

Navigating the Socially Distant Landscape



TODAY'S SPEAKERS

- **Mary Ann Dickinson** – President and CEO, Alliance for Water Efficiency
- **Julius Duncan** – Environmental Engineer, EPA WaterSense
- **Sandra Giarde** – Executive Director, California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA)
- **Monica Garcia** – Regional Water Authority, California

ORIGINAL DATE:
NOVEMBER 5, 2020

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WEBINAR SUMMARY

In the introduction, Ms. Dickinson provided an update on the Alliance for Water Efficiency's (AWE's) Learning Landscapes Grant Program (<https://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/news/learning-landscapes-grant-program-and-lessons>). The grant will be used to build new or improve existing outdoor educational spaces that serve grades 3 through 8. They will focus on projects that include elements of efficient water management and incorporate at least one of AWE's new Learning Landscapes Lessons in their education program. They have awarded 8 grants for 2020.

AWE has developed a collection of Outdoor Water Efficiency and Conservation Lessons. The lessons are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards for grades 3-8 with new lessons to be added in 2021. The lessons covered include "Our Water", "Planting for Our Climate", and "Our Great Outdoors".

FEATURED SPEAKER: SANDRA GIARDE

Landscape professionals faced several challenges during the early days of 2020 to maintain safe operations while avoiding COVID-19. One challenge was that homeowners were often unaware of whether landscaping was considered an essential business and were not sure if they could contact landscapers if immediate work was needed. With the uncertainty, [CLCA](#) began reaching out to county officials for guidance and possible exemption of landscape work. Along with communicating with officials at the Contractor's State License Board, they were able to create a national broad-based coalition of landscape contractor, irrigation, and nursery/garden center associations. They now provide email updates to CLCA membership and one-on-one advice to members with unique issues. The guidance packet developed was something that landscape contractors and staff could carry with them that explained the Governor's orders and other important information that they could share with their clients.

Originally they planned to have 16 in-person workshops planned for 2020 that needed to shift to virtual. To do that they created the MWELO Essential Elements Workshop Series, a series of 6 virtual sessions. The classes included firescaping, mulching, and pest management. Also in 2020, CLCA created a

WaterSense Materials at
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense>

- [Relieve Pressure and Reduce Water Waste from Spray Sprinklers](#)
- [Smart Watering with Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers](#)
- [Water-Smart Landscapes guide](#)
- [Find it, Flag it, Fix it: A checklist for your landscape](#)

partnership class with the QWEL program to offer both certifications. This allows for students to go through one class series and receive both certifications at the same time.

FEATURED SPEAKER: MONICA GARCIA

Due to limitations on gatherings during COVID-19, it became a challenge to the in-person Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) certification offered by the [Regional Water Authority](#). In a normal year they would offer two trainings per year to 30 students per training. The process would go for four weeks where students would meet for one day each week. In 2020 they had to shift their trainings online to Zoom meeting and the class is twice a week rather than once a week. An exam is required with the class and they used MonitorEDU to monitor and proctor students during the exam.

The Zoom format went well and students and instructors were able to stay engaged through chat and share features. The instructors also brought examples of pipes and controllers during the class to provide practical examples. The next class is scheduled for March 2021 and will continue through the virtual format.

SPEAKER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What do you find to be the most effective form of outreach for California landscapers?

A: Ms. Giarde answered that they use multiple methods to reach out to their landscapers because they can vary between big and small and may not all be easy to contact. By putting out information from their Facebook page they got a lot of interaction from a larger group than they may have had through email. The website developed also received good attention from landscapers.

Q: If someone has the QWEL certification, can they pay the fee to have the additional CLCA certification? Will the water efficiency dual certification program be available in Northern California?

A: Ms. Giarde answered that the class is required for the CLCA certification. With the dual certification, the exam is combined so by completing the combined class, both certifications can be earned. They are looking to find a Northern California partner to expand the program to the region as it is critical.