

Elvenia J. Slosson Endowment Fund

FINAL REPORT for project commencing on March 1, 2005 and finalized on June 30, 2005.

Title of Project: Landscape Water Conservation in Southern California: a Comprehensive Outreach Program

Janet S. Hartin
Environmental Horticulture Advisor
San Bernardino and
Los Angeles Counties
UC Cooperative Extension
San Bernardino, CA 92415
jshartin@ucdavis.edu

Karl McArthur
Natural Resource Advisor
San Bernardino, Riverside
and Imperial Counties
UC Cooperative Extension
San Bernardino, CA 92415
kamcarthur@ucdavis.edu

Project Summary

This project involved consolidating, editing and disseminating objective, research based material previously written and peer reviewed by University of California academics in the fields of evapotranspiration, water use of landscape plants, irrigation scheduling, reducing runoff, and water conserving strategies stressing routine use of 'can tests' and properly maintaining irrigation systems and appropriate use of mulches will be prioritized. Information was provided on CDs to 280 public and private landscapers attending accompanying *Water Conservation in the Landscape* workshops conducted in the greater Los Angeles basin (Ontario) on May 11, 2005, and in the Palm Springs area (Doral Resort, Cathedral City) on May 12, 2005.

This project was instrumental in the principal investigators subsequently receiving a \$165,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources to provide intensive on-sight training in water conservation practices on large landscapes throughout Southern California to *Water Conservation in the Landscape* workshop attendees.

Below is the final workshop program offered at both locations:

Water Conservation in the Landscape

8:00: Welcome and Overview

David Hill (Inland Empire Utilities District): Ontario workshop

Don Ackley (Coachella Valley Water District): Cathedral city workshop

8:15: Accessing University of California Irrigation Management

Information on the Internet (Mike Henry/University of California Cooperative

Extension)

8:35: **Plant Water Stress: Getting to the Root of the Problem** (Dr. Albert Markhart, University of Minnesota)

10:15: **Coffee Break**

10:30: **Public Policy: Science, Management and Politics** (Karl McArthur, University of California Cooperative Extension)

11:00: **Turf and Landscape Irrigation Scheduling** (Janet Hartin, University of California Cooperative Extension and Dr. Richard Snyder, University of California, Davis)

12:30-1:15: **On-site Lunch**

1:15-2:15: **Irrigating Mixed Landscapes Successfully** (Dennis Pittenger, University of California Cooperative Extension)

2:15-3:15: **Improving Irrigation System Uniformity and Retrofitting for Irrigating with Reclaimed Water** (Mike Huck, Private Consultant)

3:15-3:30: **Coffee Break**

3:30-5:00: **Best Management Practices to Improve Plant Health and Conserve Water** (Bill Baker, William Baker and Associates)

Project Background

An estimated 40-60% of applied irrigation water intended for landscape plants is wasted by runoff, soil evaporation or deep percolation. Studies have shown that incorporating measures such as conducting catch can tests regularly to improve irrigation system distribution uniformities of turf plantings, hydrozoning by grouping plants with similar water requirements together, irrigating trees separately from turf, and applying mulches around ornamental plantings can significantly reduce these water waste losses.

Over the past fifteen years, a voluminous amount of objective, research-based information has been published by University of California ANR and Cooperative Extension academics in many formats, including ANR publications, journal articles, field day proceedings, and research report summaries. Accessing this information by landscape clientele not familiar with the UC system often results in a hit and miss approach and can prove frustrating, inefficient, and overwhelming. A recent series of three 'Hot Topic' workshops conducted in Chino, CA by Co-Principal Investigators of this proposal attracted over 300 professional public and private

landscape clientele. One of the workshops focused on landscape irrigation management. Feedback from many attendees indicated that information presented was useful and they were not previously aware of the extent of the content and amount of information available. Many clientele requested that this UC information specifically be edited and compiled in a comprehensive format and made available in booklets and on CDs.

Packaging this information in a comprehensive, logical format on CDs with accompanying workshops to orally and visually illustrate concepts stressed in written formats was thought to likely improve adoption of specific recommendations. The intended audience included public and private landscapers; school and park district personnel; arborists; and other industry decision makers. A mailing list of over 8,000 potential attendees was used to reach interested clientele.

Future Related Work

During the two Slosson-funded workshops, participants were invited to receive intensive on-site water conservation assistance over a one-year period (January 1 - December 31, 2006) through a \$165,000 grant obtained by the principal investigators of this grant from the Department of Water Resources for a second grant. Appreciation is extended to the Slosson Endowment for providing initial funding for this comprehensive project to unfold.



The *Water Conservation in the Landscape* workshop was conducted in the Palm Springs area (Doral Resort, Cathedral City) on May 12, 2005.