

President's Message

Watching Our Water Resources

by Nikos Lynch, President



Water, water, water. It's not that we don't have enough of it; it's a distribution problem. This month's issue should give a good cross section of how we deal with water in our industry.

About 50% of residential water usage can be attributed to landscape or outdoor usage. With a tiered water system for billing common for most cities, we need to make sure we use just the right amount. Too much and the bill skyrockets, too little and the garden withers.

Many of the solutions to conservation deal with savings based on the cost of municipal water. Of course, we need to make sure there is enough go around.

We seldom talk about the idea of saving water that runs off a project site. Since it is so precious, shouldn't we incorporate ways to keep it from flowing off-site? Problems can arise from keeping all the potential site runoff, though. First, we need to make sure we don't wind up with a soupy bog and, second, we need to allow some natural flow off the site so the aquifers stay full.

Chemicals, bacteria, or algae often pollute water. Over-fertilizing is probably a greater problem than improper pesticide use. Drains that flow over a sidewalk often leave a sludge spot from algae. This is definitely a slipping hazard. Plus the sludge works its way into creeks and eventually the ocean. People are starting to take notice. We, as an industry, need to make sure we don't let this become an even bigger problem by utilizing outdated drainage practices.

We seldom talk about what to do with onsite water. Its always "don't over-water the lawn", and "use native plants". Water catchment systems can be a way for

—cont'd on page 14

June 2006

I N S I D E

Chapter & State Directory	2
Beautification Awards	3
May Treasurer's Report	5
April Board Meeting Minutes	5
Plant of the Month	7
Water Use	9
Business Opportunity	9
Smart Irrigation	11
Note From SCWD	11
Advertisers Index	15
Calendar	16

**Beautification Awards
Friday, June 23rd
San Juan Oaks Golf Club
Hollister**

2006 CLCA Central Coast Chapter Directory

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FROM MONTEREY: North on Highway 1, take 156 East near Castroville that will run into 101 North. Stay on 101 North for 8-Miles and take the 156 East exit for San Juan Bautista/Hollister. Stay on 156 East for 7 - Miles and turn right at the Union Road signal light. Our entrance is about 300 yards off Union Road.

FROM SALINAS: North on 101 for 20-Miles and take the 156 East exit towards San Juan Bautista/Hollister. Stay on the 156 East for 7 Miles and turn right at the Union Road signal. Our entrance is about 300 yards off Union Road.

FROM SANTA CRUZ: South on 1 to 129 to 101 South for 2-Miles. Take the 156 East exit (San Juan Bautista/Hollister) for 7 - Miles. Turn right at the Union Road signal. Our entrance is about 300 yards off Union Road.

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Treasurer's Report

by Laurie Reily, Treasurer

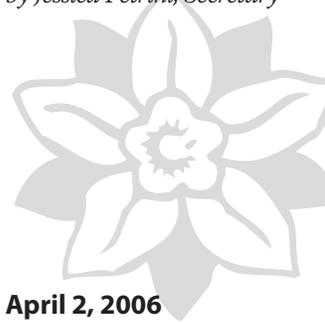


May, 2006

Opening Balance:	\$28,304.14
Receipts:	
Newsletter Advertising	\$15.50
Awards Entries	\$4,570.00
Awards Dinner	\$100.00
Awards Sponsorship	\$175.00
Membership Night	\$75.00
Golf Tournament	\$400.00
Total Receipts:	\$5,335.50
Disbursements:	
Board Meeting	\$80.00
Raffles	\$32.46
Print Smith–Newsletter	\$710.04
Treasury	\$230.00
Total Disbursements:	\$1,052.50
Checking Balance:	\$32,587.14
Savings Balance:	\$7,224.94

Board Minutes

by Jessica Petrini, Secretary



April 2, 2006

Call to order at 6:40 pm. In attendance were Tom Reily, Mike Partida, Nikos Lynch, Dennis Rabe and Jessica Petrini. The March '06 minutes were read and approved.

Old business:

It was suggested that we hold a seminar on how to use the "Better Than A Thousand Words" software. Plans for where and when were discussed.

There was no Awards report.

Dennis presented the Associate Member report. Associate members present at the March dinner meeting were pleased with the event. March's Suppliers Night was a fun and successful evening. Many non-members attended who expressed interest in joining the CLCA.

The April dinner meeting will be on April 25th, at 6:30 p.m. at Jardines de San Juan. Roy Sikes from the Soquel Creek Water District will discuss their rebate program for ET irrigation controllers. Kathleen Harley will attend, representing ET Water, the featured supplier. Jeff Sheehan will discuss ongoing state legislation on water use.

Tom Reily gave the Treasurer's report. It is detailed in elsewhere in the newsletter.

New business:

Steve McDonald gave the Communications report. Over 100 new C-27's are new members and need to be updated on our member list.

It was suggested that we have two Suppliers Nights a year and discussion ensued.

Hospice Project Report: Materials list is complete. Regan Barry is working on procuring donations. Beginning of May is a possible starting date for the project. Regan will be the contact.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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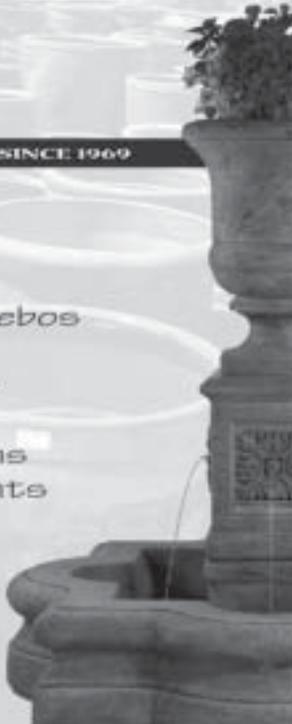
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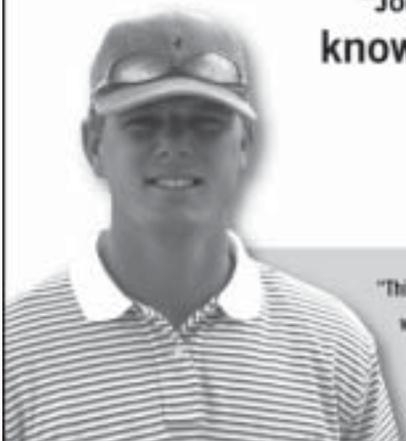
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Plant of the Month

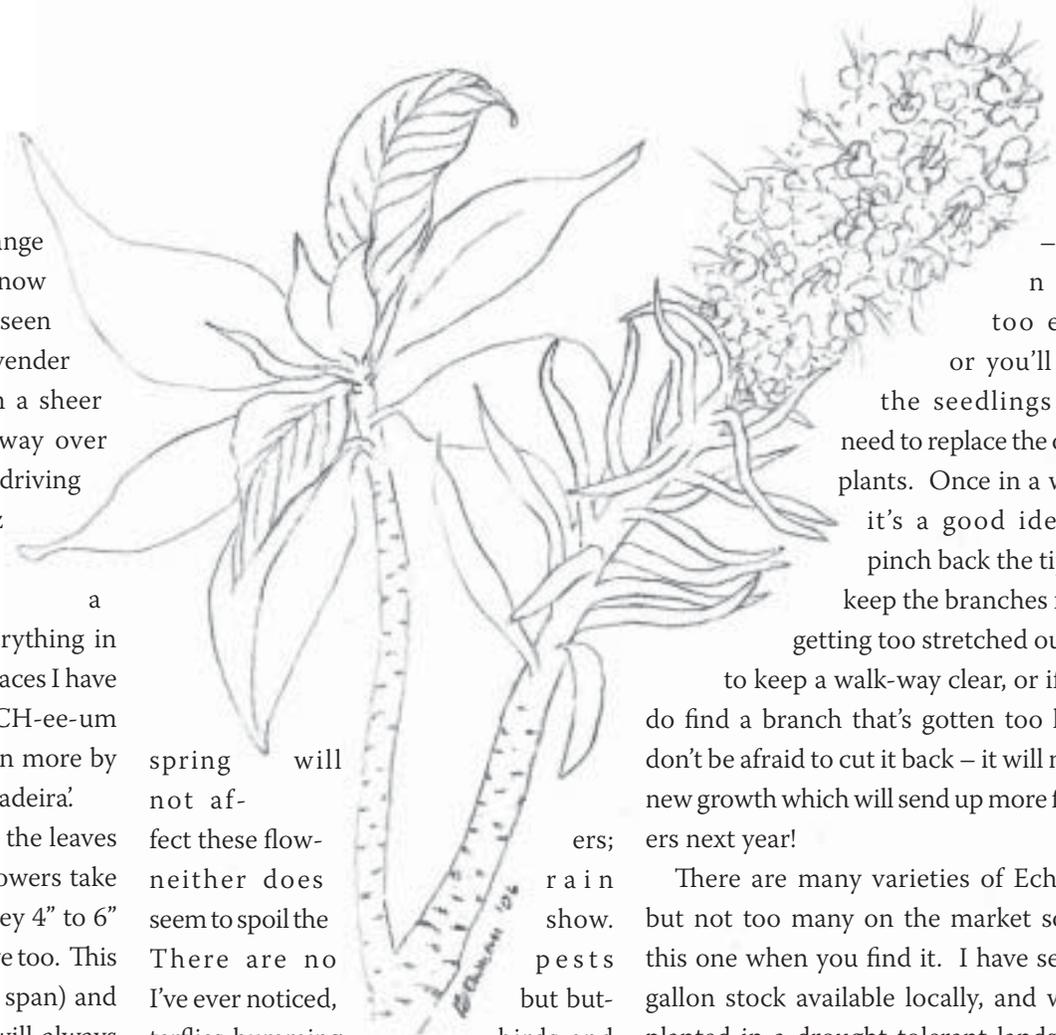
by Elizabeth Rhoades, Delta Tree Farms, Inc. (209) 334-4545, erhoades@deltatreefarms.com

Echium fastuosum (E. candicans) - Pride of Madeira

- Perennial Shrub
- Native to Madeira
- 8' x 6'
- Full Sun
- Tolerates Drought

This plant has such a wide range of possible locations I hardly know where to start. You may have seen the spectacular blue to blue-lavender flower spikes poking up from a sheer cliff along Hwy 17 on your way over the hill. Or maybe you were driving in Monterey or Santa Cruz and noticed a shock of color that seemed to rise above a fence line and tower over everything in the garden. Both of these are places I have seen the *Echium fastuosum* (ECH-ee-um fast-u-oh-sum) which is known more by its common name; 'Pride of Madeira'.

Up close there is softness to the leaves you might miss because the flowers take center stage, but the silvery-grey 4" to 6" sickle shaped leaves are attractive too. This plant is a perennial (3 year life span) and will re-seed reliably so there will always be new plants coming along at different stages of development. The *Echium* are not known to be invasive, and I have had experience with them in one lovely Mediterranean garden where they camouflaged a fence very nicely, and never re-seeded in any location that was too far from the parent. The effect was undulating mounds of silver-grey softness crowned in spring by the 20" long flower spikes in bloom and many more spikes coming up. The color range is truly blue-purple with shadings as deep as Royal Blue to Deep Purple. A cool



spring will not affect these flowers; neither does rain. There are no pests but butterflies, hummingbirds and bees love them! The only pruning necessary is to remove the spent flower spikes

– but not too early or you'll lose the seedlings you need to replace the older plants. Once in a while it's a good idea to pinch back the tips to keep the branches from getting too stretched out, or to keep a walk-way clear, or if you do find a branch that's gotten too long, don't be afraid to cut it back – it will make new growth which will send up more flowers next year!

There are many varieties of *Echium*, but not too many on the market so try this one when you find it. I have seen 5 gallon stock available locally, and when planted in a drought tolerant landscape (with *Yucca filamentosa* for example) it will truly surprise you.

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Water Use

Why the California Landscape Contractors Association Wants You to Use Water Wisely

submitted by John Sassaman, State CLCA

Ed note: This article, targeted for consumers, is worth passing on to clients. To print it out in its entirety, go to http://www.clca.org/clca/about/water_mgmt.php

Today, giving your landscape the water it needs -- and only the water it needs -- is a matter of dollars and sense. Most homeowners know that plants and trees suffer without enough water. But do you know that overwatering can take an even greater toll on your landscape? Soggy, water-soaked soil can prevent air and nutrients from reaching plant roots. It can also invite problems like root rot and other plant diseases that result in serious damage and unwanted replacement costs down the road. Watering too much or too often can also register on their water bill as the costs of treating and pumping water increase all over the state.

Fortunately, significant water savings can be realized by implementing just a few simple practices. The results of these savings can be dramatic. In fact, one recent water district study indicated that if the

amount of water wasted in California was reduced by only 10 percent, it could save up to 50 billion gallons a year -- the same amount needed to supply the residential needs of a large city. Members of the California Landscape Contractors Association recognize that water is a precious natural resource. This practical guide will help you implement the kind of efficient watering practices that will keep your clients' landscapes green and healthy -- and save them money, too.

Getting To Know Your Landscape

Different areas of a yard are exposed to varying levels of sun, shade and wind. Shaded and sheltered areas are likely to require less water than open areas in full sun.

- For best results, take time to make a water-use inventory. Look for telltale signs of overwatering, such as puddles, mud or the growth of moss or fungus. Also note areas that are dry. Make notes if you see you should make some adjustments.

- During your inspection, see how water is being used on sloped or graded areas. Water requires more time to soak in on a slope, so

plan for more frequent, shorter intervals. For example, if you water a flat area twice a week for 15 minutes, a slope with similar sun exposure may require three times a week for 10 minutes.

How Much Water Is Needed?

The amount of water needed to keep shrubs, trees and lawn areas healthy depends on a wide variety of environmental factors including climate, season, type of soil, grading and the specific type of plant, tree or grass. Once you've become familiar with your landscape, consider having a water audit performed by a certified water auditor, landscape contractor, irrigation professional or your local water district. If you have an automatic irrigation system, the audit will tell you how much water you are using, how much you actually need and how well your system is doing the job. The audit will evaluate the performance of the control valves, sprinkler heads and the controller.

In general, it's best to water in the early morning when winds are usually at their lowest.

- Avoid any irrigation during hottest part of the day.

—cont'd on page 13

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Promoting the Benefits of “Smart” Irrigation Systems

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by Hunter Industries Public Relations (760) 304-7476

As a professional irrigation contractor, you probably already know that many homeowners put their sprinkler systems into the same category as their homes’ heating or cooling systems. Other than an annual startup/shutdown service or inspection, they expect them to work with a minimum of fuss.

Using that routine service call to promote the benefits of upgrading to a “smart” irrigation system is a great opportunity to generate new business within your existing customer base. And as more and more homeowners increase their reliance on the Internet, cell phones and other communication devices, it’s easier to get them to think of the latest sprinkler systems as

communications devices that happen to dispense water, instead of regarding them as just a network of underground valves, pipes and pop-up sprays.

In fact, many of today’s “smart” irrigation systems, such as Hunter’s new ET System, deliver significant benefits by not only keeping landscapes healthier, but by reducing the annual water bill for a typical installation by as much as 30 percent.

The “Other” ET

Thanks to ongoing advances in electronics and communications, sprinkler systems can now be designed to not only read the climatological changes in your immediate area – but also automatically adjust your system’s watering schedule to

compensate for those changes.

Such “smart” sprinkler systems are what the industry calls ‘ET-based’ systems. Unlike the blockbuster movie of the same name, ET in this case stands for evapo-transpiration. Simply put, ET is the process of a plant’s root zone and surrounding soil losing moisture. The plant sucks up moisture from the soil, which is the transpiration process. At the same time, the water in the soil goes through an evaporation process, caused by changes in the overall climate – sun, wind, temperature and humidity.

An ET system measures those conditions and then calculates a watering schedule that will replace that amount

of lost moisture and no more. Because of this, ET-based irrigation is considered a “best practice” by the industry and numerous municipalities.

Numerous Benefits

So what does this science lesson mean to you? As a professional installer, promoting the benefits of ET-based irrigation systems can be a key source of new business. Here are some major benefits, with savings and efficiencies that can be measured on multiple levels:

—cont’d on page 12

A Brief Word from the Soquel Creek Water District

by Roy Sikes, SCWD Water Conservation Specialist, (831) 475-8501 ext. 146

The Weather Based Irrigation Controller (WBIC) program is moving ahead on schedule. The controller types have been selected, and contractors will soon be in the field replacing old irrigation controllers with new, ET based controllers at selected sites throughout the area. This program encourages landscape owners and managers to become familiar with this new and proven water saving technology that will most likely be a required feature in all landscapes in California within ten years.

The District also offers customers within its service area rebates for replacing existing lawn with synthetic turf, and is considering extending the rebate program to include water efficient sprinkler distribution components.

Water conservation will be an increasingly important part of water supply planning and management for all of the local water agencies, and, if not already, will be of major concern for the landscape industry. The California Urban Water Conservation Council’s website at www.cuwcc.org has a link to the AB 2717 Landscape Task Force Report. You may also find information at www.h2ouse.org. Assemblyman John Laird, at www.assembly.ca.gov/laird has information on related legislation and you can always call your local water providers or visit their websites at www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/wt/wtcon, or soquelcreekwater.org

“Smart” Irrigation Systems—cont’d

Environmental - ET Systems:

• **Conserve Water.** An ET-based system waters only as much as needed, and automatically suspends watering during rain, freezing or high wind conditions based on its own sensor data.

• **Let Mother Nature Do Some of the Work.** ET systems have a gauge that deducts rainfall from its automatic irrigation schedule, providing additional conservation by letting “natural” irrigation occur.

• **Keeps Turf and Plants Healthier.** Plant health is improved by avoiding both shallow, inadequate watering as well as over watering. Over watering may be harmful, because excessive moisture can often be a breeding ground for disease.

Economical – ET Systems:

• **Lower Your Water Bill.** An ET-based system can reduce your annual water bill by as much as 30 percent, by irrigating only as much as needed. The system captures maximum water savings by scheduling irrigation each day. In fact, studies show that homeowners tend to water too much, rather than too little.

• **May Not Have Recurring Subscription Fees.** Choosing an ET system that has a sensor attached directly to your sprinkler system is a good idea. This means there will be no recurring fees or subscriptions for weather station data, which is often based on data from miles away that may not be accurate for your immediate area.

• **May Mean Additional Rebates.** Several water boards and agencies may provide financial rebates for installing an ET-based system. Check in your local area of business.

—cont’d on page 14



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Ron E. Pohndorf
Senior Account Executive

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Water Use—cont'd

• Avoid watering when it's windy so water doesn't blow off target onto paved surfaces.

• In some areas, you may not need to water at all during rainy winter months, so don't forget to turn off your automatic irrigation system. Because your irrigation system is often set to run while you're sleeping or not around to watch, it's wise to turn it on every month or two so you can see how it is performing.

• Check and adjust sprinkler heads to make sure they are not clogged and are pointed in the right direction.

• Check for any pipe damage. If you see a sheet of water running down a slope, suspect a broken pipe or sprinkler head.

• Check the battery on the controller or time clock at least once a year.

• Consider replacing existing sprinkler spray nozzles with more efficient rotating sprinklers that have a lower application rate.

Controlling The Controller

The automatic controller tells the valves of the irrigation system when to turn on and when to turn off. Programming the time properly is critical to efficient water use. Make sure the time clock can be adjusted for changing weather and landscape requirements, and most importantly, don't forget to adjust for those changing conditions. If the system is not already outfitted with a sensor that stops watering when it's raining, call an irrigation specialist to find out how you can have a sensor added. The way the time clock is set will vary depending on make and model. All time clocks, however, can be set to control three basic functions:

- The duration of the watering cycle
- What time(s) the system will water

• What day(s) the system will water
What About Drip Irrigation Systems?

Drip systems are designed to deliver low volumes of water, under low pressure, through flexible tubing to specific plants or plant areas. They can be used almost anywhere (except on the lawn). Consider a drip system for container plants, hedges or shrubbery where lawn equipment, pets or people won't disturb the tubing. Drip systems may require a bit more maintenance because tubes can become dislodged, but they do deliver water precisely to the root system.

Avoid Runoff

Don't water anything you don't want to keep green. Water should never puddle up on sidewalks or patios or driveways. And keep sprinkler heads from spraying foundation walls and other hardscape surfaces. After all, concrete, asphalt and brickwork all deteriorate more quickly when they are constantly washed with water.

Words To The Water-Wise

The amount of water a landscape needs differs considerably depending on the climate and

season. However, there are some guidelines that work year round.

• Allow lawn areas to dry out slightly between waterings.

• Because soil compacts over time, have the lawn aerated at least once a year. Aeration pulls out plugs of soil and opens the pores so air and water can get in. Over time, aeration may actually reduce the amount of water plants need because they are getting the benefit of every drop.

• In general, new plantings will require

—cont'd on page 14

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President's Message—*cont'd*

landscapers to offer a new service. Since zero point runoff will be a rule soon, why not work with municipalities to ensure we are helping to lead the charge?

We can eliminate sewer drains completely through no-flush toilets, gray water and rain catchment systems. We are a long way off from putting water companies out of business, but wouldn't it be a fun challenge to show people how, as an industry, we can make a huge change in the amount of water that needs to be purchased? I would rather see water retention systems put in place than having to buy back treated water from cities.

About native plantings: We all love them because they naturalize easier than exotics, and use less water. But one thing I have a problem with is the term "native". So often we see Southern California plants and Chaparral plantings put into a supposedly native garden. I have never seen a naturally occurring *Asclepias-Milkweed* on the Central Coast. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

I appreciate the opportunity to be forthright. We should just call this an editorial column, as your comments would be appreciated and can be published next issue. As my term as chapter president winds down, I will continue to write on topics that I hope will be thought provoking.

At some point we need to fill some board positions. Right now we have an excellent Chapter Board. They put a lot of effort into helping the industry. We are looking for a Legislation VP, a Natural Resources VP, and also a Chapter President for next year. In the spirit of rotation, we need to find some people willing to be involved in association work. No real experience necessary, just a desire to get your hands dirty and to participate in a society whose sole purpose is to "serve the interests of its members, promote professionalism and advance awareness of the landscape industry".

Water Use—*cont'd*

more frequent waterings than older plants with more established root systems.

- Roots will grow only where they can get water. Shallow watering results in shallow root systems that can dry out more quickly during hot spells. When you water, water deeply.

- Allowing the soil to dry out slightly between waterings is critical. Muddy or soggy soil is a sign of trouble.

- To keep soil from drying out too fast around shrubbery or in flowerbeds, apply a layer of compost where unprotected earth is exposed to the sun.

- To prevent overwatering trees in the lawn area, keep grass about two feet away from the trunk.

- Periodically use a shovel or spade to check the moisture content of the soil below the surface. Even if the surface appears to be dry, the soil at root level (six to eight inches deep) might be quite moist.

"Smart" Irrigation Systems—*cont'd*

Convenience – ET Systems:

- **Are Easy Add-Ons.** Some new systems, such as Hunter's new ET System, are designed to be easily added to an existing controller, eliminating the need to replace the system's "brains." These systems consist of a small weatherproof module mounted near the controller, and a small sensor unit mounted up to 100 feet away on a post, pole, or wall. No external power wiring is needed, since both rely on power supplied by the controller.

- **Provide 'Set and Forget' Scheduling.** Once the site data is programmed into the ET module, the system adjusts the watering schedule based upon on-site weather conditions, and by each zone. There is no need to reprogram the controller due to seasonal weather changes.

- **Require Little Direct Access.** Ideal for sites where it is difficult to access the controller for seasonal reprogramming.

- **Are Ideal for Vacations or Second Homes.** No need to reprogram the system before the homeowner goes on vacation. And if your customer has a vacation home and uses it only part of the year, there's no need to worry about watering levels with an ET-based system.

So turn each maintenance call into a new business opportunity by promoting the efficiencies of "smart" irrigation systems that are environmentally responsible!

Hunter Industries is one of the world's leading manufacturers of irrigation equipment for landscape and golf. For more information, contact your local authorized Hunter distributor, or visit Hunter on the Internet at www.HunterIndustries.com.

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Calendar of Events

June 22, Hands-On Integrated Pest Management Training, Shoreline Middle School, Santa Cruz, (831) 426-5925, ext 117

June 23, Beautification Awards Banquet, San Juan Oaks Clubhouse, Hollister (408) 314-2668

July 12-15, CLCA Annual Summer Meeting at Hilton San Diego Resort on Mission Bay, www.clca.us/sfx.html

July 15-30, Summer Permaculture Design Course, Mt. Madonna School, Watsonville (831) 840-6045

September 13, Chapter Golf Tournament, San Juan Oaks Golf Course, Hollister, (800) 673-8873

September 30-October 1, Certified Landscape Technician test, Petaluma (916) 830-2780

October 12-13, CalScape Expo 2006, Palm Springs, www.piagrows.org

October 24, "Secret" Dinner Meeting, Golden Oak restaurant, Morgan Hill (408) 314-2668

Have anything to add to the calendar? Send copy to the newsletter editor by the 1st of the month. Fax: (831) 423-5292 Email: ki@cruzio.com

Beautification Awards Banquet

Friday, June 23rd

San Juan Oaks Golf Club

Hollister

details on pg. 3