knowing what you want to be good at and why, then building a talented team around you.

“For me it was always knowing my weaknesses and hiring to my weakness, playing to my strengths and not trying to be something I wasn’t,” he says. “If you do good work and you are true to your word and do what you tell people you are going to do, you get a lot of opportunities out of that.”

He says he also tried not to grow the company past the point where it could do quality work and maintain its integrity. “That was a model that worked really well, and I grew it for 17 years before I sold it. I

was very proud of the team that I built and the work that I did and was very happy to be able to partner with Yellowstone.”

The transition has given Collinsworth a chance to really focus on the areas of landscape that he likes.

“With all the different changes that are going on in the industry I am really excited to be able to work with someone like Yellowstone,” he says. “They are really at the forefront of all these developments that are happening with technology. All the things going on in our industry with robotics and green power are really exciting.”

Kristin Ely is an award-winning writer who specializes in industry reporting for business publications and can be reached at kristinmithely@gmail.com.

BRILLIANCE



Photograph Courtesy of Bolt Outdoor Lighting



Strip Light

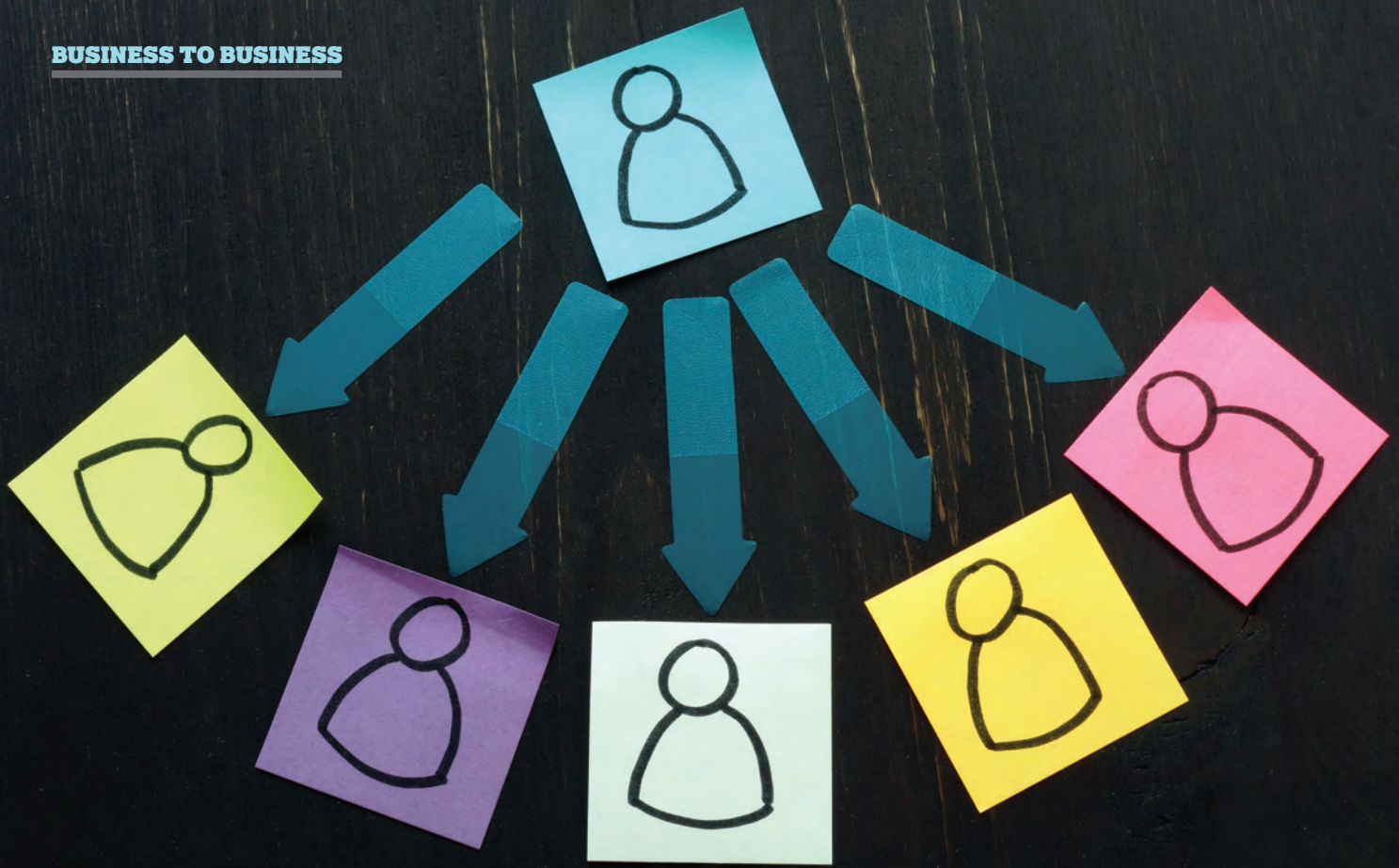
Dimmable with most magnetic transformers

Available in 25 meter & 10 meter reels

For new or existing 8-16 VAC landscape lighting systems



brillianceled.com



STOP BOSSING your crew around

By Dave Fellman

Support your employees by building around objectives and delegating effectively.

Do you think about what direction you manage in? Most managers don't manage very well because they manage from the top rather than the front and the beginning. I think this stems from a commonly accepted definition of management, which most managers seem to think is about being in charge. Personally, I think management is more about being an enabler than being a boss. It starts with a clear understanding of goals and objectives, and it works best when managers don't manage people but instead create teams.

Management by objective

I read once that management is the process of setting and achieving organizational objectives. Peter Drucker introduced the concept of "management by objective" in the 1950s. In essence, MBO is about participative goal setting. In the "big company" model, the

top manager has a vision. They consult with the senior management team to refine that vision and to formalize the objective. Each senior manager then repeats the process with his or her direct reports, and the process continues from level to subordinate level until, ideally, every employee knows his or her role and has measurable standards to meet.

In the “small company” model, the whole process is compressed with far fewer levels, but it’s basically the same. Step 1 is the vision: Where do we want to go? Step 2 is the plan: How do we get there from here? Step 3 is the measurement: Are we following the roadmap? Are we making good time? Step 4 allows for adjustments: Should we modify the plan or the timeline? Do we need to slow down? Speed up? Add resources?

Two things are important here. The first is that this all starts at the beginning with the vision, then the objective, then the plan. The second is that it’s all about “we.” You probably know the expression “There’s no I in team.” It’s been my experience that the best managers tend to be “we” people rather than “I” people.

Management by objective is a strategy that makes lots of sense, right? But MBO also has limitations. The most important limitation relates directly to the execution of the plan, and that takes us to a more fundamental definition of management: Management is making sure that everything from the big things to the little things gets done and done right.

Think about it. If that kind of management doesn’t happen, the plan may fail. That’s why great managers are micromanagers. You read that correctly. Let me explain.

A change in language

Somewhere along the line, micromanagement became a bad word in business. I’m not sure there’s a better word, though, for managing the little things. With that in mind, I want to attempt a change in attitude via a change in language. Micromanagement is a good thing. Overmanagement is a bad thing. And time management fits into this discussion because some of the little things are too little to justify the time of a “big” manager.

Delegating is the obvious solution to that problem, but once we start talking about delegating, we have to consider words like authority, responsibility, accountability and capability.

Let me put all four of those words into a series of sentences. You build a management team by giving people authority. By accepting that authority, they take on responsibility for certain elements of management. Responsibility is something someone feels; accountability is the enforcement of that feel-

ing. And none of this is worth anything if the person with authority lacks the capability to do the job.

Management team

When you delegate, you add to your management team. I mentioned Drucker earlier, and here’s something he wrote in a 1992 article in the *Wall Street Journal*: “Team building’ has become a buzzword in American business. The results are not overly impressive.”

He went on to explain his perception of the problem, “The all-but-universal belief among executives is that there is just one kind of team. There actually are three — each different in its structure, in the behavior it demands from its members, in its strengths, its vulnerabilities, its limitations, its requirements, but above all, in what it can do and should be used for.”

The first kind of team, according to Drucker, is the baseball team, which he also compared to an assembly line team. The players play on the team; they do not play as a team. They have fixed positions they never leave.

The second kind of team is the football team. The players still have fixed positions, but they support each other and interact with each other to a far greater degree. The receiver runs a pass pattern, the left tackle protects the quarterback’s blind side, the quarterback makes the throw, and the result is (hopefully) a completed pass.

The third kind of team is the tennis doubles team. Here, the players have a primary position rather than a fixed position. In doubles tennis, when one player serves, the other takes a position to cover a part of the court when the serve is returned, but once the play starts, both players must be able to react to the changing demands of the game.

Lessons to learn

What can we take from all of this? One key lesson is that your “baseball players” must have the skills and knowledge to play their positions effectively. If not, they need training. A second lesson is that your “football players” need something beyond raw skills and knowledge. They have to know the plays and understand and fulfill their responsibilities to each play. Finally, a few “doubles partners” in your business can make your life much, much easier. Give some thought to teaching and coaching your people, not just how to play their positions, but how to anticipate and react to out-of-the-ordinary situations.

That’s how you end up with a well-running business through delegation, and that’s how I define true success as a manager! 🍀



Your employees make up multiple types of teams with different needs for leadership.



Dave Fellman is the president of David Fellman & Associates, based in Raleigh, North Carolina. He’s the author of *Rules of Engagement: A Guide to Better Communication and Better Relationships With Everyone Who Is Important To Your Business*. Visit his website at www.davefellman.com, and contact him by email at dmf@davefellman.com.

→ You build a management team by giving people authority.

Solar, software *and* savings

New trends in smart
irrigation controllers take
advantage of technology.



By Rodric
Hurdle-
Bradford

For irrigation controller manufacturers, the summer of 2021 has become a showcase to demonstrate the value of their products, as more than a dozen states deal with drought status, bringing water conservation issues even further to the forefront. Fresh technology trends have stepped up to provide solutions for current and new system installations.

“Controllers with smart features that are super intuitive are a necessity now, and they’re easier to use to conserve water,” says Dan Hymas, president at Smart Rain, Centerville, Utah. “Smart irrigation controllers are becoming more accessible, and people are becoming more educated on them. This is leading to more ease of use in the landscaping industry.”

Before making any controller choices, it’s important to take stock of what you need to take care of right away while keeping an eye to the future for your client, says Alexis Bookman, marketing communication manager for The Toro Company, Bloomington, Minnesota.

“Look for a controller that suits your immediate needs but also one that can grow and upgrade,” says Bookman. “No one can predict the future, and replacing a controller every time new technology becomes available can get expensive. If you select an option that can grow as the landscape, water restrictions and other factors change, it will make adapting and ultimately water management that much easier.”

“Smart irrigation controllers are becoming more accessible, and people are becoming more educated on them.”

– Dan Hymas, Smart Rain

As energy sources face unstable, rising costs, one potentially helpful trend in irrigation controllers comes in using the sun to keep it powered, says Mike Merlesena, national sales product manager for Dig Corporation, Vista, California.

“Landscape consultants like this product because they do not have to worry about identifying power in common areas, and they can build a system without upfront costs,” says Merlesena. “We know this is a new way of managing irrigation control systems, and we feel like this is going to be the major trend moving forward.”

Solar-powered and ambient light-powered irrigation control systems do not require direct sunlight, further minimizing expenses compared to standard AC-powered control systems. Without having to rely on a power grid, station management isn’t susceptible to issues like summer power outages that disturb carefully planned water management schedules.

“These control systems use electricity that is stored in super capacitors to power the system, regardless of the weather or environment,” says Merlesena. “The super capacitor that runs these systems will outlast the electronic component of a controller and deliver substantial cost savings in the long run.”

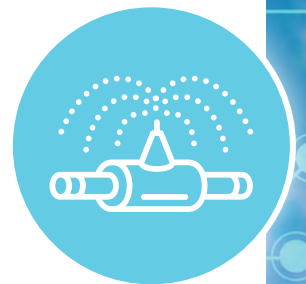
SCHEDULING SOFTWARE

Not only has predictive analytics taken over and changed the sport of baseball, it has done the same with irrigation and water management inside the landscaping industry. Trends in software management for forecasting and scheduling both simple and complex watering schedules are popular for landscape professionals who have seen their jobs be performed across even more remote locations in the past 18 months. Software that helps choose the best times for effective irrigation can make a big difference for clients, says Hymas.

“Using enhanced software for irrigation controllers should save 30% to 50% of water usage,” he says.

Controllers that use artificial intelligence and predictive analysis can better utilize rainwater and reduce runoff and site visits, says Richard Restuccia, vice president of water management at Jain Irrigation Inc., Fresno, California. Predictive analytics software makes adjustments from lessons learned from past weather trends, giving the controllers insight into when it might be the best time to irrigate.

“On the East Coast it rains during the summer, so we use our predictive analysis to identify that there is not as strong of a need to put watering



into the schedule compared to other portions of the country,” Restuccia says.

When using a weather-tracking controller, a cloud-based system will allow for regular weather calculations and updates based on climate shifts for a more efficient system, he says. The more often a system checks in on the forecast, the more accurate that watering schedule will be. Hourly calculations compared to daily calculations can reduce water use by up to 60%, especially in areas with active rainy seasons. The controllers analyze the times of lowest probability for rain and precipitation and use that guidance as the foundation for a customized irrigation schedule. The feedback on the weather predictive system has been very positive in the past year.

While it’s not a crystal ball, some predictive analytics software allows end users to look ahead into the next few weeks as well, says Rick Malkin, central controls product manager for Rain Bird, Azusa, California. That can include estimates of how much



A smart irrigation controller needs to do more for both the contractor and the client by using water effectively. One of the biggest trends in smart controllers is the addition of wireless capabilities either through Wi-Fi or Bluetooth to connected devices such as a smartphone or tablet. Some systems can provide a report of water usage statistics. Photo: Smart Rain

total water will be used, how many stations will be running and when irrigation will start and stop.

Providing an ongoing service to provide more effective water use can possibly allow contractors to add water management services as a separate line item to further drive revenue, says Restuccia.

“Promoting water management services to commercial properties, homeowner associations and other large entities is a way landscapers can add to their profits without having to make large capital or personnel investments,” he says.

BUILT FOR BLUETOOTH

Remote access of the irrigation system and advanced water management features are important on any new irrigation controller, says Malkin. Web-based cloud services allow users to log in and control the irrigation system from smartphone or tablet touchscreens. They work well for organizations with multiple irrigation system administrators or users who are often off-site. That might make them a good fit for remote work environments, which have been expanding in the past year.

While weather tracking and schedule customization are both big trends in the irrigation control-

ler space, having the capability to stay connected by internet or Bluetooth is one of the most important new features, says Darik Chandler, product manager of battery and standard controllers, Hunter Industries, San Marcos, California.

Bluetooth can be especially useful in areas where Wi-Fi service isn't an option and can reduce the amount of installation time needed in adding the controller to the client's home network, says Malkin.

Some systems include capabilities to remotely edit multiple watering schedules at once, if several stations need to be handled together, says Malkin. The schedules also include the capability to set days off in advance to manage irrigation around particular dates. That can be handy for dealing with weekends, but it also might keep an Independence Day barbecue from accidentally getting interrupted by sprinklers.

“Our system is designed to work with large irrigation systems where total water usage is being looked at as the key metric, so we always start from there when proving our results,” says Rick Malkin, central controls product manager for Rain Bird. “It always comes back to ‘Here’s how much water we are using, and here’s how much we are saving.’”

Despite a heavy reliance on technology, Chandler advises that landscapers do not solely rely on a quick technology pitch to the client when it comes to selecting an irrigation control system. Talking about the new features and how they all connect to a smartphone can leave some clients dizzy with terminology. Instead, he says to take a step back and look at the total offering that the system brings, including the software, the service and the supplier. Features like email reports on the irrigation system's efficiency including the amount of water saved over time can go a long way to showing a client the benefits. Even a retrofit of an old system should give an irrigation professional plenty of evidence that both water and money can be saved.

“New controllers should be saving around 50% of water use based on an unadjusted schedule,” he says.

It's also important to think not only of benefits to the client when choosing a manufacturer, says Chandler. A good partnership with a reliable manufacturer will help streamline future installations and back you up when troubleshooting issues.

“Look for a manufacturer that has been in business for years serving the globe with not just controllers but the entire system, A-to-Z,” he says. “Look for a manufacturer that provides at least a two-year warranty, as well as provides the controller, solenoids, flow meter, rain sensor, and sprinkler valves and heads for the best performance. That is going to save you time, money and energy in the long run.”

Rodric Hurdle-Bradford is associate editor for *Irrigation & Green Industry* magazine and can be reached at rodric@igin.com.



Remote access, whether via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth capabilities, streamlines work with controllers in installation and programming.



EVERY CONTROLLER
\$500 OFF
PLUS A FREE RAIN SENSOR



Ask about our Partner Referral Program

877-346-3333 | SMARTRAIN.NET

SMARTPHONE-FRIENDLY IRRIGATION CONTROLLERS FOR RESIDENTIAL/LIGHT COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

Manufacturer	Model name(s)	EPA WaterSense certified	Maximum stations	Weather data source	Rain data source	Rain delay?
Aeon Matrix	Yardian Smart Irrigation Controller	✓	48	Weatherbug	Weatherbug	auto.
Aifro	Water Eco and Water Eco Lite		36	real-time local weather data, uses OpenWeatherMap	real-time local weather data, uses OpenWeatherMap	auto.
Asante	Asante Irrigation Controller Kit		6			
Blossom	Blossom, Scotts Gro Controller	✓	12	current local weather and forecasts from multiple weather services	current local weather and forecasts from multiple weather services	auto.
BlueSpray	BlueSpray		64	NOAA	NOAA	auto.
Galcon	Cyberrain	✓	24	local weather stations		
Hunter	HC, Pro-HC, HPC-FP, Pro-C Hydrowise, HCC	✓	54	Weather Underground and The Weather Channel; local airport weather stations, personal weather stations and/or virtual weather station options available	Weather Underground and The Weather Channel forecasts, weather station data and/or on-site rain shutoff sensor	user conf.
HydroPoint	WeatherTRAK LC+	✓	36	proprietary ET Everywhere Weather Data (public and private weather stations, NOAA)	current local weather and forecast from weather stations	✓
Hydro-Rain	HRC 400 WiFi	✓	16	smart WeatherSense local weather data		user conf.
H2OPro	H2OPro		8	local weather stations or user-defined local weather stations	weather station, no sensor	auto.
Irritrol	Climate Logic proprietary plug in for Irritrol Kwik Dial, Rain Dial, Total Control and MC-E Controllers	✓ ◆	12	on-site sensor	rain sensor, no rainfall measurement	user conf.
Jain/ET Water	SmartBox, SmartWorks and Hermit Crab 2	✓	48	multiple streaming weather data sources	multiple streaming weather data sources	auto.
K-Rain	Pro EX 2.0 WiFi		16	WeatherIQ	WeatherIQ	user def.
Netro	Netro Sprite and Whisperer		12	local weather data from multiple sources, as well as historical climate data	based on address, with latitude and longitude, collection of weather data from multiple sources	✓
Nxeco	Nxeco	✓	36	real-time weather		
Orbit	B-Hyve	✓	12	smart WeatherSense local weather data	smart WeatherSense local weather data	user conf.
Rachio	Rachio Irrigation Controller	✓	16	NOAA, PWS	NOAA, PWS	user def.
Rain Bird	Lnk Wi-Fi Module works with ESP-TM2 and ESP-Me Series Controllers and WR2 Series Wireless Rain/Freeze sensors; ST8-Wi-Fi Controller	✓	22	World Weather Online	World Weather Online	user def.
Rain Machine	RainMachine Touch HD	✓	16	options include NOAA, MetNo, Weather Underground, DarkSky.net, FAWS and CIMIS (with subscription to CIMIS)	options include NOAA, MetNo, Weather Underground, DarkSky.net, FAWS and CIMIS (with subscription to CIMIS)	auto.
RainCommander	RainCommander RC1200		12	None		user def.
RainPal	RainPal Pro	✓	12			
Signature	EZ Connect and EZ Share series controllers	✓	24	integration of weather data feeds from NOAA, Accuweather, weather forecast data and weather alerts	integration of weather data feeds from NOAA, Accuweather, weather forecast data and weather alerts	user def.
Skydrop	Skydrop Halo Controller	✓	16	local weather stations	local weather stations	✓
Smart Rain	ComPro3	✓	48	NOAA/IBM New	NOAA/IBM New	auto.
Spruce Irrigation	Spruce Controller WiFi	✓	16	Darksky.net and optional soil moisture sensors		
Toro	TMC and Evolution Series Controllers	✓ ◆	24	on-site sensor and/or Toro Precision Soil Sensor with Evolution controller	on-site rain sensor, no measurement of rainfall	user def.
Weathermatic	SL and PL Series with SLW15 weather station	✓	48	on-site sensor	on-site rain sensor, no measurement of rainfall	user def.

✦ “discovery” mode | ◆ with Climate Logic | ★ yes, if more than one airport station is to be subscribed | * yes, backup mode from panel | 🌧 with Toro soil moisture sensors

Thanks to Smart Rain for sponsoring this year's controller chart.



Subscription fee for weather data?	Automatic scheduling interval capable	Guest access (contractor)	Home automation?	Connectivity	Other product information	Sensor capabilities	Run time input	Watering restrictions	Predictive scheduling (rain, freeze)	Zone customization	Cycle and soak (custom or calculated)	Operation without internet connection
	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi	built-in security camera, motion detection	rain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓		Wi-Fi	pause feature, winter dormancy, AiCan smart plug to operate house appliances, manually water more than one zone at a time, Aifro Cloud accessible via app	built-in temperature sensor, optional rain sensor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		✓		Wi-Fi plus	rain forecast feature	rain, freeze	✓	✓	✓			
	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi	only for indoor installation	rain, freeze	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		+	✓	Wi-Fi	run time in min/sec, can turn on multiple valves simultaneously, expands up to 64 zones via extension port	rain, freeze, flow	✓	✓	✓		✓	
		✓		RF, HW	flow monitor, alerts							
★	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi	automatic weather adjustments customizable by zone, contractor portal for multi-site management, real-time alerts and notifications, built-in milliamp sensor, event logs and reports	rain, freeze, soil moisture, flow	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	Cell	centralized cloud control for multisite management, alerts, 30+ customizable reports, over the air updates	rain, flow (with optional key)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi	optional catch cups and irrigation audit input, smart watering options based on site conditions	rain, freeze, flow, soil moisture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
				Wi-Fi	flow monitoring, alerts, restrictions, Watersense used to create auto or manual watering schedules, automatic schedule interval capable	rain, flow	✓	✓	✓		?	✓
		✓		RF plus	SMRT logic allows auxiliary wireless control up to 250 wireless relays	Climate Logic (rain, freeze)	✓	✓			✓	✓
✓	✓	✓		Cell	subscription-based product; standalone or add-on to various models of Hunter, Irritrol, Toro, Superior, Weathermatic, Rain Bird and Rain Master controllers	flow, rain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		✓		Wi-Fi	optional long-range antenna, virtual rain sensor, Wi-Fi hub plugs into internet router to use RF connection, increases router to controller distance through RF, can be configured as Wi-Fi/conventional/remote-controlled	rain, freeze	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	✓		✓	Wi-Fi			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		✓	✓	Wi-Fi	24-zone extension module to build 36-zone controller	rain, freeze	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi	current and historic weather data used, real-time notifications	rain and soil, flow with Rachio 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		✓	✓	Wi-Fi	off-site management, real-time alerts and advanced water management tools available	rain, freeze, soil, flow	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi		rain, freeze	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
				Wi-Fi		rain sensor	✓	✓			✓	✓
	✓		✓	Wi-Fi, cell	optional leak/freeze detection (FL-100), sensitive water leak/freeze detection, cloud-based server capability	rain, flow, freeze	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	HW, Wi-Fi, cell	programming accessed via the Signature Share app, end-user of contractor web portal	can integrate two sensors, such as flow, rain, pressure, freeze, ET, soil moisture; some models can use DC latching solenoids	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	Wi-Fi			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓	✓	✓		Wi-Fi, cell		rain, freeze, soil moisture, flow, ET	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓		✓	Wi-Fi	combines real-time moisture sensor data and weather predictions	rain, flow, spruce soil moistures sensors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	★	✓	RF, Wi-Fi plus	grow-in schedule able to control fountains, gates, landscape lighting via a wireless relay	rain, freeze, ET, soil moisture sensor	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
✓		✓	✓	RF, cell, Wi-Fi	SmartLine Air Card, no Wi-Fi or router required	rain, freeze, weather sensor, flow	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Growing

INTO
THE **ROLE**

Look to the future with the next
generation of pro landscape leaders.



By Lauren Sable Freiman

A desire to work outside. Camaraderie with fellow employees. The wealth of opportunities for growth. Continuing a family legacy. Their reasons vary, but the next generation of green industry professionals have one thing in common — a strong motivation to find their niche and leave the industry stronger and more vibrant than they found it.

BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

Being the boss is always challenging, but at 22 years old, leading a team of landscape professionals with years of experience under their belts comes with a unique set of challenges. As the vice president of Petit Lawn Maintenance in North Royalton, Ohio, Hunter Petit has quickly learned that the key to his success as a manager is constantly seeking out opportunities for knowledge.

“When you have guys who are 30 or 35 who run crews and have been doing it for years, it is hard to take direction from a young kid,” Petit says. “All of my guys know that I’m constantly learning, and I’m not afraid to be wrong. I give them respect and they give me respect back, and it usually ends up working out.”

Once he turned 16, Petit began to spend his summers working for his father, Matthew, in the landscape business that he started in 2004. As he laid mulch in large apartment complexes, he says he was intrigued to learn more about the business and the opportunities available to him in the green industry. After a semester of studying horticultural science at The Ohio State University, Petit realized that following in his father’s footsteps was the path he was most excited to pursue.

“I went full time in 2018 and that’s when I knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life,” Petit says. “I love working outside. The people I work with are fun, and the more I got involved, the more I liked it. There are a lot of good people in this industry, and there is a lot to learn.”



“I WENT FULL TIME IN 2018 AND THAT’S WHEN I KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO DO FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.”

— Hunter Petit, *Petit Lawn Maintenance*

Though he didn’t pursue a formal education in a college setting, Petit says he is constantly in search of new knowledge and skills, and he regularly attends seminars sponsored by state and national industry associations.

“I am pretty involved with the Ohio Landscape Association and go to pretty much every class that they have,” he says. “Recently I started taking some of my employees to the education courses with me, and they like that because it shows them that I want them to learn more things too and that I’m not just trying to be the smartest guy in the room.”

Petit says one of his favorite managerial duties is sharing his knowledge with new hires. That willingness to train the right candidate also helps to compensate for the labor shortage, a term that Petit now understands firsthand.

“Now that I’m involved with the business, the labor shortage is real and surprising,” he says. “We make it a point to say that we love guys with no experience because we are happy to teach our way of doing things. There are people who came in with zero experience and within two years, they are running crews and loving their jobs, and that’s my favorite part.”

As he continues to expand his knowledge and experience in the industry, Petit says he is hopeful that more young people will recognize the merits of a career in the green industry.

“It’s not very well known that there are a lot of opportunities for growth in the landscape industry,” he says. “I wish there were more efforts to better educate the youth because this is an industry where you can advance really far without having the burden of college debt.”

BUILDING A NETWORK

Jeff Elshoff wasn’t old enough to drive when he started his first landscape maintenance business, so he paid his sister’s boyfriend to drive him from job to job until he got his license. At one point, he was maintaining nearly 30 lawns and steadily gaining new customers through word-of-mouth advertising. He knew he loved to be outside, so when he entered Michigan State University, he majored in environmental engineering.

“It didn’t take long to realize that that wasn’t necessarily going to be the case with engineering, and someone down the hall from me was in a two-year nursery management program,” says Elshoff, 29. “I talked to him, met an advisor and ended up entering the four-year horticulture program. Before that, I don’t know if I realized that there was a full career path in the green industry.”

An internship at a large firm specializing in landscape design for high-end homes quickly opened his eyes to the possibilities and challenges of the green industry.

“I knew I didn’t want to do maintenance my whole life, but the internship changed my perspective,” he says. “It wasn’t just installing plants and mowing lawns. It was challenging, there was problem-solving and working with people. It combined a bunch of things I really enjoyed.”

After working for a couple different companies following graduation, Elshoff decided to pursue his dream of owning his own company. Three years ago, he launched Twin Bay Landscaping to serve the Traverse City, Michigan, area. In the first year, Twin Bay completed \$700,000 of work. This past year, it completed just over \$1.2 million.

“There has been a lot of growth,” Elshoff says. “We are in a unique market where there is a really small community but there are a lot of high-end homes, a lot of second homes. In my time with my last company, I had built good relationships with suppliers and some builders in town, and through those relationships, getting work hasn’t been an issue.”

With his quick growth, Elshoff says that finding labor is one of his biggest challenges. As he searches for the right people to grow his team, he says he has to be selective in the projects Twin Bay takes on.

“With it being a small community, it doesn’t take long to build a reputation, but on the same front, it doesn’t take long to ruin the reputation,” Elshoff says. “The biggest challenge is being selective and

making sure we don’t make too many promises. As we are growing, we are basing our growth off the people we have, growing from within, and making sure whoever we bring on is doing stuff the way we do it, with all the professionalism our customers expect.”

As a young entrepreneur in the green industry, Elshoff relies on his education, his prior experience and the experience of his team to show that despite being a young owner of a young company, he is well-suited for any job.

“When you get into projects that are \$200,000 to \$400,000 and show up being as young as I am, there is some hesitancy to start, and you can tell that people are wondering if they really trust this young person to have the knowledge to complete this project,” Elshoff says. “With pictures, testimonials and referrals, it doesn’t take long for people to realize what we can do.”

FOLLOWING AN OPPORTUNITY

Brandon Walters spent summers during high school working for Valley Landscaping, the Virginia-based company his father, Todd, started in 1991. But as an accomplished athlete and avid sports fan, his heart was set on a career in sports administration. After one year at Bridgewater College where he played Division III basketball, Walters made the decision to transfer to Virginia Tech and work toward a new goal — a career in the green industry.

“Once I grew up a little bit, I realized I had a great opportunity,” he says. “I love being outside, I really love working with my dad, and I gave it a shot.”

With a degree in agricultural technology from Virginia Tech and two prestigious internships under his belt, Walters, now 24, joined Valley Landscaping in 2019.

“A lot of people think that if you come from a family-owned company and you’re the son of the owner, you will start in a leadership position,” Walters says. “That’s one thing my dad has been huge on, starting from the bottom and working your way up.”

Walters spent the next four months mowing grass as a crew member, until his promotion to crew leader, where he spent the next eight months strengthening his managerial skills.

“I went to live in Charlottesville for a year, where I worked under Caleb Harlow, who was managing that branch. Having someone else manage me that wasn’t my dad was huge in my development.”

Walters says that the opportunity to truly learn the business from the ground up, and to have a mentor like Harlow, was invaluable. He says Harlow held him accountable while modeling high standards of leadership and working with clients. To this day, Walters says he calls Harlow regularly



“IT WAS CHALLENGING, THERE WAS PROBLEM-SOLVING AND WORKING WITH PEOPLE. IT COMBINED A BUNCH OF THINGS I REALLY ENJOYED.”

*- Jeff Elshoff,
Twin Bay Landscaping*



"I WANT TO BE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL AND I KNOW I CAN'T DO THAT WITHOUT LISTENING TO OTHER PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN IN MY SHOES BEFORE AND LEARNING FROM THEIR MISTAKES."

- Brandon Walters, Valley Landscaping

to ask for advice on everything from managing client relationships to dealing with disgruntled crew members.

When Valley decided to open a branch in Richmond, Virginia, Walters was tapped to run the office as an account manager. Because of the time he spent working in the field, Walters says he is in a good position to understand and relate to the challenges the production staff face. As a young leader, his willingness to ask questions and listen to feedback has garnered favor from more seasoned employees.

"The biggest thing in managing people who have more tenure than you is telling them you don't know the answer, so let's brainstorm together," he says. "A lot of people struggle with saying 'I don't know,' but I feel like I do that on a daily basis. It builds trust and leadership capital, and then people don't think you're the owner's son who is going to come in and boss people around."

As he settles into his managerial role, Walters says he constantly seeks out opportunities to improve his skills and expand his knowledge. He says he enjoys listening to podcasts and webinars so that he can learn from others who have found success.

"I want to be extremely successful and I know I can't do that without listening to other people who have been in my shoes before and learning from their mistakes," he says.

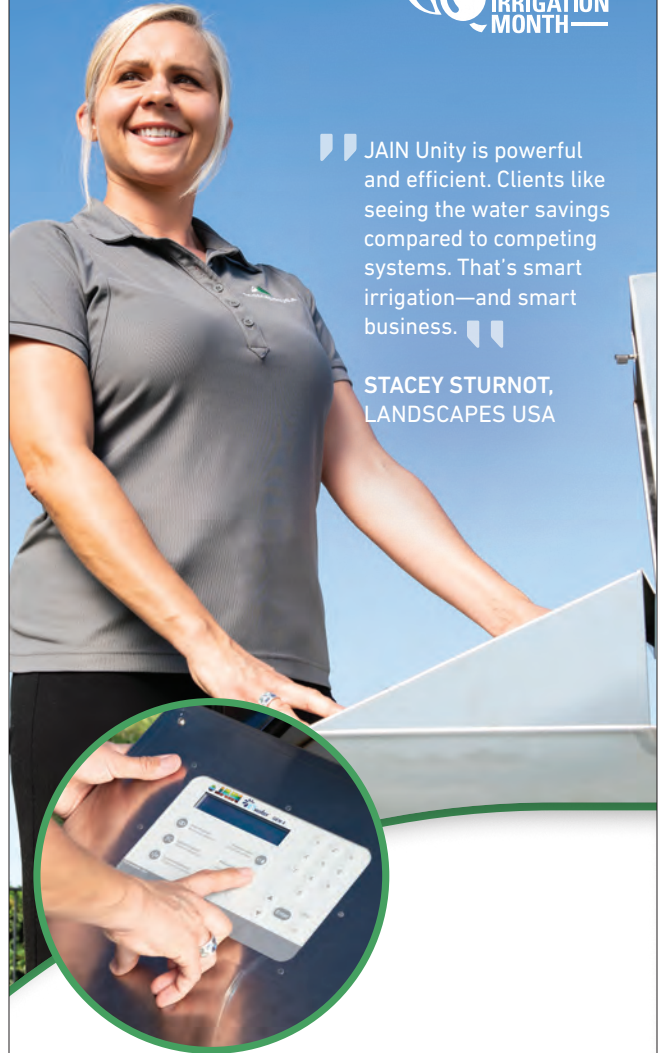
As he looks toward the future, Walters says that both personally and professionally, he hopes to impact people the way he has seen his dad impact others.

"He's always told me that the most satisfaction he gets is seeing production staff or account managers buy their first home or some other big personal achievement, and that's the kind of person I want to be," Walters says. "Profit is important but our people come first, whether that is our employees, their families or our clients. You won't get any work done if you don't focus on your people, and you definitely won't be profitable."

As he sits down each Friday to go over his calendar for the following week, Walters makes sure he leaves time to talk to crew members, ask if their equipment is up to par, find out how the company can better support them, and make it clear that their ideas and opinions are valuable.

"Growing up as the owner's son, you always have a chip on your shoulder, you always want to prove yourself, and the last thing I want to do is let the company my father built, fail," he says. "My ultimate long-term goal is to earn the opportunity to run the company one day. The big thing is *earn* it — it's not going to be given to me." 🌱

Lauren Sable Freiman is a freelance writer based in Cleveland and can be reached at laurensable@gmail.com.



“JAIN Unity is powerful and efficient. Clients like seeing the water savings compared to competing systems. That's smart irrigation—and smart business.”

STACEY STURNOT,
LANDSCAPES USA

JAIN UNITY WORKS SMARTER—FOR YOU.

Unity® is a powerful cloud-based software used with JAIN ETwater smart controllers to deliver unparalleled efficiency for water management.



REQUEST A FREE DEMO.

WEB: www.jainsusa.com/Unity

EMAIL: sales@etwater.com

UNITY® is a registered trademark of JAIN Irrigation, Inc.



INSTALLING FROM DESIGN

Sinc Contractors brought multiple water sources together in a single system.

BY KYLE BROWN



AFTER

BEFORE

Some of the most interesting projects seem to fall in your lap almost by coincidence. That's how Sinc Constructors Co., Centerville, Utah, picked up the installation that won them the Changing the Landscape Awards 2021 Irrigation category sponsored by Dawn Industries.

"We kind of stumbled onto it. I must've been curious that day," says General Manager Mike Sowby. While the company usually doesn't pursue municipal work, a friend had suggested that he come along to check out the West Valley City pre-bid meeting.

When they heard the criteria for an irrigation system installation for a local park, Sowby says he thought the team had a chance of landing the job. "We decided to put a bid in on it. That's how we got involved."

Sinc, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, does almost all commercial work with the occasional residential customer, focusing on industrial and multifamily properties. During peak season, the company keeps about 50 employees, though the year-round average is about 35.

"After looking at the overall design, the plans and everything, we were excited about the openness of the park," says Blake Tingey, vice president of busi-



Working with two water sources was complicated, but having a detailed design and supportive representatives helped the team develop the creative solution needed. Using two float sensors let the system switch between groundwater and a culinary source, saving the city on water use. Photos: Tony Beckett

“We’re able to do our BEST WORK when we have a GOOD DESIGN.”

- Mike Sowby,
Sinc Constructors

ness development. Normally when Sinc works with general contractors on multifamily properties, they juggle multiple subcontractors in a tighter area. “But with the park, it was a big, open space, and we felt that it’d be an opportunity to be able to get a lot of work done fast and efficiently.”

The park project lended itself to Sinc’s specialties, requiring technical work with larger pipe sizes. “Not a lot of other contractors out here can do work like that, so we felt we had a niche here,” he says. It also called for work with screening and amending the topsoil, which was a project the team felt they could do well. The work being done at the 104,500-square-foot area helped bring it from an open lot to a well-kept local park.

FROM THE SOURCE

The overall intent of the park’s irrigation system was to utilize a secondary water source available in the subdivision, says Tingey.

Uphill from the park, a construction development had uncovered a steady source of fairly clean groundwater, says Blake Wilson, vice president of operations. While the city had diverted the water to the storm drains initially, “they had this source that someday they could tap into to use that as a secondary source. That was the purpose, they wanted it in the city park to save massive quantities of culinary water.”

As an open lot in the middle of the city, the site wasn’t drastically different from others they’d worked

on, says Wilson. Before they did anything with the secondary water source, they had to contend with bringing in the culinary water source from one corner of the property and incorporating it with the rest of the system.

“We had to bring it from their point of connection to a central point where the pump was,” Wilson says. “The idea being, we wanted to pump the secondary water source as much as possible, then when we needed to supplement with the culinary water, the flow switch kicks on and it adds to it so there’s sufficient water to run.”

“There’s two water sources that are feeding the cistern,” says Sowby. “There’s the secondary that comes in from the groundwater that was provided. And then we brought the culinary system over to that system as well to supplement when the groundwater source wasn’t keeping up. Both of those sources came to the central point and then were pumped out into the irrigation mainline as needed.”

The initial design for the irrigation plan came from ArcSitio Design, Salt Lake City, says Tingey.

“We’ve got to give a shout-out to the architect,” he says. “They’re one of the better landscape architects and irrigation designers in this market.”

It incorporated about 30 zones with multiple types of irrigation equipment, including drip line and bubblers along with water-efficient rotary nozzles on spray heads dependent on the size of the area to be covered. The larger strip areas used 40- to 50-foot

spray rotors, with the medium areas taking 20- to 30-foot rotors. Park strips used even smaller nozzles to make the best use of the space without wasting water, and the drip line and bubblers were used with planter beds and trees.

Sinc would put the plan into action, but any irrigation professional knows there are differences between what the plan calls for and the reality of what's necessary in the field.

"We had that initial design to go off of, but we have to make field adjustments and make recommendations based on field conditions," says Tingey.

SOLVING THE CISTERN

Wilson says the city had a valve that could be opened to bring the water to a cistern with a fill line and drain line, allowing it to calculate how much water could be held in the tank.

One of the major struggles with the holding tank was getting two float sensors installed to make efficient use of both the culinary and secondary water sources, says Tingey.

"We needed to get these float sensors on this tank precisely installed at the correct height so that if there was enough water, the pump would turn on and suck the water out and use it," he says. "But then there was also a secondary supplemental fill so that when the water got too low, the supplemental fill would turn on and increase the volume of water. It was intricate, trying to get these floats at the right height to make sure there was enough water for the pump to use and not burn up if there wasn't enough."

The system was initially set up for one flow, says Tingey, but they had to incorporate both the ground-

"After we ran those zones, we were kind of able to make an estimate on the water level, because everything else would pull at a lower rate," he says. "We based it off of a worst-case scenario, as far as water usage as those big zones ran."

Even after crunching the numbers, getting the sensors in the appropriate high and low points meant climbing down into the cistern and drilling into the side of the concrete system to maximize the water volume, says Tingey.

Even with those obstacles, Sowby says the stars aligned for this project, with a good client, manufacturer, architect and contractor.

"We're able to do our best work when we have a good design and are able to work with an owner and architect who understand things, because we all know that design is a starting point," Sowby says. "One of our strong suits is being able to make educated and informed recommendations to the owner, architect or manufacturer based on what we find in the field. We can do the math and everything can look good on paper. But at go time, if there's not enough water in the system, it doesn't matter how much math we do."

Sinc kept regular communication with the various groups throughout the process, so the crew had buy-in on their recommended plans as they dealt with issues, Sowby says.

This project has paved the way for new work developed around the team's now-growing expertise. Sinc finished one similar project and is currently working on another with multiple water sources and two cisterns and another large pump system. "This will be the third one we've done, coming up, that's

Sinc Constructors used MULTIPLE FLOAT SENSORS to precisely BALANCE WATER use from two different sources.

water source and the culinary water source in the cistern. As the pump kicked on, if the system was drawing more water than the groundwater source could supply, one of the float sensors would drop and the culinary water source would supplement it. As the tank filled again, it would trigger the sensors to stop the culinary water source flow and rely on the groundwater source until it was full again. Getting that setup to work correctly took a lot of calculation and trial.

"There was brain damage," Tingey jokes. "There were quite a few phone calls and testing different heights and calculating volumes to maximize the water usage."

The team turned on the larger rotor zones that would draw the most water overall to get a sense for the water level for what the pump would drain to those areas, says Tingey.

the same concept of splitting water sources. We're getting good at it," Tingey says.

"What we learned from the last one is that we're asking all the questions up front," he says. "We're able to steer it a little easier now with the bypass and with everything. We can have these conversations with the ownership group so that we don't have to do that kind of trial and error." 🌱

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



See how Sinc Constructors made design suggestions that set the irrigation system up for success in the full version of this article at www.igin.com/installing-from-design.



BY CAROL BRZOZOWSKI

Beat fall weeds with strong maintenance practices and proper chemical applications.

Seasoned landscape professionals have learned to recognize some of the usual suspects when it comes to annual fall weeds. But it's important to keep an eye out for new offenders and disease-weakened grass. Weather patterns and overall lawn stress are driving the quantity and type of weeds to look out for this fall.

Crabgrass is the mid-Atlantic region's primary weed, notes Pete Landschoot, University of Pennsylvania professor of turfgrass science.

"It dies after the first hard frost, but it's very noticeable into September and early October," he says.

Other weeds in this region include ground ivy and wild violet. Dandelion and clover are not difficult to control, but do make return appearances, notes Landschoot.

Perennial grassy weeds can be troublesome. Nimblewill dies off in the fall, but not before it begins to take over lawns, he adds.

Creeping bentgrass and rough bentgrass also are problematic.

In the Pacific Northwest, annual bluegrass and moss present problems, notes Alec Kowalewski, associate professor, turfgrass specialist at Oregon State University's Department of Agriculture.



Weeds like crabgrass thrive when desirable grass is under stress. Over-irrigating an area can put a patch at risk for invasion. Photo: Peter Landschoot



“Annual bluegrass and moss will germinate and establish in the fall, growing vigorously through the wet and cool winter months,” says Kowalewski. “Annual bluegrass will produce seed heads in the spring and often turn yellow and die in the summer months. Moss has a similar life cycle, growing prolifically in the cool weather but entering dormancy in the summer months.”

STAY ON OFFENSE

Weeds give off telltale signs and represent turf management issues that require mitigation, such as frequent mowing, irrigation and fertilization.

As the season wraps up, those practices will provide a dense lawn preventing encroachment of crabgrass, a summer annual and a good example of a spring-establishing weed, says Kowalewski. Adding pre-emergence herbicide applied in the spring months can help prevent that.

Marble regards weeds as secondary invaders symbolizing other underlying problems.

“Turfgrass is competitive with a lot of the weeds, but when something comes in during the fall like large patch disease, that weakens the turf and allows weeds to grow,” says Kowalewski. “Oftentimes, we see the weeds come in when the biggest issue is probably irrigation.”

“A lot of weed species can be prone to those areas where there is a lot of over-irrigation,” he says. “They like wet areas and can also stress the turfgrass. Improper mowing height or frequency can also lead to weeds becoming a problem.”

Watering frequency and mowing height depend on the grass species and time of year, Marble notes. For example, St. Augustine grass might need to be mowed every week.

Not many people irrigate their lawns in the mid-Atlantic region, “but occasionally we run into a severe drought. The lawn gets thin and large patches

“TURFGRASS IS COMPETITIVE WITH A LOT OF THE WEEDS, BUT WHEN SOMETHING COMES IN DURING THE FALL LIKE LARGE PATCH DISEASE, THAT WEAKENS THE TURF AND ALLOWS WEEDS TO GROW.”

– Alec Kowalewski, Oregon State University



With its lack of cooler temperatures found elsewhere, landscaping in Florida means “in the fall, we’ll still be battling those summer annual weeds species,” says Chris Marble, an assistant professor of landscape and weed management in the University of Florida environmental horticulture department. “Common (weeds) include the spurge species, Florida pusley, artillery weed and many others. There are also perennial species, including nutsedges and torpedo grass.”

Cool season weeds that might be problematic in north Florida where the season is more typical of the rest of the country include chickweed, annual bluegrass and Henbit weed.



Manage fertilization programs to develop strong grass that can won't give weeds a chance to grow in during the season. Photo: Peter Landschoot

die. Guess what comes back first? Weeds," says Landschoot.

In the Northwest, mowing the lawn at least once weekly between 2 to 3 inches also helps.

"Return the grass clippings with mulching blades to return valuable nutrients to stimulate future turf growth," Kowalewski says, adding that lower heights upon the canopy allow space for weed growth.

REVISIT FERTILIZING FREQUENCY

Landschoot says homeowners don't fertilize often enough.

"They'll do it once every two or three years and then the lawn thins out," he says. "Anytime you have space available and sunlight, weeds can start to grow."

Kowalewski recommends Northwest-based contractors fertilize four to six times yearly, applying 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application, totaling 4 to 6 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet annually.

Fertilizing in the fall and spring avoids summer and winter month applications during extreme temperatures, Kowalewski adds.

Those using synthetic fertilizer should look for a bag containing a high concentration of nitrogen and low concentration of phosphorus such as: 25-5-10 (25% nitrogen, 5% phosphorus pentoxide, 10% potassium oxide).

"Organic fertilizer can also be used. However, these products have low levels of nutrient, 3-3-3 for example," says Kowalewski. "High application rates will be required to reach the nitrogen rates required for vigorous turf growth."

"Irrigate three to four times per week from Labor Day to Memorial Day," he adds. Apply ¼ inch of water per application, totaling between ¾ and 1 inch weekly.

With dandelion and clover flowering in spring, herbicides should be applied to these weeds in the fall months when the plant is sending nutrients to the roots to prepare for overwintering, says Kowalewski.

"Active ingredients that control these weeds include 2,4-D (2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) for dandelion and triclopyr for clover," he adds.

In using chemical applications, "identify those most problematic species in the landscape and choose an option that's going to control that top species so you're not indiscriminately applying herbicides when they might not be effective on the weed species you're targeting," says Marble.

Applying pre-emergence herbicides in the fall helps prevent the germination of weeds like annual bluegrass. Ethofumesate can be applied for

post-emergence management of annual bluegrass, notes Kowalewski.

"Moss is controlled well with carfentrazone and fatty acid soap," he adds. "Control is best when application is coupled with dethatching to physically remove the moss from the turfgrass."

Up to 2½ months of crabgrass control is achieved with pre-emergence herbicides that include pendimethalin, says Landschoot, adding it's best done in the spring before the crabgrass emerges and when timed with forsythia bloom.

The long residual of most pre-emergence products in the soil won't prevent germination, but it will prevent emergence, with the root of the germinating seed taking up the herbicide, says Landschoot.

Herbicides addressing crabgrass can also contain prodiamine, says Marble.

"For something like Doveweed — problematic in the summer and early fall in Florida — those herbicides aren't going to be as effective," Marble notes. "Use something like indaziflam or dimethenamid. In planting beds, use flumioxazin to control that particular species more effectively."

A WINNING STRATEGY

Proper turf management practices lead to great success, notes Marble.

"When you're using herbicides, it's important to follow an integrated program. No herbicide is going to work if those other practices aren't in place first," he adds. "Combining herbicides with other strategies will offer the best success, cost less money, be the most environmentally friendly and give the best results."

Target annual bluegrass, chickweed and Florida pellitory weed in late season and early spring, says Marble.

"Crabgrass is the big one in the spring," he notes. "We can be challenged in Florida, especially because with all of our warm season turf grasses like St. Augustine, the most commonly used turf grass in Florida, we don't have any way to selectively control crabgrass in it. With pre-emergence herbicides, we can prevent it from becoming a problem in the first place."

Landschoot says he doesn't recommend herbicide use late in the season.

"Early spring is a time to get on the crabgrass and put down pre-emergence herbicides for crabgrass control, other annual grasses and other annual broadleaf weeds. Mid-fall is the best time to control ground ivy and wild violet. Apply broadleaf herbicides after the first hard frost, which in my area is sometime around mid-October."

"These are perennial weeds," says Landschoot. "The leaves will die off, but the crowns will be alive over the winter and produce new leaves the following spring after the first frost."

PROPER TURF MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES WORK HAND-IN-HAND WITH CHEMICAL PROGRAMS.

“At the time the plant is moving sugars back into the crown region, it’ll also be more efficient in taking up the herbicide,” he says.

Fall is a good time to do weed control in general, says Landschoot.

“If you time it with the frost, that’s even better,” he adds. “If you can’t do anything in the fall, you always have the spring to follow up next year.”

The major issues in turf management of weeds are soils, shade and fertility, notes Landschoot.

“I always tell people, to get it down to the basic level,” Landschoot says of turf management practices. “Choose good quality seed for the lawn from the start. Get a soil test before doing any kind of renovation or a new establishment work. If the pH is off, the fertilizer is not going to be very efficient.”

In the case of acidic soil, the soil test can indicate how much nutrients, lime and phosphorus potassium are needed, he adds.

“As far as the nitrogen goes, there are general guidelines for the different species of grasses used in our region,” says Landschoot. Kentucky bluegrass can call for two or three applications, but something like a tall fescue may only need one or two applications per year.

There are a lot of clay soils in the region, says Landschoot, adding that working a good quality compost into the soil can increase the organic matter and help retain moisture as well as provide better soil structure.

And while a small amount of shade is fine, lawns don’t do well in heavy shade, and while one won’t find crabgrass in such lawns, “you will see a lot of other shade-tolerant weeds coming into those lawns,” he adds. “Unless you’re willing to take down a tree or really prune it up, I suggest putting in ground covers, because heavy shade and grasses just don’t mix.”

Landschoot doesn’t believe there are many highly effective options for organic weed control. His studies of gluten meal, for example, show 50% control in contrast to 90% and higher with chemicals. For pre-emergence effects, they’re not strong and unless applied at the right time, they will not yield good control, he adds.

Some iron-based compounds like iron sulfate are used in areas where broadleaf herbicides are not utilized which burns back the foliage, he says, adding it doesn’t do much to kill the crowns of the plant.

For planting beds, plant oils like caprylic acid and vinegar-based caprylic acid products are good options, says Marble.

“A lot of municipalities have banned glyphosate, so people are looking for organic or certified options,” he points out, adding plant oils won’t be as effective on perennial species and are all contact action.

“They’re not systemic and might require more frequent applications, but they can be used as part of a good integrated weed management program with good success.”

Kowalewski notes the best weed prevention method in turfgrass management is mowing, fertilization and irrigation.

“We call these the primary cultural practices because you should be spending more time and money on these cultural practices than the rest,” he adds. “A weedy lawn is an indication that someone is not properly implementing these three things.”

Carol Brzozowski is a freelance writer with a specialty in environmental journalism based in Coral Springs, Florida. She can be reached at brzozowski.carol@gmail.com.

Easy-to-use landscape and irrigation design software.



Visit us online today at www.RainCAD.com for details!



Trusted by thousands of green industry professional contractors, consultants and architects in over 30 countries.

Email: sales@raincad.com | Phone: (936) 372-9884

Pack your suitcase.

We’re going to San Diego!

**2021:
Dec. 6-10**

Trade Show
Dec. 8-9



- Reunite with industry colleagues on the show floor.
- Learn core skill sets and level up your expertise.
- Sit back and relax in the sun-sational weather.

Register today! www.irrigationshow.org

IA awards scholarships to 10 students around the nation

The Irrigation Association, Fairfax, Virginia, announced the winners of its 2021 scholarship program. In its fifth year, the program awarded 10 scholarships to deserving recipients studying and pursuing careers in the irrigation field.

The 10 students are from colleges and universities around the nation and are enrolled in associate to graduate programs with an irrigation focus. 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.

Since the program's inception in 2016, 89 students have been awarded scholarships.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2021 Irrigation Association scholarship program:

- Tracinal Carr – Shasta College
- Erick Cervantes – Fresno State University
- Herbert Franklin – Florida A&M University
- Blake Kessler – Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute
- Brett Lynn – University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Kayla Morrison – Oklahoma State University
- In Owad – Kansas State University
- Zachary Rosenkrans – Kansas State University
- Kiera Scott – California State University-Fresno
- Connor Sinks – Kansas State University

The 2022 scholarship program will open this fall with a deadline of Feb. 15, 2022. To learn more about program requirements and the application process, visit www.irrigation.org/scholarships.



Irrigation & Green Industry announces its new Watch Us Grow: 2021 Industry Standouts program

Irrigation & Green Industry's new Watch Us Grow: 2021 Industry Standouts program sponsored by Heritage Landscape Supply Group celebrates irrigation and lighting service providers that have had a successful year. Whether the company is large or small, this program will recognize those that have excelled in revenue growth in those sectors in the past year.

Several of the best success stories from irrigation and lighting companies, both large and small, will be featured in a series of company profiles in the September print edition of *Irrigation & Green Industry* magazine alongside other benchmarking data.

"We want to celebrate and learn from the companies that have seen the most growth, not just the top earners," says Kyle Brown, *Irrigation & Green Industry* editor-in-chief. "The Watch Us Grow: 2021 Industry Standouts program gives us the opportunity to honor and recognize company leadership that encourage that growth, no matter what their revenue or experience level."

All entries will be included in a drawing for a DJI Mini 2 quadcopter drone, provided by Heritage Landscape Supply Group. Apply by July 16 at www.igin.com/watch-us-grow.



Photo: GIE+Expo

GIE+EXPO 2021 returns in person

Registration is open and plans are underway for GIE+EXPO, the annual trade show set for Oct. 20-22 at the Kentucky Exposition Center. Registration is available online.

As of April 20, 675 companies had already signed on to exhibit at GIE+EXPO and the co-located Hardscape North America. More than 70 are new exhibitors. Exhibitors will showcase their latest innovations outdoors where attendees can test drive equipment.

According to a recent survey of past attendees, 91% of landscape professionals and 84% of dealers are likely to attend this year.

"Despite the pandemic, business never stopped for those who design, install and maintain living landscapes. While this year's show will look different, we can't wait to welcome everyone back to Louisville," says Kris Kiser, managing partner of GIE+EXPO and president of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute. "We understand how important GIE+EXPO is to our industry, and we are committed to providing the education, resources and networking businesses need to thrive."

GIE+EXPO is sponsored by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Professional Grounds Management Society and National Association of Landscape Professionals.

For more information, visit www.gie-expo.com.



Deadline: **July 16**

www.igin.com/watch-us-grow

Are you a 2021 Industry Standout?

Are you proud of your business's growth in the past year?
Why not brag about it and win a new drone in the process?

Irrigation & Green Industry's new Watch Us Grow: 2021 Industry Standouts program sponsored by Heritage Landscape Supply Group **celebrates irrigation and lighting service providers that have had a successful year.** Whether the company is large or small, this program will recognize those that have excelled in revenue growth in those sectors in the past year.

Several of the best success stories will be featured in a **series of company profiles** in the September print edition of *Irrigation & Green Industry* magazine alongside other benchmarking data.

Enter today:
www.igin.com/watch-us-grow

IRRIGATION &
green industry



HERITAGE
LANDSCAPE SUPPLY GROUP



1 Lighting design tool. FX Luminaire, San Marcos, California, launched My Design, a free digital tool for lighting designers and installers that simplifies the lighting design process.

Users can drag and drop images and products to create an elegant lighting design in minutes. Designers can snap pictures while walking the job site, then create the lighting design from anywhere using a tablet or laptop. All project information is stored in the cloud, so users can access it 24/7 from their home, office or truck.

With My Design, distributor outside sales reps can provide on-the-spot design tips and recommendations to customers. Designers can produce detailed design proposals, and contractors can generate part lists for fast and accurate ordering. The lighting design can then be used as an install plan for their crew.

 **FX Luminaire**
www.fxli.com



2 First aid kit. Milwaukee Tool, Brookfield, Wisconsin, is adding to its Pack-out Modular Storage System with two new Packout First Aid Kits: a 204-piece Class B Type III kit and a 76-piece Class A Type III kit. Both kits include first-aid essentials tailored to the most common injuries users encounter on the job site.

The kits feature an impact-resistant body that keeps contents safe from drops and bumps on the job site. IP65-rated weather seals protect bandages, adhesives, antibiotics and other essential medical supplies from rain and other job site debris. The kits' no-travel bin seals keep contents secure and in their proper place.

For added functionality, the kits are equipped with a wall hanger so they can be easily mounted to walls, and retroreflective first aid stickers for easy identification.

 **Milwaukee Tool**
www.milwaukeetool.com



3 Submersible pump cable. Service Wire Company, Culloden, West Virginia, introduces its new twisted THW submersible pump cable for everyday applications. The twisted THW cable is primarily used to supply power to pumps and can be run down the well casing in wet or dry applications.

This flexible cable easily routes down the well, reducing the risk of conductor damage during installation. The twisted THW cable features solid or stranded conductors insulated with PVC (type THW), twisted with a green insulated ground conductor.

It is available in two conductor with ground (#14 AWG - #10 AWG) and three conductor with ground (#14 AWG - #2 AWG) in 600V copper. Twisted THW is sunlight resistant, gas and oil resistant and temperature rated at 75 degrees Celsius wet/dry. It is also RoHS compliant.

 **Service Wire**
www.servicewire.com

SUPPLIER IN THE NEWS

Kubota's 'Hometown Proud' \$100,000 grant program narrows to five finalists

Kubota Tractor Corporation, Grapevine, Texas, has identified the top five finalists in its inaugural Hometown Proud Grant Program, now open for public vote to help Kubota determine the recipient of \$100,000 and use of Kubota equipment to refresh or revitalize a community project. Nearly 400 entries were received from nearly every state in the country. Each application was reviewed, scored and then paired with a local Kubota dealer as the local dealer of choice within each community.

Until June 25, the public was invited to visit www.kubotahometownproud.com to cast a vote for one of the top five finalist projects. Every voter that placed a vote was automatically entered into a sweepstakes for a chance to win a Kubota residential Z200 Series zero-turn mower or BX Series sub-compact tractor. The community project with the highest

combined score from points and votes will be announced as the winner in July 2021.

"Kubota received hundreds of deserving applications from around the country, and we are excited to share our top five finalists in our inaugural Hometown Proud Grant Program. We are honored to showcase both the people and the passion behind each project," says Todd Stucke, Kubota senior vice president, marketing, product support and strategic projects.



Photo: Kubota Tractor Corporation



4 Skid steer. ASV Holdings Inc., Grand Rapids, Minnesota, is expanding its new Max-Series lineup with the addition of the vertical-lift VS-75 and radial-lift RS-75 skid steers.

The skid steers include a new, next-generation cab available with 360-degree visibility, a roomier operator area, a more comfortable seat, a new high-tech touch-screen display and more. Max-Series skid steers also feature rated operating capacities, departure angles, breakout force, hydraulic performance, ground clearance, speed, ease of serviceability, cooling packages and more.

The Max-Series has an optional state-of-the-art 7-inch touch-screen display. The screen includes monitoring tools, displays the view from the backup camera and integrates with service history and schedules. Job management features such as passcode operator lockout and idle time tracking are also available.

 **ASV Holdings Inc.**
www.asvi.com



5 Mower attachment. The Lawnmower Fender, Manitoba, Canada, introduces its lawn mower attachment: the Lawnmower Fender. The attachment works to prevent damage to plants, flowers and shrubs by lifting them as the mower is pushed through cutting the grass underneath.

The Lawnmower Fender allows you to cut very close to shrubs, plants and gardens while avoiding any damage to branches and stems. Garden hoses are saved from the blades of the mower by being picked up prior to being driven over and destroyed.

The Lawnmower Fender is constructed of steel for durability. It easily attaches and will adjust to fit most walk-behind lawnmowers and can be adapted to ride-on, stand-on and zero-turn radius mowers. It won't interfere with the height adjustment, side discharge, bagging system or the operation of the lawnmower.

 **The Lawnmower Fender**
www.thelawnmowerfender.com



6 Microtrencher. Ditch Witch, Perry, Oklahoma, announced the new MT26 microtrencher, which can cut a clean trench down to 26 inches deep and 1.5-3 inches wide. The attachment is part of a complete microtrenching system, along with the Ditch Witch RT80 ride-on trencher and HX75 vacuum excavator.

By reaching depths of up to 26 inches, contractors can install a typical 2-inch fiber or power cable line with the required 2 feet of ground cover all at the same time. The MT26's ability to create a trench up to 3 inches wide helps simplify the trench cleaning process.

The attachment can be equipped with a variety of blades, including the standard carbide-tipped blades and the Ditch Witch exclusive PDC blades with diamond-embedded carbide. All blades are easily changeable with standard hand tools.

 **Ditch Witch**
www.ditchwitch.com

SUPPLIER IN THE NEWS

Aquascape collaborates with Coyote Peterson to build wildlife center turtle pond

Aquascape, St. Charles, Illinois, worked with Coyote Peterson of Brave Wilderness on YouTube to create an Aquascape ecosystem pond for native turtles at the Lake Erie Islands Nature and Wildlife Center, April 28-29. The Aquascape team and Ed Beaulieu, Aquascape vice president of field research and contractor development who vlogs at Ed The Pond Professor on YouTube, constructed an indoor pond for threatened and endangered species of turtles.

Together, Aquascape and Beaulieu designed the indoor pond. The water feature project required 5,000 pounds of weathered stone and 1,000 pounds of river rock. A 7-by-14-foot structural wall supporting the pond is 2½ feet tall so patrons of the wildlife center can easily view the exhibit and interact with the turtles inhabiting it. AquaBlox Water Storage Modules beneath the system provide structural support for the

boulders in the pond and alleviate pressure on the floor below.

“There’s nothing like transforming an ordinary corner of a nature center into a fully functioning aquatic ecosystem,” says Beaulieu. “We incorporated driftwood elements and even a tree stump to naturalize this habitat for the Midland painted, map and Blanding’s turtles. A variety of aquatic plantings help soften the boulders and add height to the waterfall. I loved working alongside and learning from Coyote during this project.”



Photo: Aquascape

KICKING IT BACK INTO GEAR

TEST, COMPARE & BUY NEW PRODUCTS · EXPLORE THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY
NETWORK & LEARN FROM EXPERTS AND PEERS



GIE+EXPOTM

OCTOBER 20-22, 2021

LOUISVILLE, KY · WWW.GIE-EXPO.COM · 800-558-8767

Fill Your Off Season With Profits



Christmas Decor

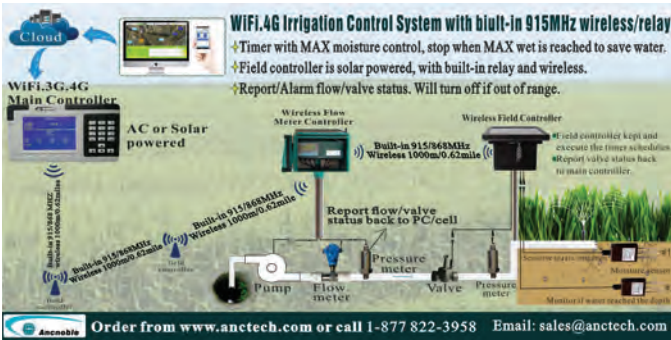
We provide:

- Comprehensive Training
- 24/7/365 Support
- Consistent Product Availability
- Marketing and Sales Plans
- Proprietary Industry Software

Call 1.800.687.9551 for a No-Obligation Territory Analysis
www.christmasdecor.net/franchise

WIFI.4G Irrigation Control System with built-in 915MHz wireless/relay

- Timer with MAX moisture control, stop when MAX wet is reached to save water.
- Field controller is solar powered, with built-in relay and wireless.
- Report/Alarm flow/valve status. Will turn off if out of range.



Order from www.anctech.com or call 1-877-822-3958 Email: sales@anctech.com

CLASSIFIEDS ●●

Florasearch, Inc.

In our third decade of performing confidential key employee searches for the landscape and irrigation industries and allied trades worldwide. Retained basis only. Candidate contact encouraged, confidential and always free.

Florasearch, Inc.

1740 Lake Markham Road | Sanford, FL 32771
 Ph: 407-320-8177 | Fax: 407-320-8083

Email: search@florasearch.com | Website: www.florasearch.com

Grow your business!
 Place your ad today.

CONTACT SALES FOR DETAILS.

CENTRAL U.S.

Tom Schoen | 952.905.3214
tom.schoen@bock-assoc.com

EAST, WEST, INTERNATIONAL & CLASSIFIED

Tara Schelling | 215.588.5811
taraschelling@igin.com



www.igin.com



**One Product... COMPLETE
 Plant - Soil - Root
 AGRONOMICS**

**BioPlex Transplant
 Concentrate & Plant Enhancer™**

TOTAL INSTALLATION

toll free: 800.441.3573
eMail: bioplex@earthlink.net
order on-line: bio-plex.com

AD INDEX ●●

ANC Technology - www.anctech.com	49
BioPlex Organics - www.bio-plex.com	49
Brilliance LED - www.brillianceled.com	23
Christmas Decor - www.christmasdecor.net	49
Dawn Industries - www.dawnindustries.com	13
DeWitt Company - www.dewittcompany.com	17
Ewing Irrigation - www.ewingirrigation.com	51
GIE+EXPO - www.gie-expo.com	48
Hunter Industries - www.hunterindustries.com	2
Hydro-Rain - www.hydorain.com	7
Irrigation Show - www.irrigationshow.org	43
Irrigation & Green Industry - www.igin.com	45, 49
Jain Irrigation - www.jainsusa.com	35
K-Rain - www.krain.com	11
Paige Irrigation & Landscape Lighting - www.paigewire.com	5
Smart Irrigation Month - www.smartirrigationmonth.org	19
Smart Rain - www.smartrain.net	29
Software Republic - www.softwarerepublic.com	43
WAC Landscape Lighting - www.waclighting.com	52



EASE CLIENTS' MINDS ABOUT INSECTS AND COVID

With backyard season here, your clients will want to spend more time enjoying their outdoor landscape areas. With the events of 2020, some might be concerned about the safety of being outside with disease-carrying flying insects.

As the virus causing COVID-19 began rapidly spreading across the planet, the worldwide scientific community has worked to gather information and research about this virus and how it is transmitted.

Researchers in the Agricultural Research Service's Arthropod-Borne Animal Diseases Research Unit in Manhattan, Kansas, in collaboration with Kansas State University, are investigating whether insects are involved in any way in the transmission of this virus. In two studies conducted by this group looking at two species of mosquitoes, midges and house flies, the researchers found that these biting insects do not pose a risk for transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 to humans or other animals.

HOW CLEAN IS YOUR WATER?

Having clean, safe water is more crucial than ever to public health. While some U.S. cities are keeping things clean and pumping out high-quality water to their residents, according to www.lawnstarter.com, millions of other Americans lack access to safe water.



LawnStarter ranked the 200 biggest U.S. cities according to seven key factors related to the quality of and access to water. Here are the best:

Top 5 best cities for water quality

- Columbus, Ohio
- St. Petersburg, Florida
- Aurora, Colorado
- Frisco, Texas
- Overland Park, Kansas



Trending topics

WILDFLOWERS CAN HELP REDUCE RUNOFF IN ROADSIDE SOILS

Grass is typically planted in the soils along roadsides after construction. It provides an effective way to minimize the runoff leaving roads when it rains. But is there an even better option to reduce runoff? The Soils Matter blog explored the benefits wildflowers bring to roadside soils.

According to blogger Erin Rivers, who completed a study on the topic, "Runoff from roads typically contains harmful pollutants and contaminants. Streams, rivers and lakes can be harmed by these contaminants if the runoff is not infiltrated by soils on the roadside first. In regions that receive a lot of precipitation year-round, this can be a big problem."

Rivers and her team wanted to see how effectively wildflowers soak up runoff in tilled soils compared to turfgrass. They found both turfgrass and wildflowers absorbed the same amount of runoff, but wildflowers come with other benefits. Wildflowers tend to have deeper roots that can stabilize soils and reduce erosion. Besides their aesthetic properties, wildflowers increase pollinator habitat and reduce the need for mowing which causes soil compaction.

AMERICANS EMBRACE GARDENING

During the early stages of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed as though everyone on social media was learning to bake bread and planting backyard gardens while in quarantine. According to a survey conducted by www.trees.com, this turns out to be true ... at least the backyard garden part.

The results of the survey show that 88% of Americans say that taking up gardening as a hobby improved their mental health. As Americans began to plant and dream about plump tomatoes and crunchy radishes, seed companies saw a 270% increase in sales.

The survey also found that 64% of people took up plant-keeping as a hobby during the pandemic, and more than a quarter of Americans have taken on debt to fund plant-keeping. Even as we begin to see COVID-19 in the rearview mirror, 90% of Americans say they expect to continue keeping plants after the pandemic ends.



Your Source for Smart Irrigation Products



RAIN BIRD ESP-TM2 6-STATION OUTDOOR CONTROLLER

Make your ESP-TM2 controller SMART with EPA WaterSense certification by adding the LNK WiFi module and a WR2 rain sensor.



HUNTER PRO-HC CONTROLLER

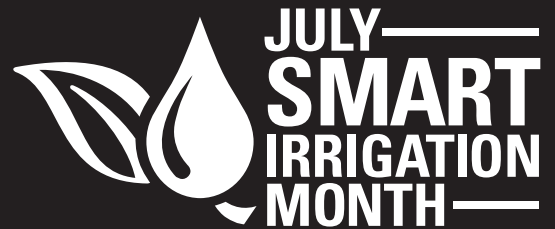
Outdoor irrigation controller with Hydrowise web-based software from anywhere worldwide using your smart device or web browser.

Follow us on social media:



Get Smart and Save Water for Smart Irrigation Month

Ewing is your source for Smart Irrigation Month with the latest smart irrigation products, expert advice and educational resources to help save water on every install. Keeping smart irrigation techniques and products in mind for landscapes isn't just good for the environment, but it can also help differentiate your business with clients.



CHECK OUT ALL OUR
SMART IRRIGATION
PRODUCTS HERE



FIND YOUR EWING
LOCATION NEAR YOU!



Perfect Every Time. Dream it, Solve it. Wall Wash Fixtures

5021-30BBR - Standard

- Onboard brightness control range 190 to 980 lumens



5121-27/30BK - Mini

- Adjustable to 2700K or 3000K CCTs
- Onboard brightness control range 80 to 420 lumens



5221-30BZ - NEMA

- Onboard brightness control range 200 to 1500 lumens
- Continuous adjustability beam control NEMA distribution beam control up to 90°x 120°
- Horizontal or vertical orientations



Deliver broad even illumination for beautiful facades, shrubbery, trees and other landscape elements. Available in black, brass and bronze architectural finishes.

WAC

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

walandscape-lighting.com