

IRRIGATION

# Decoding irrigation certifications

Determine which credentials may be good additions for your business.

By MIKE TEMPLE, CGIA, CIC, CID, CLIA, CLWM

**F**or a professional landscape contractor looking to expand, one strategy is to earn a professional certification.

With so many choices, it's often difficult to determine which certifications are right for you. For example, the Irrigation Association's (IA's) Select Certified program offers four certification programs designed specifically for landscape professionals: certified irrigation contractor, certified landscape irrigation auditor, certified golf irrigation auditor and certified landscape water manager. There's also the certified irrigation system designer. Let's decode these options:

**Certified irrigation contractor (CIC):**

The CIC is targeted to business owners and managers who install and operate irrigation systems. CICs must demonstrate knowledge of hydraulics, precipitation rates, distribution uniformity, sprinkler spacing, controller operation and safety requirements. They also must show a general understanding of irrigation plans and specifications and business basics.

**Certified landscape irrigation auditor (CLIA) and certified golf irrigation auditor (CGIA):**

The CLIA and CGIA certifications are intended for those involved in collecting site data, making maintenance recommendations and performing minor repairs to quantify turf irrigation water use on landscapes and golf courses. CLIAs and CGIAs determine irrigation uniformity and efficiency and develop basic irrigation schedules.

**Certified landscape water manager (CLWM):**

The CLWM certification is designed for those who manage the

irrigation system.

This program builds on the skills learned in the CLIA and CGIA programs and details how to fine-tune the irrigation schedule to apply the optimum amount of water to the landscape without over watering. It also covers the financial impacts of system improvements to evaluate the benefits of water usage reduction versus the cost of the system improvements.



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**Certified irrigation designer (CID):**

CID certification offers a more advanced level of certification and goes into greater detail on all aspects of irrigation system design. Topics covered include sprinkler/pump selection, calculation of water windows, sizing of water supplies and system hydraulics.

On top of the existing programs, IA is developing a new entry-level certified irrigation technician (CIT) program, which addresses the basics of irrigation system maintenance and troubleshooting. Exams for the new CIT program will be available for the first time at the 2013 Irrigation Show & Education Conference, which takes place Nov. 4-8, in Austin, Texas. Computer-based testing will be available beginning Dec. 1. **LM**

*Temple is owner of Irrigation Innovations in Waxhaw, N.C., and serves as chair of the Irrigation Association certification board.*

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