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Talega landscaping wins environmental award

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The landscaping at Talega, a San Clemente housing community with price tags ranging from \$700,000 to \$1 million, recently won a merit award at the 40th annual Environmental Improvement Awards in Kentucky. The honor, bestowed by the Professional Landcare Network, recognizes Talega's recycling program, water use and plant choices.

Joe Montross, vice president of business development at San Clemente-based Bemus Landscape Inc., which manages Talega's public landscaping, said "sound horticultural practices" and a "passion for the sciences involved" helped the company win the award. Forty-six companies won a merit award this year.



Bemus Landscape, which manages the public landscaping in San Clemente's Talega community, won an award for its environmental practices.

Here's more from Montross:

Q. What kind of environmental landscaping techniques helped Bemus win the award?

A. We used pruning and irrigation-management practices that are unique for a predominantly drought-resistant and native landscape. We have a green-waste recycling program by which we transform all of our grass clippings and tree trimmings into mulch, which we then use on our projects, thereby providing a beneficial horticultural product and eliminating unnecessary material going into our landfills.

Bemus manages a storm-water pollution-prevention program. ... We implemented an aggressive integrated pest-management program that reduces the use of pesticides.

Q. Is landscape sustainability an integral part of your business? How so?

A. We have strong partnerships with many drought-resistant and native-plant growers that allow us to be on the cutting edge of new plant species that are not only appropriate for a sustainable landscape but are also aesthetically pleasing. We believe we are stewards of our environment, and sustainable landscape practices are an integral part of that stewardship.

Q. Have you noticed landscaping companies starting to focus more on being environmentally friendly?

A. Yes, there is a definite trend, because more and more customers are demanding it. We have always had great respect for the environment. After all, we are the "green industry."

Q. What does it take to become an industry leader in the landscaping business?

A. You must have a love for what you are doing. It can be a lot of hard work and demanding, but it also can be extremely fulfilling. You must have a passion for the sciences involved in the industry, (such as) horticulture, agronomy, entomology (and) botany.

Q. How do you feel about winning this award?

A. We are very proud. Being recognized by our peers in the industry shows that we are a progressive leader in job quality, water-saving techniques and sustainable landscapes.