



THE HALLMARK

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Becoming ever water-wiser

Like a wizard, I command water to flow — clean, fresh water. When I turn on the faucet handle in my shower, I expect the water to come out; it does. Technology grants me this shaman-like ability, which I've never been without and that I now regard (perhaps like you) as my birthright. It never occurs to me that the faucet will fail me, so accustomed am I to effortlessly accessing clean water that, of course, is irreplaceable for sustaining my envied American lifestyle.

To what do I owe this good fortune, which is not shared by almost three billion of my earthly companions? (An estimated 900 million humans do not have access to safe drinking water, and 2.6 billion do not have access to basic sanitation.) Certainly, little that I have ever done entitles me to this incredible convenience. For reasons beyond my comprehension, I was born into this blessed U.S.A. at a time when clean, fresh and, yes, inexpensive water has always been at my fingertips.

Indeed, our nation's ability to harness water to do its bidding and raise our standard of living has been little short of astounding. Take the engineering and harnessing of the Colorado River, as one example — perhaps its most stark. Disregarding the misappropriations, political wrangling and deleterious environmental consequences of its taming for the moment, who can argue that its water hasn't

made deserts flower into some of most agriculturally productive land on Earth, that it hasn't been the single largest ingredient in allowing the growth of some of the nation's largest and most dynamic cities and — not coincidentally but certainly less recognized — birthed the modern irrigation industry as we know it, a key factor in the growth and continued evolution of our Green Industry?

Author Steven Solomon, in his book *Water, The Epic Struggle for Weather, Power, and Civilization*, claims that the United States rose to its prominence in the world during the 20th Century due, in large part, to its success in using water in four categories efficiently: meeting our domestic needs (drinking, cooking, sanitation), economic production (manufacturing, mining, agriculture), power generation and transport (shipping, defense).

Within the past generation, a fifth category, environmental sustainability, has emerged. It will figure largely in our special Water Wise coverage, which begins on page 17 in this issue. We've arrived at the point in the evolution of our Green Industry, and the understanding of what our efforts can accomplish, that we can make vastly larger positive environmental impacts on the properties entrusted to our care.

As you read our Water Wise coverage, you will gain in this first of three monthly installments a greater understanding of water management and its role in sustaining the urban and suburban properties that are now so much a part of our lifestyles.

Our continuing coverage of irrigation and water issues will continue to focus on water use efficiency and best management practices. We won't focus on restrictions and bans. We'll be sharing examples of what we're doing well, and what we're going to be doing better.

The Green Industry, including our contractor segment, is an industry of positive change. It's in the forefront of a worldwide movement to use resources more wisely to preserve and improve our urban and suburban ecologies.

As you read our **Water Wise coverage**, you will gain in this first of three installments a greater understanding of how landscape irrigation fits into the **total water picture** of the urban and suburban properties within our communities.