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Northwest Landscape Professional

The NWLP – Northwest Landscape Professional – is the official publication of the Washington Association of Landscape Professionals and is published and distributed quarterly to WALP members and extended gratis to select courtesy subscribers.

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The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals is monitoring the ongoing COVID-19 concerns on public safety.

WALP has developed a resource page on our website to give members and affiliates in the landscape industry up to date information on how this crisis affects landscape professionals. WALP leadership continues to work on your behalf to get answers from the government on key issues that impact our staff, customers, and our businesses.

Please visit www.walp.org/covid-19-resources for the most up to date information. We wish you all good health during this challenging time.

For information regarding advertising opportunities, please call us at (360) 350-4464 or email at info@walp.org.



Spring Has Sprung! Time to Roll Up Our Sleeves!

Ella Vogelpohl
Ragen & Associates
2021 WALP State President

Thank you for those who attended the 2021 Annual Meeting and the Strategy Planning Meeting on January 29th. New directors and officers are in place and committees are already at work. Congratulations to the WALP Award winners as announced in this issue. The chapter presidents are busy planning virtual meetings and trainings and soon we will start meeting in person too.

We have welcomed 4 new members since January and the membership committee is working hard for our members. There are a few social events in the works for this year – the Annual Golf Tournament, an “Old Fashioned Company Picnic – WALP Style”, a 9-Pin, No-Tap Bowling Tournament, and hopefully holiday parties.

I want to “Thank” John Murphy for being our 2020 President. It was a difficult year not knowing what or when we were going to be able to do anything. John will be busy for us coming up with a new certification program. I know he would love some help!

The COVID virus is still with us, but with the vaccines now available for most, we will be able to get back to business as usual and enjoy most social activities (with using safe distancing and cleaning guidelines). If your company is like ours, you are swamped with lots of work coming at you from every direction! This should help all of our companies recover and ensure our vendors we will be busy for years to come. Please remember to thank your employees for their efforts and our vendors for keeping us supplied with what we need. With people still staying home, they are looking at their yards and realizing that they should really get their yards in shape.

I look forward to seeing everyone at WALP's meetings and events this year and hope everyone stays safe and healthy! 🌱

Mission Statement For The Washington Association Of Landscape Professionals

To promote professionalism, integrity, and education to a thriving membership within the Green Industry and the communities served.

Vision Statement For The Washington Association Of Landscape Professionals

- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals is a publicly recognized and unified industry of landscape professionals who embody business and technical excellence.
- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals provides and promotes the opportunity to mentor and support its members.
- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals' members receive value and benefit by sharing knowledge, resources, and experience.
- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals is the networking place and referral resource for “Green Industry” professionals.

“Defining Professionalism In The Green Industry”

WALP Office

120 State Ave NE #303
Olympia, WA 98502
(360) 350-4464
email: info@walp.org
website: www.walp.org

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Cover photo: Avid Landscape Design & Development LLC, 2021 Award of Distinction winner for Design Build. Project: Lents Residence Walls & Firepit.

2021 Committees

Awards Committee

Lloyd Glasscock
Northwest Flower & Garden Festival

Certification Committee

John Murphy
JM Landscaping and Irrigation
Michael Murphy
Sunrise Landscape Design, Inc

Conference Committee

Will Anstey
Devonshire Landscapes, Inc.
Ella Vogelpohl
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Education Committee

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Events Committee

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Golf Tournament Committee

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Marketing Committee

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Membership Committee

Tim Buiten
*Tim's Complete
Landscape Management*



Member Testimonials

Will Anstey

General Manager

Devonshire Landscapes Inc.

The relationships with other professionals and our suppliers/vendors that I have made through my participation in WALP give me access to knowledge and experience well beyond my own, and that within my business. For example, doing a walk-around at a maintenance account a few weeks ago I noticed half of an Ilex Crenata hedge was looking thin, weak, and the leaves were yellowing. I am able to determine a few plant pests/diseases, but I had no idea what the issue was with this hedge. I did not want to go through the time and expense of simply replacing the underperforming plants without knowing what the problem was. If the same thing happened to the new plants I would lose time and money, and lose the confidence of my client that I was a professional. I took a picture and emailed Zack at Puget Sound Plants, asking for his thoughts and suggestions. He helped me to identify the culprit! Phytophthora Root Rot! Now I have a plan to confidently address the underlying soil, drainage, and irrigation issues that allowed this pathogen to take hold. I have communicated my findings and approach with the client, and look forward to getting my clients hedge back to looking its best. I am glad I did not just replace the plants because I did not know any better. Thank you to Zack, Puget Sound Plants, and WALP. 🌿



The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals was founded in 1984 by a group of landscape professionals who wanted to define professionalism, develop educational programs, and evoke legislative representation on the issues pertinent to the Landscape Industry.

The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals (WALP) is a non-profit organization of landscape professionals dedicated to providing opportunities that promote professionalism, integrity, and education within the Landscape Industry through the members it serves.



WALP Chapter Updates

Snohomish County Chapter



Brandon Cook
Snohomish County Chapter Director

Wow! You found a spare moment to read a magazine article! Thank goodness for the little breaks. Isn't that how it feels every spring? January's slow, February starts slow; then starts showing signs of life. Then BAM March kicks down the door and announces The Season Has Begun! We're feeling the same way here in Snohomish County. We're glad for the abundance of work that many of our contractors are experiencing, excited for all of those new plants going out from local suppliers, and pleased with the well-stocked vendors throughout the area. Thankful that all of this teamwork keeps on making the dream work.

Snohomish County held the first two of its educational meeting series in February with an interview of Roger Canfield of Puget Sound Plants. Roger dived into his entry into the industry with a great explanation on how to make money with plants. Followed up by a perennial favorite topic on Irrigation hosted by HD Fowler where we got to listen to Brent Sanders and Greg Hendry give us great tips, tricks and advice. Did you miss these meetings and wish you could have been there? You're in luck! We've started recording the informational portions of our meetings and posting to the WALP

YouTube page. That way if you heard something that you wanted to circle back on, or were just plain ol' tired and done for the day when our meeting started you can listen at your leisure now.

Moving forward we are planning to host an interview in April with Lorraine Brooks the dean of the Horticulture Department at Edmonds Community College on educational opportunities for the industry. Based on our poll earlier this year, education for both owners and employees is something you are asking of us and we are happy to oblige. We also got confirmation from the chapter that there is interest in doing a community service project and the Board has reached out to the Evergreen Arboretum to see how we can help. We're excited to continue planning a Fall service project where we will be assisting the Arboretum in renovating and replanting the 'Small Tree Walk'. How fitting for our chapter to reconnect with one of our region's great landscapes and a place many Snohomish County Members have assisted in the past!

Not to be outdone, Dale Gellner has graciously accepted the request to bring the Mike Bailey golf tournament back this year after Covid-19 made it unfeasible to host a tournament. At this time (March/April) it looks like the tournament will be held in late September but of course we will update and announce as we finalize details.

We're looking forward to getting back to in person style meetings as soon as it is relatively feasible do so and your Board is monitoring the situation closely and working with our Vendor Hosts to make this happen. One idea we will hope to continue is recording the informational/educational portion of the event so that these great resources

can be used in the future or allow those who can't be in person to enjoy the 'next best thing.'

Let us know if you have any great topics for upcoming meetings as we want to provide what our members need in a timely manner. We'd love it if you'd give us a follow on Instagram and Facebook that way we can be better at communicating with you and getting timely and usable feedback from our members. Find us at @WalpSnoCo

Alright, that's enough from me, enjoy the last of those Rhododendron blooms and Let's Grow! 🌿

Southwest Chapter



Don Bottemiller
State Treasurer

Spring is upon us. Our landscapers are busy with landscaping and Maintenance services. Contractors are busy with selling their products and services. As we move forward in our Covid-19 era, we have been able to continue to meet our challenges. The recent snowstorm shut everyone down, except for snow removal services. As we look ahead, we need to replace our chapter President who is in the process of moving to Texas and Vice President who is no longer employed at his company. While King and Snohomish chapters have started doing virtual

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..... Remembrance

Jim Ashe – Everett Home and Garden Show

James William Ashe (Jim) of Granite Falls was born on May 12th, 1946. He passed away on February 28th, 2021 after a long battle with cancer at the age of 74.

Jim was the founder of the Everett Home and Garden Show, and was a strong supporter of the WALP Snohomish County Chapter. When Jim started the Everett Home and Garden Show he contacted WALP to be a part of this event. The WALP Snohomish County chapter had an active role in designing and building landscape displays for many years. Jim also provided incentives to WALP members to participate with exhibitor booths.

In lieu of flowers or gifts to the family, please donate to the Sno-Isle Libraries or your local PBS station.



Wes W. Wong, Jr. – Tacoma WinSupply

Wes W. Wong, Jr. (March 28, 1974 - February 11, 2021), Long time industry friend and colleague, Wes was Assistant Manager at Tacoma WinSupply for over 15 years, a wholesale landscaping & irrigation supplier. He valued the many relationships with his co-workers & customers formed during those years.

Wes loved to cook, grill, garden with his wife, & coach youth baseball & fastpitch teams. He could make you belly laugh like no other and had a gift for dancing (until he noticed that his daughter was recording him).

Wes & family became part of Redeem Church seven years ago, which extended their church family with even more wonderful Jesus people. He enjoyed serving in all ways that God put on his heart. He gained many more brothers & sisters in Christ whom he loved deeply. He also loved doing life with his Life Groups. His relationships built at both churches taught him how to value the word of God & and to love his family & God fiercely.

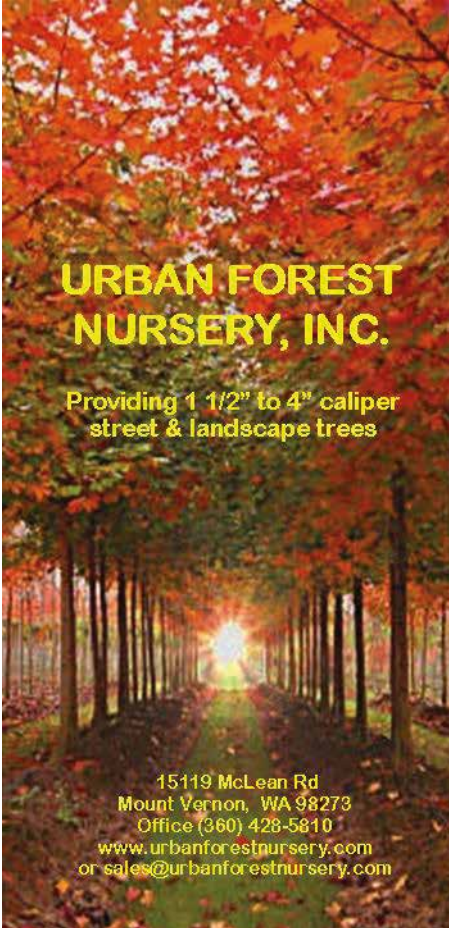
On 2/11/2021, this strong & unforgettable man left our world & started his journey into Heaven after a 21-day battle with COVID-19. While in the hospital, he told his family "I love you. Don't cry, don't worry & remember to pray". Until he took his last breath, he made sure to remind them that God was in charge of his life.

Chapter Updates

continued from page 4

meetings and education presentations, we are focused on getting a slate of officers and setting up a calendar for this year's meetings.

We would like your help with considering to be an officer for our chapter. Chapter Presidents have monthly zoom meetings on the WALP state board and work on setting up our chapter meetings and events. The Vice President assists the President with his duties and moves into the Presidents role after their term expires. Anyone interested should contact Don with D&D Nursery or John with JM Landscaping. We will both work to support you if you have any interest. Until we can get our board back on track, King and Snohomish chapters have monthly education meetings with their chapter meetings. Feel free to attend virtually. You can follow their topics in the WALP Wednesday publication. 🌿



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■ PART 1 – H-2B Program: An Introduction



Summary

Landscape employers who have consistently been struggling with hiring additional labor for their busiest time of year may benefit from using the H-2B program to legally hire foreign workers with temporary work visas. Although it is likely too late to request workers for 2021, employers interested in using the program should begin planning now for 2022.

What is the H-2B Program?

The H-2B program permits U.S. employers to temporarily hire foreign non-immigrants to perform non-agricultural labor or services in the United States. The employment must be of a temporary nature for a limited period of time such as a one-time occurrence, seasonal need, peak load need or intermittent need. The H-2B program requires the employer to attest to the U.S. Department of Labor that it will offer a wage that equals or exceeds the highest of the prevailing wage, applicable Federal minimum wage, the State minimum wage, or local minimum wage to the H-2B workers. The H-2B program also establishes certain wage and recruitment standards in order to protect similarly employed U.S. workers.

Q: What are the Costs and other Considerations?

A: Besides the hourly wage requirement, employers must also pay or provide the transportation, visa fees, lodging, recruitment, and daily subsistence for foreign workers' travel

to the job site. Employers must also pay or provide the workers' transportation home if they complete the contract or are terminated for cause. In general, workers coming from Mexico cost between \$1100-\$1250 per worker. Employers may choose the workers they sponsor for visas, and there is no housing requirement. Assistance with the application process can also cost several thousand dollars, depending on the organization or law firm you decide to work with.

Q: Are There any Benefits for WALP Members?

A: Yes, WALP has partnered with Washington State University and wafila, a non-profit association that

assists employers in using the H-2A and H-2B programs, to conduct a wage survey that has been accepted by DOL to determine the H2B prevailing wage for WALP members. WALP members operating in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties are therefore able to currently pay \$16.23 per hour to H2B workers, rather than the standard DOL wage of \$19.31 per hour.

Q: How and When Do I Apply?

A: The application process generally takes between 120-150 days. Additionally, the Federal government places a limit of 33,000 H-2B visas for two six-month periods each

continued on page 8

The advertisement features a man, Vaughn Chandler, wearing a yellow hard hat and a green long-sleeved shirt with a logo, kneeling next to a large tree trunk. The background is a lush green landscape with trees.

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year: October – March and April – September. As most landscape companies will likely need to request workers in April, it is recommended that landscape employers begin the process in either November or October. The first step in the process is to request a prevailing wage determination from the DOL – this is essentially where the DOL will consider the job duties workers will perform and the location of the work to determine the minimum wage the H-2B employer must pay its H-2B workers and U.S. workers similarly employed. As mentioned above, WALP members in King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties are able to use a WALP sponsored survey when filing their prevailing wage determination to obtain a more favorable wage requirement.

If you are interested in learning more, please schedule a consult with us at <http://wafla.org/guestworkers> or call (360) 455-8064 x 110. Be also on the lookout for a follow-up article later this year with further information on the H-2B program requirements and filing timelines. 🌱

This column is produced by wafla for informational purposes only. The items contained herein are provided for general information and do not constitute legal advice. Wafla does not provide legal advice or counsel; and readers should make their own inquiries before making any decision based on this or any other information received from wafla.



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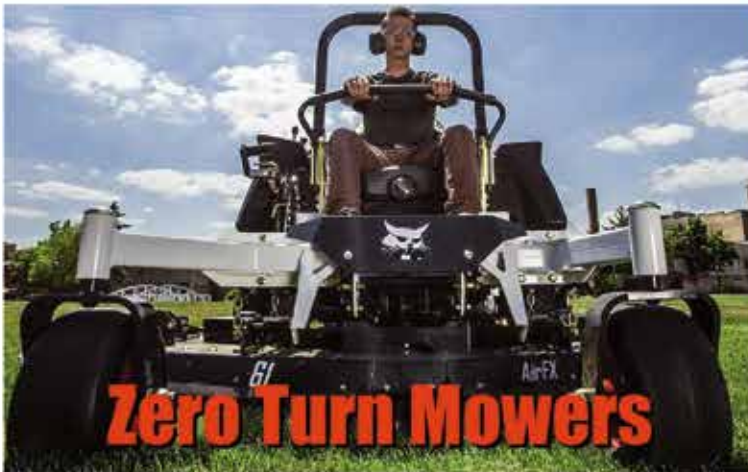


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A New Grub in Town

Will Anstey, Devonshire Landscapes Inc.

For the last few years I have received more and more complaints from customers dealing with lawn damage in late Fall and winter. A terrible time to be tasked with lawn repair, as soil temps are getting too cold for good seed germination. As always, it is our goal to help our clients maintain a beautiful and healthy landscape. The issue at hand is the lawn and turf damage caused primarily by Crows and Racoons looking to feed on the larvae of the European Chafer Beetle. First identified in Washington State in Tukwila in 2015, this issue seems to be growing every year, and we should anticipate that trend to continue for the next 5-10 years. I have heard that is about how long it took nature to balance out this pest infestation on the East Coast.

The best defense against any pest or disease is a healthy plant, which requires sufficient nutrients, irrigation, and healthy soil full of living beneficial microorganisms, mycorrhizae fungi,

and earthworms. Pesticides can damage this system and may leave your lawn weakened and more prone to other pests, diseases, and weed infestation.

This is why we implement an organic approach to landscape management.

Here is what we are recommending to our clients:

#1 - Replace lawn with Native and Low Maintenance plants

Unless you require lawn areas for lawn type activities consider replacing high maintenance lawn with a variety of native and drought tolerant trees, shrubs, and groundcovers!

Additional savings in maintenance costs could provide a 7-year break even return on investment. Any irrigation costs would be additional savings.

PRO's

- It will camouflage and hide any future Chafer Beetle grub damage, making this a non-issue.

- Increase the aesthetics of your landscape with different plants, textures, colors, flowers, etc.
- The flowers and plant variety will also attract more song birds, butterflies, and hummingbirds!
- Reduction of required maintenance and carbon emissions.
- Creates habitat for local wildlife*

CON's

- Up front cost.

#2 - Repair lawn

If you prefer to keep your lawn, we are happy to do what we can to keep it as healthy and beautiful as we possibly can. We can rake up and remove torn out sod pieces, overseed with a Fescue lawn seed mix, and top-dress bare soil areas with compost. Healthy, and well maintained and **irrigated** lawns have shown more resilience to damage.

PRO's

- Immediate actions can be taken to improve aesthetics, possibly during maintenance visits
- Compost topdressing will help protect and improve soil
- Cheaper than a full lawn replacement

CON's

- Potential future damage may occur, even with preventative measures taken.
- Repaired areas could take several months to "fill in".
- Seed germination is dependent on temperature and water availability

#3 - Replace lawn

If your lawn didn't look good before,

or you prefer immediate results, you may take this opportunity to install new sod. We can cut out your existing sod, and install new sod, without tilling. This method reduces cost and retains soil health and microbiology. If you have issues with Raccoons peeling back sod, we can temporarily install wire mesh grid sheets until the sod roots in.

PRO's

- A brand new healthy green lawn, instantly.
- Leveling out bumps and dips and removal of unwanted weeds and grasses
- Immediate results, you do not have to wait for seed to germinate

CON's

- Potential future damage may occur, even with preventative measures taken.
- More costly than lawn repair

Preventative Lawn actions moving forward

The following should be done in this order of priority.

1. Lawn renovation in Spring to improve soil texture & health.
2. Install irrigation system, and/or irrigate in summer to prevent drought stress
3. Apply Nematodes or *bacillus thuringiensis* in August (requires watering)

Motion activated sprinklers have also been effective for some of our clients. 🌱



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Northwest Premier Landscape Awards Program Recap

Lloyd Glasscock, Northwest Flower & Garden Festival, Awards Committee Chair

It has taken a bit longer than expected but results for the Annual Awards program are in and now we turn our attention to next year's event. Before we do that it's helpful to look at the successes we had regarding changes to the program even in a pandemic stricken year.

This year we overhauled the scoresheet used in judging projects and better defined some of the categories. This appeared to give the judges a better 'benchmark' when looking at the projects. The projects were judged remotely (as opposed to judges being in the same room) with communication done via e-mail or by phone as necessary. Because of the lower number of entrants for 2020 this method worked well.

Participation was low this year (which candidly goes beyond the health crisis) though the quality of the projects entered was very high. One could

conclude that firms are having a hard look at what might be 'award worthy'. This year we had 13 entries by 8 firms in 9 categories, actually a pretty good cross-section. All the projects earned an award; 2 of Merit, 5 of Distinction and 6 Grand Awards. Projects were of all sizes and scope from Corporate Campuses to backyard firepit areas.

An Award of Merit means the project meets industry standards. Judges are landscape professionals as well as WALP members and this standard is taken seriously, indeed it sometimes appears to be a high bar. An Award of Distinction means the project is exceptional, but still with some room for improvement somewhere. A Grand Award generally means the project is exceptional but with no obvious room for improvement. Usually there is some 'wow' factor considered, even in small projects. In all categories the degree of difficulty, be it access or site conditions

or some other factor is taken into account.

A visual presentation is prepared as of this writing and should be available for viewing from the WALP website. It's about 6 ½ minutes long and presents images of the projects and awards earned. If you haven't seen it already be sure to give it a look.

Thank you again to the firms that chose to enter projects in the Program!

Entrants for 2020 were:

Avid Landscape Design & Development LLC

Plantscapes

Devonshire Landscapes

Green Spaces Landscaping

Kirkland Land Care

Northwest Outdoor Lighting

Pacific Earthworks WBE

Vulcan Design & Construction



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2020 Northwest Premier Landscape Award Winners



GRAND AWARD
Design Build
Green Spaces Landscaping
Parikh Outdoor Living Space



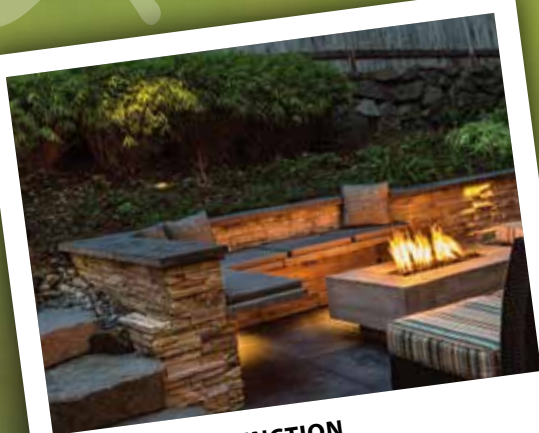
GRAND AWARD
Commercial Construction
Pacific Earth Works WBE
REI Spring District Corp. Headquarters



AWARD OF DISTINCTION
Design Build-Hardscaping
Vulcan Design & Construction
Luettgerodt Outdoor Living



GRAND AWARD
Public Works
Kirkland Land Care
Fritz Hedges Waterway Park



AWARD OF DISTINCTION
Lighting
Green Spaces Landscaping
Joffe Residence



AWARD OF DISTINCTION
Commercial Maintenance
Devonshire Landscapes
Kenney Retirement Community



GRAND AWARD
Lighting
Northwest Outdoor Lighting
Snohomish Residence



AWARD OF MERIT
Residential Maintenance
Devonshire Landscapes
Quinn Residence



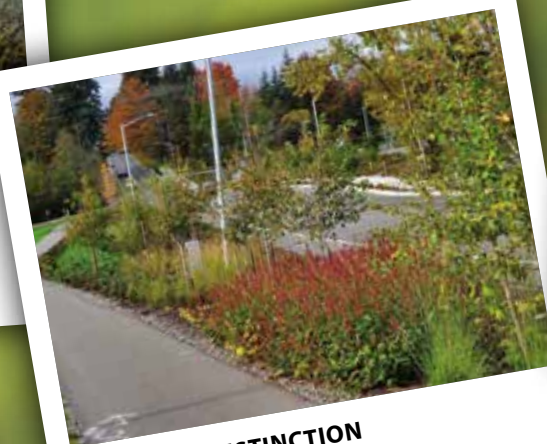
GRAND AWARD
Commercial Construction
Pacific Earth Works
Rover Roof Deck Improvements



GRAND AWARD
Hardscaping
Green Spaces Landscaping
Joffe Residence



AWARD OF MERIT
Residential Construction
Green Spaces Landscaping
Smith Renovation



AWARD OF DISTINCTION
Public Works
Plantscapes
WISC Frontage



AWARD OF DISTINCTION
Design Build
Avid Landscape Design & Development LLC
Lents Residence Walls & Firepit



The Value of Networking



Rod Bailey
Alder Springs Enterprises, LLC

Do you believe in Networking as a way to expand and grow your business? Almost every area of your business can be improved by networking with other people and asking them the questions about how they met and solved the problems facing you.

If you could walk into a room with 30 or 40 potential mentors do you think you could learn something from them? Of course you could and there are many venues out there where this could be the case. Your local WALP Chapter meetings are a great venue for

networking as are all of the regional and national meetings sponsored by NALP, WALP, WSNLA, OLCA, OAN, NALP members have access to a number of Peer Group discussion opportunities that are unparalleled networking opportunities.

When it comes to marketing your business there are many outside-the-industry groups that present excellent networking opportunities as well. I don't have room to fully name them all but a few acronyms you might recognize would be BOMA, NAIOP, IFMA AASK, IREM, CAI, NWPRA, GCA, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc. If you don't recognize some of these give me a call and we can discuss who and how they might be helpful to you.

This past year I participated in a group called **Job Quest Workshop** through our church. The promise of this group is not to find you a job but to teach you the skills to find a job yourself. When I was first asked to be a discussion leader with this group I thought "What have I got to offer here, I've only applied for a job twice in my whole life?" Then I got to thinking,

since you do Management Consulting work with small businesses you have applied for a job with every single client you have had" (and some I didn't get as well) I realized that I had, in fact, applied for many jobs and that is what I am doing with every potential new client. I realized that my major tool has been Networking.

Networking is simply the process of getting to know people and giving them the chance to get to know you. Not only does this work for me now, I realized it worked very well for me for thirty years as the owner of my own business in the Landscape Industry.

You have all heard of having an Elevator Speech wherein you practice how much you can say about your business to get someone interested in you while travelling between floor 1 to 6 (or waiting for a bus, or standing in line at Starbucks, etc. etc. You should have an elevator speech for your business just as you should have business cards, a printed "leave behind" piece, a Brochure, a Web Site, a Facebook Page, a LinkedIn account, Twitter, Instagram and all the other social networking sites. Remember in

all these situations you may have only a few seconds or lines to open up your networking opportunity.

When you meet someone new (as well as people you already know) are you applying for a job directly with them? Not necessarily but you may be networking with them to see who they know that you should talk to. Yes, Word-Of-Mouth is a most effective networking technique as well as a most effective marketing and sales technique. Ask your network contacts for a referral.

How many people could you reach indirectly if you convinced your barber or hair dresser that you are the best act in town? When we were marketing landscaping and landscape maintenance services my banker had more of my business cards and tri-fold brochures in his desk than I had in mine. He thought that every new mortgage was a potential new or upgraded landscape job about to happen and he was happy to wrap the cost into the new mortgage,

and to make sure I got the job.

One day when I was leaving a Chamber of Commerce lunch someone came up to me and said "Hey, I just heard a lot about your company from one of your salespeople at my table, you sound great"! Since I was the only one from my company there I asked him to point out this "Salesperson" to me. You guessed it right, he pointed out one of my best customers in town.

When you network with others your main job is not to sell, your main job is simply to get to know someone who could either be directly or indirectly able to help you. My experience in 50 years of business and marketing taught me that when people want a particular product or service they would rather buy it from someone they already know than to risk dealing with a stranger.

When we participated in meetings with BOMA or NAIOP (from which we got over 65% of our new business) we learned that if you sit down at a table and start pumping someone for

business with you right off the bat you will be sitting at a table by yourself next month!!! You don't need to be overly promotional up front..... they know why you are there!

So, now start thinking about how networking with others might be helpful to you when you are looking for: a job, new contracts, new employees, new equipment, materials and vendors, or nearly anything, etc. etc. etc. 🌿

Rod Bailey is a Management Consultant with Alder Springs Enterprises, LLC with many years of experience in the Landscape Industry including his own business, Evergreen Services Corporation for 30 years. He was a founder of WALP in 1984 and President in 1987. He is a Past President of NALP Legacy Association ALCA. He works out of Salem, Oregon throughout the Pacific Northwest as well as nationally. He can be reached at 971-719-2158 or by email at RodLBailey@hotmail.com

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What's your Marketing Story?

Stacie Zinn Roberts, Founder, *What's Your Avocado? Marketing & Public*



Everyone loves a good story. We tell stories to soothe our children to sleep, to relax with a movie on a Saturday night, to connect with friends over a beer. In business, something as basic as what you name your company should tell a story too.

To illustrate, let me tell you my story. About 10 years ago, I had a dream that a friend who farmed citrus, cattle and turfgrass sod was telling me that the market had crashed in every commodity where he had invested. But on a lark, he said in the dream, many years ago he'd planted a grove of avocado, and don't you know avocados are now selling for 10 times more than they ever had before? The thing that saved me, he said, was the thing I overlooked. And I woke up.

I thought about calling my friend and telling him to go plant a grove of avocados. (With the craze over avocados these days, perhaps I should have.) But what I realized was the avocado wasn't for him. It was for

me. The thing I'd overlooked, green industry marketing, was what was going to save me.

When I started What's Your Avocado? Marketing and Public Relations in 2012, the choice of my company name was strategic. It tells a story that is wrapped around a concept. The concept is that every person, every product and every business has something about them that's special. I call that unique element Your Avocado. When I work with clients, I help them find their avocado and express it in the marketplace in a way that's authentic to them and drives sales.

Now, every time I meet someone and tell them my company name, they ask what it means. I tell the story. It's so memorable that I've created a trigger to keep my company in the minds of potential customers. Lots of people have sent me avocado-themed gifts — avocado earrings, beach towels, Christmas tree ornaments — all because of my company name.

Telling a story works. I've seen it over and over. When Eric and John Lefebvre were teenagers, they were just two kids with a lawnmower and a lot of determination. Cutting neighbors' yards eventually grew into a real business that, back in 1988, they named E and J Mowers Lawn Care located in Charlotte County, Florida. That name told a story. Eric and John will mow your lawn. Thirty years later, the brothers are now seasoned professionals with crews that hand-manicure the landscapes of beachfront estates, and the company rarely offers mowing services anymore.

A couple of years ago, Eric and John realized that their company name no longer reflected the scope of their business. The story no longer

fit. So, they changed it. E and J Mowers became Green Leaf Solutions, a name that tells a story of a high level of expertise offering a variety of landscaping services. They rebranded with a new logo for their business cards, shirts and trucks, and they launched a website.

The results were immediate. Some folks joked that they must be putting the company up for sale because of the new, fancy image. But most of the reactions were positive, saying they presented a more professional appearance in line with the high-quality work they do. In a tight labor

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market, the new name and story helped them to recruit more skilled talent.

My firm recently branded a new Bermudagrass for Oklahoma State University and its licensing agent, Sod Production Services. The grass is the most cold-tolerant Bermuda on the market. We wanted the name to reflect the variety's main attribute but also harken back to its roots at OSU. The name we came up with was Tahoma 31. The number 31 refers to the number used to identify it during a decade of research. Tahoma is a Native American word that sounds like Oklahoma but means "frozen water." The name tells a story. It conveys a message about the product's benefits, and it sounds good too.

What does your company name say

about you? How can you optimize the story you tell to inform your customers about your products or services?

I'd love to hear how you tell your company's story and learn about Your Avocado. Feel free to shoot me an email at stacie@whatsyouravocado.com or connect with me on Twitter @whatsyouravocad 

Stacie Zinn Roberts is a nationally recognized, award-winning writer and marketing expert with more than 25 years of experience. She has won more than 40 national awards for her work including the United Nations Environmental Program for retail environmental marketing, as well as from organizations such as the Public Relations Society of America and the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association.

She's written for industry publications such as Golf Course Management, Sports Turf, Golfdom and PR Daily. She spent eight years as the president and director of marketing for Environmental Turf, where she developed the branding for SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum, the grass that eventually became the greens grass for the Rio Olympic Golf Course. Stacie served for six years on the Board of Directors of the Florida Turfgrass Association as Chair of the Research & Scholarship Committee where she worked closely with the scientists from the University of Florida's turfgrass breeding program. Stacie founded What's Your Avocado? Marketing & Public Relations in 2012.

This article is a reprint from the Irrigation & Green Industry magazine with their permission.

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■ IA welcomes release of final specs for sensor-based controllers

Consumers now have more choices for WaterSense-labeled irrigation technologies available on the market.

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA (Feb. 11, 2021) – The Irrigation Association welcomes the release of the EPA WaterSense Specification for Soil Moisture-Based Irrigation Controllers. With the release of this specification, consumers will now have more choices than ever for WaterSense-labeled irrigation technologies available on the market.

“We thank WaterSense for their leadership in spearheading the development of this specification,” said John Farner, IA’s industry development director. “Soil moisture sensors are an effective tool to ensure that water is being used efficiently, while promoting plant health.”

Soil moisture-based irrigation

controllers now join weather-based controllers, spray sprinkler bodies and professional certifications in the WaterSense portfolio of labeled irrigation technologies and programs. Like weather-based irrigation controllers, WaterSense-labeled soil moisture sensors can be stand-alone controllers or “add-on” or “plug-in” devices that can be used in tandem with an existing controller to help it water more efficiently.

“The Irrigation Association looks forward to our continued partnership with the WaterSense program,” continued Farner. “Since its inception, the IA has stood with WaterSense to enhance the market for water-efficient

technologies, products and services. As demand for these products continues to grow, so does the importance of this public-private partnership.”

With the release of the specification, these products can earn the WaterSense label. Manufacturers, retailers and distributors that produce or sell soil moisture sensors are welcome to join the program as WaterSense partners and begin applying to label or promote labeled sensors. For more information about the WaterSense Specification for Soil Moisture-Based Irrigation Controllers, please visit www.epa.gov/watersense/soil-moisture-based-control-technologies. 



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NEW PRODUCT UPDATES

■ Work Smarter with New FX Luminaire Accessories



March 1, 2021 – Installing FX Luminaire light fixtures should be simple. That's why we're introducing six new accessories to help contractors solve common installation challenges and maximize labor savings.

These versatile solutions prevent leaning, keep fixtures precisely aimed, and more. Check out the lineup:

Bracket Mount

What's thin, sleek, and shiny? Our stylish new Bracket Mount! It's the perfect solution for lighting applications with shorter depths, surface-mounting needs, and modern aesthetics. With a shorter base, it lets you position fixtures closer to the mounting surface.

Conduit Stabilizer

For added strength in modern path light installations, the stabilizer has wings to prevent the conduit from tilting or spinning. Its slim profile lets you pound in the stake while minimizing the amount of disturbed soil.

Critter Plug

Prevent unwanted critters from entering a fixture! The plug protects the base of the fixture and can be easily removed for routine servicing.

LED Programming Adapter

Make programming LED boards easier! The new adapter lets you assign groups at the Luxor® controller

without using the fixture's wire leads. This makes it handy for assigning fixtures after installation or during retrofits.

Lock Ring

Aim your up lights and wall lights by tightening our new Lock Ring onto the stake. The two convenient finger tabs make securing the job easy. Now included with every up light and wall wash fixture!

Mini-Junction Box

The newly expanded box provides more space to hold wire and connectors. With optional snap-on backing, servicing is simple and tool-free. 🌿

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■ Toro Adds Swivel Mud Buggy® to Trusted Material Buggy Product Line

New Swivel Mud Buggy features redesigned tub and innovative swivel feature



BLOOMINGTON, Minn (Oct 20, 2020) – Toro has made a major advancement to their Material Buggy line with the introduction of the all-new Swivel Mud Buggy®. Built on the same frame as the popular MB TX 2500 Tracked Mud Buggy, this new Swivel Mud Buggy features a redesigned tub that enables it to swivel 180 degrees, allowing users to dump materials anywhere between the 180-degree angle.

For enhanced durability, the Swivel Mud Buggy also offers a thicker 3/8-inch polyethylene tub material. With the increased thickness of the tub, users can tackle more jobs with confidence and ease, regardless of the material being transported, including sand, rock, mulch or even cement. When it comes to productivity, the new addition to the Toro Material Buggy product line does not disappoint. In addition to the swivel feature and the redesigned tub, the swivel switch travels with the right-hand control handle, allowing operators to safely and efficiently operate the machine while simultaneously swiveling the tub.

The Toro Swivel Mud Buggy can

carry up to 2,500 lbs. (16 cu. ft.) of material, and the 25 hp KOHLER® Confidant engine delivers exceptional power to handle even the most challenging material handling applications. Additionally, the Swivel Mud Buggy can reach transport speeds of up to 6 mph in forward and 3 mph in reverse to efficiently transport material around the jobsite. In terms of durability, the rugged Endless Kevlar® reinforced tracks are built for high performance and offer outstanding traction for a wide range of terrain, including hillsides, culverts and ditches. The unit also performs well in various challenging conditions such as mud, gravel and even snow.

“We know our customers are looking for a machine that focuses on increasing productivity in every way and ensuring that they can get their jobs done with precision,” said Kaitlyn Ingli, marketing manager at Toro. “Our Swivel Mud Buggy was engineered to deliver exceptional precision, user-friendly controls, and ultimately, an innovative and highly efficient working experience for Toro end users.”

The unit also features an auto-return dump feature that eliminates the need for the operator to wait for the tub to return to the traveling position, increasing overall productivity. The model weighs approximately 1,575 lbs. and boasts an impressive 16 ft³ tub volume. The Swivel Mud Buggy offers convenient service points for routine maintenance. The belts, hydraulics, battery and engine compartment are all easily accessible and simple to maintain.

The Swivel Mud Buggy will be available in Fall 2020 through Toro’s trusted distributor network. For more information on the Toro Swivel Mud



Buggy, please visit the Toro website or contact your local Toro rental representative. 🌿

About Toro

With roots dating back to 1914, Toro is a leading worldwide provider of innovative solutions for the outdoor environment including turf and landscape maintenance, snow management, rental and construction equipment, and irrigation solutions. Through a strong network of distributors, dealers, retailers and rental stores in more than 125 countries, Toro helps customers care for golf courses, sports fields, public green spaces, commercial and residential properties, construction sites and agricultural operations. More at: www.toro.com

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■ Prevent Nozzle Stream Blockage with New PGP-06 Rotor



February 9, 2021 – Hunter Industries –

Tall grass can block or deflect a rotor's nozzle stream, which leads to dry, underwatered patches and muddy, overwatered areas.

The new PGP-06 solves this problem with a taller pop-up height. At 6", it can clear tall turf and deliver water efficiently without interference.

"When the nozzle stream is blocked by turf, it can't work effectively," said

Steve Hoveln, Product Manager at Hunter Industries. "The new PGP-06 rotor pops up a full 6", which positions the nozzle high above the turf. This allows it to deliver water unimpeded."

Best-in-Class Benefits

Featuring a ¾" inlet and a wide array of high-efficiency nozzles, it's a great system upgrade option with numerous benefits:

- Patented automatic arc return feature returns the turret back to the original arc pattern if vandalized. The adjustable arc spans from 50° to 360°.
- Non-strippable drive mechanism is protected from damage if turned in the opposite direction of travel.

- Part- and full-circle rotation in one model offers flexibility across landscapes and reduced inventory.
- Headed and slotted setscrew enables all-radius adjustment with a Hunter wrench or flat-blade screwdriver, making it easy to fine-tune the spray.
- QuickCheck™ arc mechanism enables rapid arc adjustment.

The 6" pop-up model rounds out the line of PGP® Ultra rotors, which also includes the most popular 4" model, along with the 12" pop-up and shrub models. 🌿

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■ New Rain Bird® Flow-Indicating Basket Filters Provide All-In-One Irrigation Solution



AZUSA, Calif. (Feb. 16, 2021) – Rain Bird's new Flow-Indicating Basket Filter product line makes irrigation systems easier to install and maintain by providing flow measurement, filtration and integrated pressure regulation in an all-in-one, compact solution.

"It's important to monitor your irrigation system's performance to ensure all areas are getting just the right amount of water," said Whitney Braun, product manager for Rain Bird's Landscape Drip Division. "However, it can be challenging to discover and diagnose issues quickly, before they become real problems. Our new Flow-Indicating Basket Filter product line provides easy, visual monitoring of irrigation system changes over time."

Ideal for drip systems, Rain Bird's Flow-Indicating Basket Filters are designed to work with any residential or commercial irrigation system with a flow range of 3.0 gpm to 20 gpm (11,4 to 75,7 L/m). A dial at the top of the filter cap provides diagnostic information about the zone's operation, saving time and simplifying maintenance. During irrigation system installation, contractors can use the basket filter's accurate flow reading to simplify design and scheduling calculations. Then, by using the basket filter's indicator bezel to mark that zone's appropriate flow rate on the dial, they can also quickly diagnose

any future maintenance issues, such as weeping valves, system blockages, leaks/excessive flow or a clogged filter. Cleaning the filter is fast and easy thanks to its unique upright design, which also prevents debris from entering the downstream line during routine maintenance.

Rain Bird's Flow-Indicating Basket Filters are available in five models. There are three one-inch models – two with integrated 40 psi pressure regulation and one without. A fourth model is a full commercial control zone kit, including a one-inch Rain Bird® PESB Valve, while a fifth model is a Retrofit Kit that makes it possible to upgrade existing Rain Bird Basket Filters by simply changing the filter and the cap. All five models provide flow measurement and filtration, with replacement stainless steel filters also available.

"By installing these new Flow-Indicating Basket Filters, irrigation professionals can determine when a system may need maintenance with just a quick glance at the filter's dial," said Braun. "As a result, they get additional control for better, faster troubleshooting, fewer callbacks and invaluable peace of mind."

For more information about Rain Bird's Flow-Indicating Basket Filters, visit rainbird.com/products/flow-indicating-basket-filter. To learn more about Rain Bird's many other water-efficient products and solutions for landscape, golf and agricultural irrigation, visit rainbird.com. 🌱



About Rain Bird

Based in Azusa, Calif., Rain Bird Corporation is the world's leading


manufacturer and provider of irrigation products and services. Since its beginnings in 1933, Rain Bird has offered the industry's broadest range of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, commercial developments and homes in more than 130 countries around the globe. Rain Bird has been awarded more than 450 patents worldwide, including the first in 1935 for the impact sprinkler. Rain Bird and The Intelligent Use of Water™ are about using water wisely. Its commitment extends beyond products to education, training and services for the industry and the community. Rain Bird maintains state-of-the-art manufacturing assembly facilities in the United States, China and Mexico. www.rainbird.com.

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■ Rain Bird Launches New Mobile App for Landscape Irrigation Professionals



TUCSON, Ariz. (Feb. 10, 2021) – Rain Bird has introduced “Rain Bird Resources,” a new, free mobile app intended to help landscape contractors and other landscape irrigation professionals get the information they need – anytime and anywhere.

“Contractors, distributors, specifiers, and other irrigation professionals are always on the go,” said Doug Closter, associate product manager for Rain Bird. “Now, with our new Rain Bird mobile app, there’s no need to store bulky printed materials in your truck or wait until you’re back at your office to look up product details or technical specifications. With this app, you have that information and much more right at your fingertips.”


Available now in English and in six additional languages by the end of March 2021, the Rain Bird Resources app is available for free download from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. After irrigation professionals download the app to their mobile devices, they can navigate to the Rain Bird Catalog, Literature, Design Tools and other resources from the main menu. Within those categories, they can view the full Rain Bird Landscape Products Catalog, featured new products, a literature library, technical support references and a specification

resources section. The company plans to add more exciting content and tools as the app grows.

“Rain Bird Resources will greatly reduce the number of printed catalogs we need to print each year, helping us be better environmental stewards,” Closter said. “And, because we will update the app’s content in real time – unlike a printed catalog – users can rest assured that they’re accessing the most current information available.”

This no-cost app does not require users to set up a login or password for quick access. A robust search function makes it easier to find specific information without having to click through multiple screens. Because some irrigation sites may not have Internet access, the app caches key information for offline use. A bookmarking feature also helps users store their favorite pages for quick reference, and they can easily share information from the app via email, text or social media.

“We understand that in the irrigation business – as in any business – time is money,” Closter said. “With Rain Bird Resources, we’re giving our valued professional customers easy, nearly instant access to the Rain Bird information they need, when they need it.”

For more information about Rain Bird’s many water-efficient products for landscape, golf course and agricultural irrigation, visit www.rainbird.com. 



About Rain Bird

Based in Azusa, Calif., Rain Bird Corporation is the world’s leading manufacturer and provider of irrigation products and services. Since its beginnings

in 1933, Rain Bird has offered the industry’s broadest range of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, commercial developments and homes in more than 130 countries around the globe. Rain Bird has been awarded more than 450 patents worldwide, including the first in 1935 for the impact sprinkler. Rain Bird and The Intelligent Use of Water™ are about using water wisely. Its commitment extends beyond products to education, training and services for the industry and the community. Rain Bird maintains state-of-the-art manufacturing assembly facilities in the United States, China and Mexico. www.rainbird.com.



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