

# the **Daily Plant-It**

[www.clca-inlandempire.org](http://www.clca-inlandempire.org) The Official Publication of the Inland Empire Chapter of the California Landscape Contractors Association



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The mission of the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) is to serve and protect the interests of its members, promote professionalism, and advance public awareness of the landscape industry.

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**Tuesday, March 20, in Riverside**

**Edibles such as coffee, donuts,  
brownies, and gummies will be provided.\***

In 2016, California joined several other states in legalizing the recreational use of marijuana. Proposition 64, also known as the Adult Use of Marijuana Act, legalizes the recreational use of marijuana for adults 21 years of age and older. Companies committed to drug-free workplaces face challenges with contradictory laws and often struggle to understand the actions they are able to take when drugs enter the workplace.

What happens when an employee is caught smoking weed at work? What if a drug test comes up positive for marijuana? Plan to join us at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, March 20, at Toro in Riverside where you'll get answers to these questions and more. We're excited to have Jennifer Grady, a lawyer with the Grady Firm in Los Angeles, who will weed through the facts and provide attendees information on:

- Drugs in the Workplace
- State and Federal Laws Governing Drug Testing
- Employee Rights Concerning Drug Testing
- The Drug Free Workplace Program
- Reasonable Suspicion Testing
- Contracting with a Testing Facility

This very informative meeting, sponsored by Toro, is FREE to attend. RSVP's req'd. Email [clca2016@mail.com](mailto:clca2016@mail.com) or call Bronwyn at (949) 466-1222 to confirm your attendance.

Toro is located at 5825 Jasmine Street in Riverside.

\* Edibles provided at this meeting will not contain THC.



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## Spring is Almost Here



**FRANK FONTES**  
Casa Verde Landscape

With spring around the corner, I can't help but get excited as our landscapes are about to flourish with new life and beautiful color. Spring is also the time of year when we all start our spring cleaning. Most of us think about spring cleaning as a time to refresh our homes or offices in preparation for the new season. But it's also a time to refresh our minds and skill sets. A great way to do this

is through continuing education. Refreshing your skills and knowledge enable you to continue performing at your peak and will help prepare you for a busy spring season. Change and development is continual in our industry, which makes learning about these things a must in order to keep up with our competition.

As landscape professionals many of you are certified in something, which requires you to complete a specific number of classes offering CEUs to maintain your

certification. Alternatively, some of you may want to take classes for your own personal growth or to increase your knowledge base. Either way, you see the value in education.

CLCA offers many educational opportunities, both at the state and local levels. CLCA state is offering Mastering Water Efficient Landscapes (M.W.E.L.) Training Workshops throughout 2018 and they also offer webinars on topics ranging from "hiring the right people," to "what keeps employers up at night," to "unlocking the secrets to native landscaping." We try to offer educational opportunities to our chapter members at the local level too. Coming up, we have a meeting on marijuana in the workplace. Hopefully, you'll plan to join us on March 20 for this free event and get a better understanding of the actions you can take when drugs enter the workplace.

This spring, I encourage you all to take some form of action toward refreshing your education and skills. Do some spring cleaning in your mind and tackle this wonderful season prepared! ~Frank



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## LEAF Announces Candy Fiske Honorarium Fund

Since 1977 the Auxiliary of CLCA has been devoted to the promotion of higher education for landscape professionals. Through the changes over time, from the Grass Widows to the Women's Auxiliary to the current name, Auxiliary, its members have paved the way to create a vehicle to collect, store, and distribute money for students interested in pursuing education to become a professional in the landscape industry. This vehicle was named the Landscape Educational Advancement Foundation (LEAF).

Beginning in 1986, Candy Fiske was the leader of a group of dedicated individuals who had the vision of a foundation that would protect money obtained from chapter donations, members, and families of contractors. Each chapter could establish a scholarship and memorial funds for revered members who had passed could be created in their name. The awards to students would come from the yearly earnings of each fund and the principle would remain in the foundation in perpetuity. In 1988 she saw its fruition in LEAF.



In honor of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment and ongoing success and growth of LEAF, the Auxiliary is announcing the creation of the *Candy Fiske Honorarium Fund*. Candy had the vision and the skill to pursue the 501C status, draw up the legal papers and bylaws, establish a Board of Trustees, and market to all of the chapters encouraging them to create their scholarship fund. This was an enormous undertaking, but one that she welcomed with her determination, tenacity, and skills, along with the efforts of a group of individuals from all arms of CLCA assisting her in the process.

Candy was also President of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Auxiliary and State Auxiliary. She and her husband, Roger, have been active for many years in CLCA leadership and activities.

In the past 30 years LEAF has given out \$523,175 in scholarships to 579 students attending junior college and university programs. The Board of Trustees is actively involved in the management of the funds and the Selection Committee carefully reviews each scholarship application and selects qualifying students who want to pursue careers in landscape contracting and the green industry. Auxiliary has served as the fundraising arm for LEAF, with the full support of CLCA members, and through donations to the chapter and memorial and honorarium funds. Thanks to the fundraising efforts and the generosity of CLCA and Auxiliary members, LEAF has recently reached the million dollar mark. This money is protected and will continue to grow and help students reach their goals. Thank you to everyone who has helped LEAF grow over the years.

Auxiliary has donated \$1,000 to establish this honorarium for Candy. We are excited about this and hope that members will join us in donating to help this fund grow to \$5,000 *and beyond*. It is a great tribute to a distinguished member who left an important legacy to our association and to the education of our future professionals. LEAF remains committed to Candy's vision and hope you will all join in celebrating her and her contribution to CLCA.

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Services include preliminary notices, liens, stop notices, bond filings, lien releases, waivers and releases, and more.



[ccla.org/benefits](http://ccla.org/benefits)



**Donations can be made to "LEAF," with a notation on the check that it is for the "Candy Fiske Honorarium Fund," and sent to CLCA Headquarters, 1491 River Park Dr., Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95815.**

## Nonrenewal, What Do I Do Next?

### Are there specific Rules on Commercial Insurance Cancellation and Nonrenewal?

Commercial insurance companies must follow the rules set out in the insurance code regarding commercial insurance cancellation and nonrenewal. There are separate insurance code sections covering cancellation and nonrenewal for workers compensation, auto, ocean marine, surplus line, reinsurance policies, and other commercial insurance lines; therefore, it may be a good idea to contact the California Department of Insurance (CDI) for a complete explanation if you run into any problems with cancellation or nonrenewal notice. If you are unclear as to your rights under the insurance code, then contact the CDI.

#### In Summary

Commercial insurance by its very nature is complex. However, it is possible with the assistance of a competent licensed broker-agent to steer clear of the pitfalls and make good decisions when purchasing insurance for your business. This article is meant to be a starting place for the small business owner investigating commercial insurance coverage. Throughout the article, general information has been given on the greatest areas of concern when dealing with commercial insurance. If you desire further clarification on any commercial insurance topic, then please contact the CDI.

#### How Can I Purchase Commercial Insurance?

One of the first steps in purchasing small business

insurance is to contact a licensed insurance broker-agent who specializes in commercial coverages. Beginning a working relationship with a reliable, competent broker-agent can be as crucial to your business plan as getting professional advice from an accountant, banker, human resources analyst, payroll specialist, lawyer, or a trusted business mentor.

Business contacts that you have made are excellent referral sources for recommending a commercial lines broker-agent, especially if the contacts are in the same industry as your business or in a closely related industry.

Professional broker-agent associations can assist you in your search for a licensed commercial insurance broker-agent. The Insurance Brokers and Agents of the West (IBA West) and the Western Insurance Agents Association (WIAA Group) are professional associations that can assist you in contacting a commercial insurance broker-agent in your local area. Also, looking through the local yellow pages under the insurance section can aid you in locating the phone numbers for those broker-agents specializing in commercial insurance.

*This article, found on the California Department of Insurance website, was submitted by Pam Kinne with CLCA Insurance Solutions. For more information, call Pam at (714) 265-7977.*

**~KURAPIA~**

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## WINE TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



**IE CHAPTER MEMBERS** and friends have fun aboard the bus on their Grapeline Wine Tour through Temecula on Jan. 27.



**PICTURESQUE SCENES** fill the backdrop of this group picture at the first stop on the tour.



**RELAXING** and networking were a top priority at this social chapter event.



**CASA VERDE LANDSCAPE** rep Frank Fontes and his wife Connie enjoy a fun-filled day with their CLCA friends. Frank is the 2018 IE Chapter President.



**OC CHAPTER PRESIDENT** Ed Wallace (center), his wife Mari, and new friend Jim Gronwall (right) sip on some tasty wine.



**PEACE OUT** – The fun-loving group bids farewell as their wine tasting adventures come to an end.

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- Has the highest level of local/personalized service available and uses company employees, not independent contractors to serve you?
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- Discloses all costs and fees?
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- Offers technology products designed specifically for the green industry?
- Offers online access to your account?
- Has an option to offer your clients automatic monthly recurring billing?

CLCA has a partnership with Heartland Payment Systems as its endorsed credit/debit/prepaid card and payroll processor. Heartland offers competitive, customized pricing for CLCA members including an easy-to-understand pricing structure that offers significant savings by reducing — and in many instances, eliminating — traditional payment processor fees. For a free, no obligation analysis of your statement for credit card and/or payroll processing, contact Dana LeBlanc at (916) 599-8689.

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## LEAF Scholarship Applications are Available Online! - Deadline to apply is April 13

The California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) is pleased to announce that the application for LEAF scholarships is now available online.

How many of your students struggle with funding their education? Every year, the number of students needing financial assistance grows.

LEAF is here to help!

Since 1972, CLCA's Auxiliary has offered scholarships to college and university students majoring in landscape-related programs. In 1988, the Landscape Educational Advancement Foundation (LEAF) was formed to carry on the tradition of awarding financial aid to deserving students.

The largest struggle LEAF has is building awareness that scholarships are available. Any student attending an accredited California community college or state university majoring in a landscape-related program and taking a minimum of six units is eligible.

Please help us spread the word by letting students know of this scholarship opportunity! Deadline to apply is April 13, 2018.

Thank you for your help. Together we can help students get the funds they need to continue on with their education!

**Students can apply online by visiting  
[www.clca.org/clca/downloads/leafapp.pdf](http://www.clca.org/clca/downloads/leafapp.pdf)**



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## Leveraging Online Reviews to Expand New Business

By Kalin Thomas, Ewing Irrigation Products

When people search for the best company to fulfill a service, one of the first places they go for more information is online. 90 percent of consumers search online customer reviews before choosing to purchase a company's services or products.

This means positive online reviews for your company could directly translate to increased revenue and client referrals – so it's important to leverage them as part of your social media strategy. Listed below are three ways that online reviews can help your business grow.

### Always remind your clients to leave reviews.

After you have successfully completed a job, be sure to suggest to your clients that they tell family and friends about your company and leave online reviews on your social platforms.

An easy way to incorporate your social media handles into your customer touchpoints is by including links to your social media accounts on your business cards. This way, your clients always know where to go to leave a glowing review!

### Post testimonials as social media posts.

Not only does this help develop content for your social media channels to keep your page updated, but it allows for satisfied customers to speak for your business in a special way. Give them their moment in the spotlight! Your customers will feel valued knowing you value their opinion of your business.

### Always acknowledge the review, be it positive or negative.

One of the biggest upsides to social media is the amount of direct access your customers have to your business and vice versa. It is now easier than ever before for customers to directly engage with you and your business and provide feedback on a job well done.

Thus, it is important to make sure your customers feel appreciated, and above all, heard.



When a customer leaves a positive review, you should always acknowledge it by reacting with the appropriate Facebook reaction (e.g. “like,” “love”); liking or retweeting on Twitter; liking their Instagram pictures, etc.

If a customer leaves a negative review, or has a question, follow these steps to ensure your response is appropriate and helpful:

- Publicly apologize for their concern or negative experience. You may write something along the lines of, “We’re sorry you had this experience and want to help make it right.” This shows other apprehensive would-be customers you are invested in feedback and are willing to learn from it.

- Ask the customer to direct-message your account with details of the negative experience, and handle the rest through private message. Taking the interaction out of the public eye will help you provide a more intimate, one-on-one problem-solving experience.

Sometimes, if their problem can be solved online, people will revise their negative review and leave a positive one instead!

### How to get the most out of your reviews

By consistently monitoring and responding to feedback, you gain a deeper sense and understanding of how your clients perceive your business.

Above all, be open to learning from your clients’ experiences. Doing so can help you change and improve your business strategy to better meet their needs, making for a stronger and more positive business relationship for everyone.

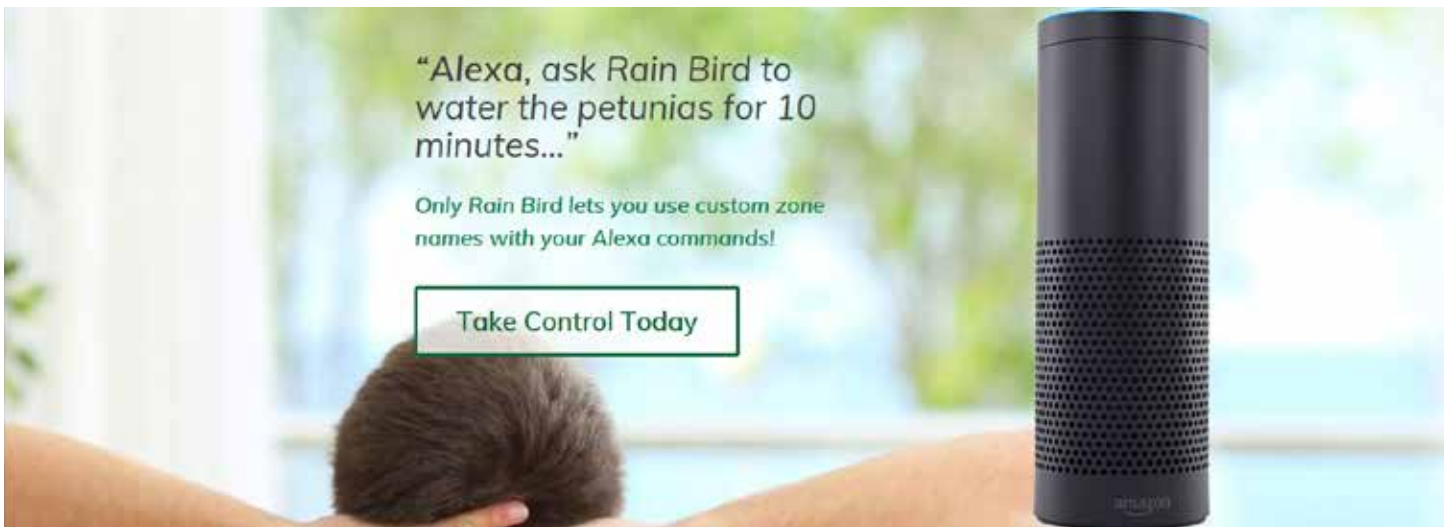
*This article is part of Ewing’s blog series, Social Media for Landscapers, featuring tips on how you can take advantage of social media for your business. Find more green industry tips and solutions on their website at : [www.ewingirrigation.com](http://www.ewingirrigation.com).*



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## Rain Bird Introduces Alexa-Enabled Controllers



Users of Rain Bird controllers featuring the company’s LNK™ WiFi Module can now “talk” to their irrigation systems, thanks to Amazon’s popular voice-activated personal assistant, Alexa.

“Enabling Alexa opens up a whole new world for customers using our WiFi-enabled controllers,” said Nick Kelsch, senior product manager for Rain Bird controllers. “Now, homeowners can manage their irrigation systems with simple verbal commands. And with 130 commands available, Rain Bird is changing what you can ask of your irrigation controller.”

In the U.S. and Canada, Alexa commands can now be used with Rain Bird’s professional series controllers, the ESP-TM2 and ESP-Me, when outfitted with a LNK WiFi Module, as well as with ST8-WiFi controllers offered through retail channels. International availability is being planned for a future release.

After installing the free Rain Bird App on an Android or iOS smart phone or tablet, new users simply need to enable Amazon Alexa within the Rain Bird App settings, and log into their Amazon Alexa account to enable the new Rain Bird Skill. The Rain Bird App allows users to give watering programs and zones unique names of their own choosing. They can also request local weather forecasts and manage their rain sensor.

“Personalization is key for us, which is why we wanted to ensure that we can provide both custom program and zone names that mean something to our customers,” said Randy Montgomery, Rain Bird engineering manager. “Saying, ‘Ask Rain Bird to water the front yard’ is much more intuitive than saying, ‘Ask Rain Bird to water Zone 4.’”

With Alexa, help is also just a quick question away. Users can ask Alexa how to start managing their Rain Bird irrigation system, to list available commands, to list their property’s irrigation zones or watering schedules, to

inquire on watering time remaining, or to ask about the status of current seasonal watering adjustments.

“Rain Bird’s WiFi controllers are backed by an extensive contractor network; easy-to-install, proven, high-quality hardware; and a simple, intuitive mobile app,” Kelsch said.

To learn more about Rain Bird’s complete line of irrigation system components, visit [www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com).

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## LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



**2018 STATE BOARD** is installed at the Leadership Conference on January 30 at the Ontario Convention Center.



**ALLEGIANCE AWARD** recipient Marianne Estournes is recognized during the luncheon at the conference. Presenting is one of last year's recipients, Wendy Emeterio.



**ALLEGIANCE AWARD** also goes to Eric Watanabe. Presenting is past State President and long-time friend, Chuck Carr.



**MICKEY STRAUSS GRASSROOTS AWARD** recognizing effective work in legislation, goes to Dave Norred (center). Presenting is the award's namesake, Mickey Strauss, and State Director of Legislation, Megan Rios (right).



**REGULAR MEMBER of the Year** award goes to Regan Barry (right). Presenting is past State President and last year's winner, Peter Estournes.



**ASSOCIATE MEMBER of the Year** award goes to Craig Stenehjem. Presenting is 2017 State President, Tim Hendricks.

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**CLCA INSURANCE SOLUTIONS** reps Pam Kinne, Bill Deeble, and Gina Stanley talk to showgoers about their varied insurance services and the benefits of CLCA membership.



**EWING** rep and IA President Warren Gorowitz catches up with long-time friend Bronwyn Miller at LIS, this year held Jan. 31-Feb. 1 at the Ontario Convention Center.



**SOUTHLAND SOD** reps Norm Lopez and John Domenici detail the benefits of sod in the landscape.



**IMPERIAL TECHNICAL SERVICES** reps Mark Pedicone and Alex Perilman talk to attendees about how they can custom build irrigation assemblies for the widest range of controller manufacturers' products.



**WEST COAST TURF** reps Anthony Pulizzano, John Marman, Dani Booth, and Carlos España talk to showgoers about Kurapia, their drought-tolerant natural ground cover sod.



**LCIS** reps Robb Hubbard, Ashley Hissong, Terry Mahlman, Brian Arnold, Kim Ayala, Mike Dunn, and Jared Jarvis showcase smiles and information about their insurance services.



**GREEN INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME** booth is staffed by Irrigator Tech rep Marcie Daigle and Kellogg Garden Products rep Hap Kellogg. Hap was inducted into the Green Industry Hall of Fame in 2013.



**CLCA BOOTH** visitors Stacey Sturnot (past SD Chapter President) and Steven Kinzler (past SFV Chapter President) are greeted by CLCA staffers Maria Abero and Allison LoDolce.



**A-G SOD** reps Paul Gaudet and Mark Hommel talk to attendees about their various sod products

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— Olga See, O. See-em-Bloom



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