

A division of the year, marked by changes in the weather.

Seasons...

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM
SIGNATURE LANDSCAPE SERVICES!

Issue 22
January, 2010

Sustainability in a tight economy.....

As we all continue to weather the economic storm, it is easy to put sustainable practices on the back burner. We are very aware of tightening budgets and appreciate that 2010 may be another tough year. We have a dichotomy in the sense there is growing awareness and appreciation of energy conservation initiatives put forward by organizations such as the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program and the benefits that come from that, but the reality of reduced budgets makes it very hard to move

forward in this arena.

We at Signature feel it is important for us to stay on the forefront of offering Sustainable Landscape Management Programs, as **GREEN** is here to stay in the commercial property marketplace. As Grant Degginger wrote in the Puget Sound Business Journal December 11th "Utilities must begin

maintaining energy performance data on {properties} to which they provide service, no later than January 1st 2010. Monitoring and reporting on building performance appears to be the wave of the future". You can be sure water use will be one of these areas monitored. As we have mentioned previously, a full irrigation audit on your landscape can show a substantial

Come and visit our booth at the Bellevue Home Show January 22nd -24th



January 22-24
MEYDENBAUER CENTER

FRIDAY 10 am - 8 pm
SATURDAY 10 am - 8 pm
SUNDAY 10 am - 6 pm

BUY ONE ADULT ADMISSION GET ONE FREE
When you use this code: HOME at www.bellevuehomeshow.com

* To purchase advance tickets online, go to www.bellevuehomeshow.com, click on the Brown Paper tickets website and enter the code shown above. You can redeem the offer by presenting this coupon at the Bellevue Home Show Box Office on show days (January 22-24, 2010). Offer valid ONLY when purchasing 1 adult ticket. Limit one coupon per purchaser. Not valid with any other discount offers.




We are now a 4 star EnviroStar member!

EnviroStars is a program that certifies businesses based on their practices and policies that demonstrate a commitment to protecting the environment by properly managing and reducing hazardous waste.

friendly practices are built into the company's policies and operations. To improve the star rating, a company has to become more proactive in reducing wastes and the use of hazardous materials.

Companies receive a rating from 2 to 5 stars; the higher the rating, the more thoroughly environment-

EnviroStars staff evaluates a company based on its hazardous waste storage and disposal practices, spill prevention, record-keeping

systems, and pollution prevention practices which go beyond requirements.

They also consider efforts to reduce the overall environmental impact or "footprint" of the business' operations. This assessment is based on a site inspection, an application/worksheet submitted by the company, and a check with regulatory

agencies. In King County, the program is a service of the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program, King County Department of Natural Resources & Parks.

We are proud to have earned the 4 star rating & will continue to improve and work toward 5 stars.



Sustainability in a tight economy continued...

ROI, especially if your property falls under the auspice of the **'Saving Water Partnership'** or **'Cascade Water Alliance'**, which will subsidize material costs for irrigation efficiency initiatives. Irrigation is not the same old game of installing heads and letting the water fly. Today irrigation is becoming a science of applying water in such a way as to reduce waste and maximize efficiency. With today's available technology, it is possible to water more efficiently while reducing total water use anywhere from twenty-five to thirty-five percent. On large properties, this can mean thousands of dollars saved per year on water bills. Our irrigation staff

includes certified irrigation auditors who are able to provide in depth information on the current status of an irrigation system and make recommendations to improve efficiency.

This year we are offering a new service to customers in the Puget Sound area. The **Sustainable Solutions Group** will focus on installing and maintaining stream and wetland mitigation sites. For the last year we have contracted with Arbormetrics Solutions working for Puget Sound Energy installing and maintaining mitigation sites in critical areas. Services that we offer include; invasive control (chemical or mechanical), wetland and stream restoration, and

installation of rain gardens. We also see storm water run-off mitigation as an area that will have greater focus in the coming years. One method to address this is through retrofitting 'rain gardens' (shallow depressions that can hold and soak up run-off from roofs and driveways) in car parks. Often poor grading in car park development can lead to areas of standing water. These would be a great place to install a rain garden – by breaking up the tarmac and pulling out the sub-soils, installing 24" of drainage rock, covered by 24" of amended soils, and suitable plant material. This would not only help alleviate storm-water run-off concerns, it would help the aesthetic of your property.

There is a lot of "green-washing" going on currently and Signature likes to pride itself on continuing to 'walk the sustainable talk', so we were very happy to recently receive a Fourth Star from King County's **'Envirostar'** Program We look forward to helping you go forward in to 2010, to both save money and introduce sustainable practices onto your property. If you would like a list of our sustainably managed properties, please contact Tom Burgess at tom.burgess@signaturels.com



Trying to do our part to be socially responsible here at Signature

- ◆ ***We are now e-mailing invoices (to sign up please e-mail Pam Davila at pam.davila@signaturels.com)***
- ◆ ***We have changed from rubber earplugs (by the 100's) to individually assigned earmuffs***
- ◆ ***We have changed from purchasing safety vests in China to those manufactured in Seattle***
- ◆ ***We recycle ink cartridges, paper, bottles & cans***

What's the Crew Up To?

Freezing temperatures late last year have yielded to our typical moderate, maritime winter climate and it is forecast to stay until spring. Accordingly, we are out and busy during a traditionally slower time of year in the landscape continuing to perform many important seasonal tasks including bed detail, weed prevention and pruning. Add drainage, mulching and renovation work to the list and our winter season is well rounded and very busy.

Our primary focus in late-December through late February is bed detail and pruning. Time spent carefully cleaning beds now will pay dividends later this spring when things get busy. Once cleaned our licensed operators will be making selective use of pre-emergent weed controls to help get a handle on problem bed areas with a prescriptive approach that identifies target weeds in specific areas rather than a wasteful blanket approach

to all areas.

Winter also affords us an opportunity to spend time pruning plant material to correct for bad growth habit, rejuvenate overgrown or declining plants and thin for proper structure. Most deciduous plants are dormant this time of year, allowing us to enjoy their structure rather than their foliage. Good pruning and attention to detail can make for a very attractive winter landscape

so keep your eye out for our crews.



How to maintain Curb appeal...

In these difficult economic times, it can be challenging to find ways to maintain occupancy rates, not to mention budgeting for promotion to attract new tenants. While economizing is par for the course as this decade begins, savvy business professionals realize that solvency relies on the creation and maintenance of cash flow. Curtailing expenditures must be tempered with prudent spending on promotion activities to assure income.

A site's landscape is a prospective client's first impression of the desirability of that property. The ongoing costs of landscape management can be mitigated while maintaining, or even increasing curb appeal. Following are some of the many opportunities available to make maximum use of your budget.

Turf renovations are an inexpensive method of keeping turf healthy and green while simultaneously saving money on water usage. Healthy turf naturally utilizes less water, fertilizers and pesticides while maintaining an aesthetically pleasing appearance. Turf renovations are primarily aeration, topdressing and seeding.



Irrigation audits and renovations discover and alleviate the inefficient use

of water on a site by replacing and adjusting irrigation components. Many local water districts offer rebates for these services so the expense to the customer can be quite minimal. With rising water costs, the consequent savings from reduced usage are realized almost immediately.

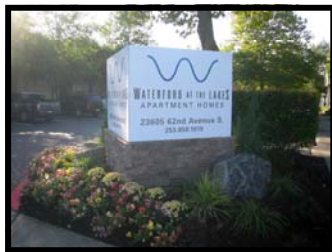


Mulching landscape beds promotes water savings and reduces plant replacement costs. Perhaps the biggest benefit comes from the increased curb appeal a freshly mulched site offers. It is typically the most significant change in a landscape for the dollar. To help keep the cost of mulching in check, consider applying mulch to fronts of buildings and common areas as opposed to eliminating it altogether.



Signage is key to marketing, but it can be costly to replace outdated and inadequate monuments and signs. Consider renovating existing signage by updating landscape plants and installing

ornamental boulders around them. Signage can also be enhanced at a relatively low cost by installing cultured stone around the base of the sign.



Plant replacement offers several benefits. Large and crowded plant material is costly to keep pruned and ages a project. Replacing these plants with smaller, lower maintenance varieties takes years off the apparent age of a site and keeps maintenance costs in check.



Seasonal color and containers have always been favorites for creating great curb appeal. It can also be one of the first items cut from the budget when things are tight. Keep in mind, however, that the cost of seasonal color can be much lower than many forms of advertising, and if it brings just one more tenant in the door or keeps an existing one from leaving, it will have paid for itself several times over.



Ongoing maintenance like adding new playchips to play areas, replacing dead plants, addressing drainage issues are all typically less expensive if performed on an ongoing basis as opposed to letting them add up over time. An additional benefit to handling these issues in a timely manner is that the site will look well cared for throughout this time.

In short, landscape management, while often one of the first things on the chopping block for reduction in a tough economical climate is, in many cases actually less expensive than many traditional advertising solutions and has the additional advantage of benefitting your existing clientele, the environment and your future cost structure.

Landscape Industry Certified....new name, same level of professionalism



Beginning in 2010, the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) certification program will assume a new brand name – **Landscape Industry Certified Manager & Technician**. Previously, PLANET designated the *Certified Landscape Technician* (CLT) and the *Certified Landscape Professional* (CLP). The new brand name will speak clearly to consumers like you with no more confusing acronyms. So, give us some time to get used to the new branding, as you'll still see CLT & CLP in our written communications.



We recently celebrated two newly certified individuals at Signature Landscape; Dado Horvat, District Manager for our East Maintenance District, and Edgar Mendoza our Maintenance Foreman in our North Maintenance District.

Both Horvat and Mendoza are **Landscape Industry Certified Technicians**, specializing in the Turf Maintenance category. Mr. Horvat is responsible for assuring quality landscape management services to the Eastside district clientele within Signature's client base.



Dado Horvat
Landscape Industry Certified

Mr. Mendoza has served as Landscape Maintenance Crew Member, Crew Leader and has recently been promoted to the Maintenance Foreman role. He has worked at Signature for nine years and his proven technical and leadership skills have paved the way for his success here.



Edgar Mendoza
Landscape Industry Certified

Signature provides avenues for learning in several different ways; on the job training & mentoring, in-house sessions and sending staff to classes, seminars and conferences throughout

the year. When it comes to fostering professionalism, we are 'outstanding in our field'!

Mike Ethington, CLT/CLIA/CWCM, a three year veteran of Signature Landscape Services, Inc., has been promoted to a Field Supervisor role. He is overseeing the Technical Support arm of Signature's Landscape Management department called the **Sustainable Solutions Group**. As Field Supervisor, Mike manages the Irrigation and Restoration Ecology teams. Mike is passionate about water conservation and how our clients can save water and reduce costs.



Mike Ethington
Landscape Industry Certified

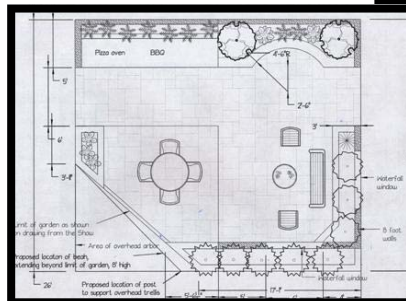
WALP display garden at the 2010 Northwest Flower and Garden Show



Feb. 3 - 7, 2010 | Washington State Convention Center | Seattle

WALP's primary purpose for the 2010 WALP Display Garden is to introduce the public to the organization, dedicated to bringing the most timely and useful information to consumers who are considering looking for a landscape professional to maintain or manage a current property, renovate an existing garden or design, or install a new landscape.

To find a landscape professional in your area, visit their statewide organization's web site at www.walp.org



'Simply Entertaining' the theme of the WALP display garden featuring an outdoor Italian pizza oven & BBQ...