SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Landscape contractors in this drought-riddled state are taking advantage of the lack of water this year to further service customers' lawns and landscapes.

Walter Barrows' company in Santa Barbara, where lawn watering is restricted, is using green paint on brown, dormant turf. "California's rainy season really ends in April," notes Larry Rohlfes, communications director for the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA). "So we don't expect any more rain until fall this year."

The CLCA's position on water states, in part: "The key is efficient irrigation management. Far more water can be saved by improved irrigation management than by other water-conserving landscape practices."

Rohlfes says that the CLCA has been busy disseminating water-saving hints to the public through the mass media. "This is the fourth year of drought," notes horticultural extension agent Janet Hartin of San Bernardino County. "People are beginning to water more intelligently—in the morning and on a schedule. We've put together a lawn watering guide for homeowners with minimums and forty commonly-asked questions and their answers. "We are all in total agreement out here: do the grunt work on your irrigation system and save 10 to 20 percent of your water." 

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GROWTH PRODUCTS

GOLF

Golf courses offer answers to problem

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — The golf industry needs to convince the public that golf is part of the solution to environmental problems, not part of the problem, says Perry Dye, president of the Golf Course Builders of America.

"Whether it's building environmental habitat or taking care of water problems, golf courses are part of the solution, not part of the problem," says Dye.

The studies we need to compete in today's environmental arena have to be three to five years old, they have to be very well documented, and they're very expensive," says Dye. "The environmentalists have spent the money, so we're behind in our research in order to provide that one piece of information that proves that golf courses are part of the solution."

Dye says an important "buzzword" in 1990s will be "spoon-feeding."

"I think spoon-feeding through irrigation is something that's going to help us in the future," he says. "We need to spoon-feed our lawns instead of using heavy applications and do soil balancing and soil mixing at the time of construction. Sites will then be environmentally safe for a long, long time and require less chemicals for maintenance."

Dye notes reports from Japan that more than 90 caddies have developed skin problems and rashes due to mis-application of pesticides. Such incidents demonstrate the need to export our knowledge of turf management.
management.

"Today it's a major sales job on our behalf to prove that we're part of the solution, not part of the problem," says Dye. "I'm an eternal optimist. I think we've done major things for the environment. It's a major give-and-take today, and we give up a lot more than we get to take, but we have to be perceived as part of the solution." •

ACADEMIA

Japanese visit Virginia Tech

BLACKSBURG, Va. — The turfgrass research and Extension programs at Virginia Tech and Michigan State Universities were recently shown to a contingent of 30 turfgrass professionals from Japan.

Among the group visiting was Dr. Yoshisuke Maki, past-president of the International Turfgrass Society. Others included Japanese academics, industrialists, golf club owners and golf course superintendents. •

EQUIPMENT

Haul Master buys vehicle maker

MENDOTA, Ill. — Haul Master, Inc. has acquired C.H.I. Industries, an original equipment manufacturer of general-purpose utility vehicles.

Claude W. Martinez, president of Haul Master, says the acquisition brings enhanced engineering and manufacturing support to Haul Master's established product line of rugged, dependable, and economical utility vehicles.

C.H.I. Industries' operation has been combined with Haul Master's manufacturing facilities in Mendota, Ill. •

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