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# OC Vision

Official Publication of the Orange County Chapter of California Landscape Contractors Association • [www.clca-orangecounty.org](http://www.clca-orangecounty.org)



Cover Photo:  
IRWD HQ Succulent Garden  
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**OC VISION**  
C/O CLCA - Orange County Chapter  
P.O. Box 12044  
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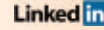
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## You are Not Alone



**Sal Hernandez**  
Pacific Breeze Landscape  
Chapter President

It's been a rough month for me. Many sleepless nights, changing of a lot of diapers, and getting pooped on more often than I'd care to say. Dealing with a crying baby is no fun either. I'm constantly trying to figure out the source of his cries. Is he hungry, tired, or does he need to be burped? It's been a while since I've had to deal with a newborn child and I'm definitely feeling out of practice. I'm grateful for my wife, Kathy, and our families who are a great support during this challenging time.

I can't help but see parallels between my current situation and when I started my company six years ago. I had no idea what to do, which direction to go, what suppliers to use, etc. When something went wrong in the business, I had to figure out the cause. Asking lots of questions along the way. Fortunately, I learned early on that I didn't have to do it alone.

Connecting with CLCA early in the startup of my business was the key to its immediate success. I can't put a value on the networking and mentorship that I received as a member. I've made lots of friends, built strong relationships with

fellow green industry business owners and suppliers who want to help me succeed. CLCA, like my family, supports me daily.

While I have the support I need, the continued success of my business still falls on me. Success doesn't just come and that's it. It takes work to remain successful. There will be constant change and you must be able to adapt and modify accordingly. I'm often evaluating my business and looking for ways to improve. One tool that I found super helpful is a SWOT analysis. SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is a method for identifying and analyzing internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats that shape current and future operations and help develop strategic goals. If you've never done this analysis on your business, I strongly encourage it.

Bottom line: The support you need is out there! CLCA offers resources to help you succeed. ~Sincerely, Sal

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2022 CLCA-OC Calendar	
Mark Your Calendars & Save the Dates Now!	
Sept. 17	OC Chapter Beautification Awards, Mission Viejo. <i>MV Country Club: 26200 Country Club Dr.</i> Reserve your seat at <a href="http://www.clca-orangecounty.org">www.clca-orangecounty.org</a>
Sept. 22	CLCA Education Day. More info coming soon!
Oct. 12	CLCA University, Class #3. <i>This will be online.</i> Topic: Marketing your Business & Increasing Sales.
Nov. 9-11	CLCA Convention & Trophy Awards. Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa. More info at <a href="http://www.clca.org/convention">www.clca.org/convention</a> .
Nov. 16-17	The Landscape Expo, Anaheim. More information at <a href="http://www.thelandscapeexpo.com">www.thelandscapeexpo.com</a> .
Dec. TBD	Chapter Holiday Party, Location TBD.

**Don't Miss Our Biggest Event of the Year!**  
**Beautification Awards Gala Set for Sept. 17 at Mission Viejo Country Club**  
*• Bring Your Staff, Designers, and Customers!*

The 2022 Beautification Awards are well underway and over 50 submitted landscape projects have been assessed for recognition and award. Winners will be announced at the Beautification Awards banquet to be held Saturday, September 17, at the Mission Viejo Country Club at 26200 Country Club Dr., Mission Viejo.

By attending the Beautification Awards banquet, the opportunity for success is the prospecting! Attending the banquet not only gives you the opportunity to find out if your project will be recognized, but it also leaves a lasting impression on your customers and colleagues. Inviting your customers, designers, architects, management companies and staff is a great way to showcase your work, thank them for their loyalty, and have some fun!

Didn't enter a project? Plan on attending anyway. Photos of the winning properties are showcased in a multi-media presentation during the awards ceremony, allowing you an opportunity to get ideas for your projects.

Tickets to the event are just \$100 each. There are also lots of sponsorship opportunities available! Reserve your seat online at [www.clca-orangecounty.org](http://www.clca-orangecounty.org). Call (949) 466-1222 with questions or for more information.

**Advertise in the OC Vision!**  
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## How to Identify Boxwood Blight

**B**oxwoods are a genus of around 90+ species within the Buxaceae family, with new varieties hitting the market every year. They are broadleaf evergreen shrubs that are a staple of many landscapes and grow in a variety of climates. Used as foundation plantings, hedges, and more, they require part or full sun depending on yearly climate for optimal growth.

Boxwoods are typically low maintenance, unless they are used as a formal hedge and need regular shearing. However, they can become diseased, most commonly with blight and Phytophthora. These diseases can look similar. Use our guide to the right to help identify boxwood blight.



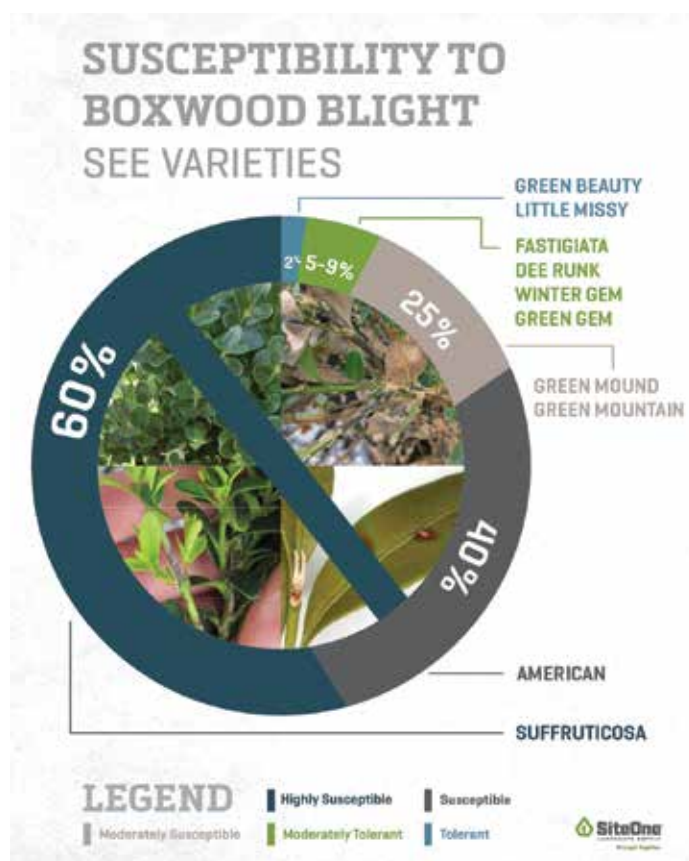
### Identifying Boxwood Blight

Boxwood blight is a fungal disease caused by *Calonectria pseudonaviculata* and *C. henricotiae* that affects *Buxus*, *Pachysandra* and *Sarcococca* genres. Research states a wide range of boxwood cultivars are susceptible to boxwood blight, but the most susceptible species are *B. sempervirens* with *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Suffruticosa’ (English boxwood) and *Buxus sempervirens* ‘American’ (common or American boxwood) topping the list.

Originally discovered in the United Kingdom in the 1990’s, boxwood blight came to the United States in 2011. This disease has now been found in 23 states. As shown in the image above, it significantly impacts the plant’s aesthetics and eventually kills it. Symptoms include leaf spot, rapid defoliation, severe dieback, and black cankers on stems. Circular leaf spots appear before leaf blighting, and the spots often look brown or purple. You may also notice dark brown or black stem lesions. In areas of high humidity, you might notice white fuzzy masses of spores on stems and leaves, but this is less common. It can take over quickly during wet periods and can go dormant in warmer and drier conditions, only to reappear when the weather changes.

### Avoiding Blight

The fungal spores can last over 10 years in the soil. They stick to anything exposed to the infected plant, such as gloves, tools, equipment, tires, clothes, and more. Some states, such as Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Tennessee now have Boxwood Compliance Agreements to abate this infectious disease. The agreements contain strict protocols for boxwood shipping and care.



To limit infection, you should follow these guidelines:

- Make sure to purchase boxwood from reputable suppliers.
- Water the plant roots (not leaves) in the morning, as evenings can have low temperatures and fungus thrives on wet leaves.
- Clean your tools in a 10% bleach solution after pruning different blocks of plants. Use a fresh solution after each job.
- Properly dispose of any infected plants, typically by burning the plant on-site.
- Do not work in landscape beds when the plants are wet.
- Consider using mulch around boxwoods to prevent water splash onto leaves, keeping them drier.
- Wash off shoes and clothing between landscaping jobs, especially in areas noted to have boxwood blight.
- Apply preventative fungicides regularly in areas noted to have boxwood blight.

If you suspect boxwood blight, quarantine the plants as soon as possible. Gather sample stems and leaves and take pictures. Take these pictures into your local SiteOne Nursery or your local state extension office to discuss your next steps and to inform them of the disease in the area.

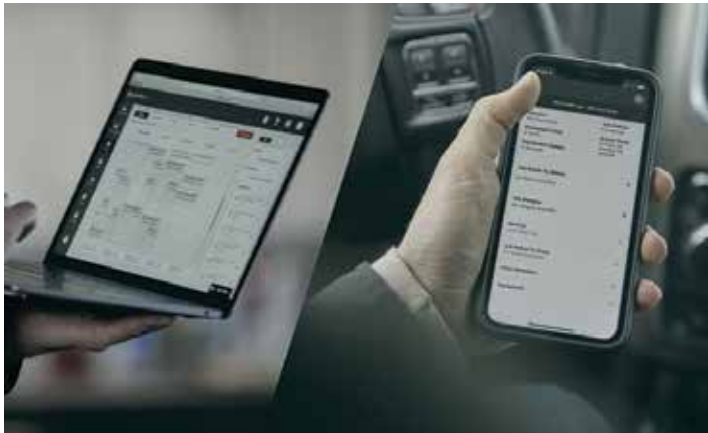
If boxwood blight is prevalent in your area, consider asking your customer to choose a boxwood variety that is more resistant, such as Portfolio® Little Missy, Green Gem, Winter Gem, or Dee Runk. Other alternative plants are *Ilex glabra* and *Ilex crenata*, which mimic the boxwood look without the disease pressures.

*This article was excerpted from Site One Landscape Supply's blog at [www.siteone.com](http://www.siteone.com).*



# Toro Adds New Features to Horizon360™ Business Mgmt Software

*New customer relationship management tool and payment processing capabilities increase convenience and productivity for professional landscape contractors.*



“Adding the new customer relationship management tool and automated payments feature not only meets the business needs of our Horizon360 customers, but gives them valuable time back in their day,” said Dave Francis, Senior Marketing Manager at Toro. “These features offer increased convenience to professional landscape contractors, while streamlining their communications and interactions with customers. Ultimately, these updates ensure they have all the data and tools they need to effectively run their business right at their fingertips.”

### Communicate with Ease

The new CRM feature will allow contractors to automate customer communications, which means no more calling or texting. This feature can be used to schedule appointments, alert customers of upcoming service, communicate changes to the job, such as rescheduling due to inclement weather, and notify customers when a job is complete. Additionally, the CRM tool can be used for marketing business promotions and reminding customers of yearly service opportunities.

Designed to be easy to implement, communications can be created based on a pre-selected template, or you can build your own template with custom fields. Then, simply trigger the email to send and get on with your day.

*Continued on next page...*

New features introduced to the Toro® Horizon360™ business software suite help drive more profits for professional landscape contractors. A customer relationship management tool will allow contractors to automate client communications, while a new online payment feature makes invoicing a breeze.

The new features build on the powerful all-in-one Horizon360 software suite that’s designed to help landscape contractors more effectively track the productivity of their crews and equipment, automate their billing process, and enhance the time management of their businesses.



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According to the National Integrated Drought Information System, 45% of the US and 54% of the lower 48 states are currently in drought.

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# Horizon360™ New Features

...Continued from previous page

## Invoicing made Simple

It's estimated that ten percent of invoices are missed or never delivered. The new automated online payments feature eliminates that — every invoice will go out and it will be simple for customers to pay.

The new system collects all recently completed jobs and sends invoices out for payment at your desired frequency. Choose from monthly, bi-weekly or immediately following service.

The simple process has just two steps. First, an email is generated and sent to the customer to notify them that an invoice has been made ready for payment. Then, customers simply click on the link and make the payment. Repeat customers can save a credit card on file for simple payment processing every time.

To ensure the payment process is secure for both contractors and their clients, Horizon360 software has partnered with EVO Payments, a leading global provider of payment technology integrations and acquiring solutions. All Toro contractors will be able to utilize EVO's secure cloud-based payment processing solutions to accept and manage their payments within their Horizon360 software suite.

"We are excited to partner with Toro to offer EVO's acquiring and processing services and secure Payfabric gateway to Horizon360 software customers," says Brendan F. Tansill, EVO's President, the Americas. "Our proprietary solutions improve the contractors' ability to accept and manage card payments, allowing them to focus on growing their businesses."

"Horizon360 is designed to help busy landscape contractors deliver better customer service, attract and retain great employees, manage time better, while increasing revenues and profit margins," said Francis. In addition to the two new features, the software suite offers real-time equipment tracking and an intuitive bi-lingual phone app, and makes managing complex scheduling, challenging weather events, and multiple crews easier than ever.

To learn more about Horizon360, visit the Toro website at [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com).

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1/4 Page (B/W)	\$1,245
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1/3 Page (B/W)	\$1,735
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1/2 Page (B/W)	\$2,140
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Full Page (B/W)	\$4,050
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For more info. about advertising in the *OC Vision*, contact Bronwyn Miller at (949) 466-1222/[eyescares@yahoo.com](mailto:eyescares@yahoo.com).



# Truth

By Steven Cesare, Ph.D., The Harvest Group

A change-agent business owner from Kansas called me the other day to talk about a topic that an increased number of owners have thrown my way recently. “Truth.”

I hear it all the time:

- “Steve, my employees do not tell the truth to me.”
- “If I told my employees the truth, they would be offended.”
- “To avoid a lawsuit, I have to be politically correct with my employees rather than be truthful with them.”
- “If I gave them a truthful performance review, they would leave, and how does that really benefit me?”
- “Steve, truth is irrelevant nowadays, since everyone has their own ‘personal truth.’”
- “I’m sort of truthful with my employees most of the time.”

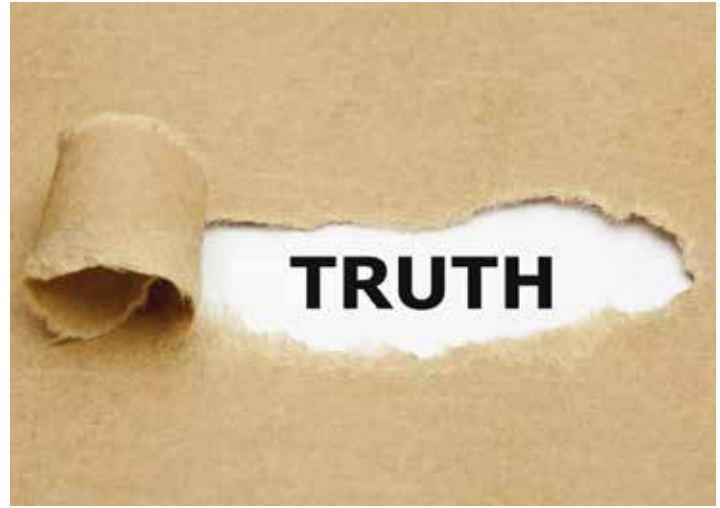
Let’s wax philosophical for a moment. If you don’t have truth, can you really have love, or respect, or honor, or friendship, or sincerity, or trust, or peace of mind?

“Really?”

Remember the timeless adage: “A half truth is still a lie.”

The Kansas business owner shared a recent example where her employees did not tell the truth. In brief, due to a safety issue involving landscape equipment, several employees did not tell the truth (that’s called lying by the way) as part of the related investigation. Rather than tell the truth, the employees chose to “play dumb” and simply let the investigation play itself out administratively.

She knew they were lying. They know they were lying. I’m in San Diego and I know they were lying. And you know what? You know they were lying too, right?



Are you being truthful with me?

Now answer the question again.

When it comes to truth, never forget that you are a role model. Do it, lead it, enable it, reinforce it.

During my conversation with the business owner, I suggested that “truth” become more of a foreground issue in her company. My recommendations to her, also apply to you:

- make “truth” one of your company’s Core Values,
- when doing an investigation ask your employees “are you being completely truthful to me on this issue?”,
- insert the word “truth” into every contract proposal and enhancements bid,
- ask your employees if they think you are always truthful with them,
- stipulate in the Code of Conduct section of the Employee Handbook that employees always be truthful,
- document truth at all times (e.g., interviews, performance reviews, walk-throughs, job quality, injuries, customer interactions, overtime).

Being realistic, we all know this process will be awkward, time-consuming, and revealing. But until we begin this process, we are not being honest to our employees, our customers, our family members, or ourselves.

Isn’t that the truth?

Now answer the question again.

If you have any questions or comments about this topic or anything else related to human resources, simply call me at (760) 685-3800.

*This article was excerpted from the Harvest Group blog, Tuesdays with Steve Cesare.*



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## MWDOC Offering Rebates to Help Save Water



**D**on't let the drought get you down! The Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) has created rebate programs to incentivize consumers to save water by transforming their landscapes with climate appropriate plants and efficient irrigation devices. Orange County knows that every drop of water saved today is an investment towards a sustainable future.

eventually enters the ocean. Using multi-trajectory, rotating streams of water, rotating nozzles water more efficiently and uniformly than traditional sprinkler heads. They can reduce your outdoor water use by up to 30%.

**Drip Irrigation - Rebates start at \$0.50 per square foot.** Convert spray heads to drip irrigation, which uses emitters to deliver water to specific locations at, or near, plant root zones. Drip irrigation systems are very water-efficient and are even customizable for different plant varieties in a small area. Enjoy water savings of up to 50 gallons per day.

**Soil Moisture Sensors - Rebates start at \$80 per device or \$35 per station for sites over 1 acre.** Soil moisture sensor controllers are placed below ground in the root zones of lawns and landscapes to determine if and how long to water. They are available as stand-alone controllers or add-on devices to existing controllers. They have been shown to reduce outdoor water use by up to 70% without sacrificing the quality or health of your landscape.

**Smart Sprinkler Timers - Rebates start at \$180 for properties less than one acre -or- \$35 per station for properties greater than one acre.** Choose a weather-based irrigation controller that adjusts the watering schedule based on current weather conditions, or a soil moisture sensor controller that measures the soil's water content to determine how much water plants need. Enjoy water savings of up to 40-50 gallons per day/home.

**Rain Barrels and Cisterns - Rebates start at \$35 per rain barrel and \$250 per cistern.** Capture the rainwater that falls on your roof and use it later to water your plants. Plants and microbes prefer rainwater because it is naturally "soft" and free of chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals. Rain barrels can help reduce ocean water pollution by preventing rain from carrying fertilizers, pet waste, and harmful debris from your property out into the ocean.

**Sprinkler Nozzles - Rebates start at \$2 each. (Minimum of 15 nozzles)** Upgrade to rotating sprinkler nozzles that water more evenly and efficiently than traditional pop-up spray heads. Rotating sprinkler nozzles can help you reduce harmful water runoff that flows off your landscape and

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## 5 Ways to Make the Workplace More Welcoming



“We’ve found that establishing and building personal relationships is most effective in making new team members feel welcome,” says Jennifer Burnett, VP of organizational development for LandCare.

LandCare, Lindgren Landscape, and Ground Works Land Design make new employees feel welcomed by offering them gifts, such as branded t-shirts that they prepare ahead of time.

It’s also necessary to assure that when your employees walk in the door, they will have everything they need to be successful for the day. If you’re committed to their success, it will make them feel much more valuable.

### Provide Them with a Buddy/Mentor

Providing your employees with someone they can ask for help, share experiences with, and offer them guidance is crucial to establishing a welcoming workplace environment. This way, each employee feels like they have a safe zone to fall back into when they’re confused about something or feel uncomfortable.

Carruthers Landscape Management Inc. stated that in the past, it wasn’t unusual to just push someone right into the mix after they had been hired. However, Carruthers learned from that mistake.

“Now, when we get a new hire, we assign them a buddy — another crew member who can show them around and introduce them to people,” Carruthers says. “It’s made a really big difference. Crew members go from not knowing anyone to automatically having one familiar face — so they don’t

In the workplace, it’s incredibly important to create an approachable environment that will encourage employees to want to come to work every day and give their best possible performance.

It’s crucial to avoid a negative atmosphere, so, how exactly can you make the workplace more welcoming?

### Start Off Prepared

It’s beneficial to know a bit about your employees before they begin working. The more you know about who is working for you, the more you will be able to connect with them and make them feel like a part of the team.

*Continued on next page...*

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## 5 Ways to Make the Workplace More Welcoming

...Continued from previous page

feel as though they're totally on their own. We've also found this helps everyone get to know each other much faster."

### Show Interest in Them Being There

It's important to engage with your employees to make them feel more welcomed in the work environment. If you take the time to hear their ideas, ask them how they're doing, and acknowledge their presence, it shows that you are taking the time out of your day to greet them, making them feel important. You want to show them that you care about their personal life. The more important they feel, the more welcoming the workplace becomes.

"Sometimes our personal lives end up affecting our work lives," says Nubia Guterrez, Human Resources Manager for Mullin. "I listen. If I'm able to do something, then I'll do it. Most recently we had a team member's father that passed away. We sent flower arrangements to the funeral, and we had a couple of team members along with myself and the owner attend the funeral."

Mullin assures everyone that providing support to others is part of the job, and everyone should be participating in making others feel appreciated, especially new members.

### Be Informative to Employees

Being informative about things around the workplace is beneficial to employees when it comes to them feeling welcomed. Telling them where the bathrooms, the kitchen, the conference rooms are, and introducing them to whom they're going to be working with makes the environment more approachable. Try to inform them of their tasks, and whom they can talk to in case they need help with anything.

"Another one that I always like to do is making sure that they have an opportunity to meet the other managers that they're going to work with on a regular basis so that there's no mystery of who the new person is, what do they do and things like that," says Chris Psencik, Vice President of McFarlin Stanford.

Keeping your employees out of the dark is one of the best ways to make them feel like they fit in, which makes the workplace significantly more welcoming.

**"In the workplace, it's incredibly important to create an approachable environment that will encourage employees to want to come to work every day and give their best possible performance."**

### Have a Positive Attitude

The more positive your attitude is, the more approachable you come off. Walk around the workplace with a smile, and make sure to say hello to employees who you encounter or even ask how they're doing. Even something as small as nodding your head at them can make a notable difference in how welcomed they feel.

"Just a handshake or a fist bump or a pat on the back kind of thing, it's very genuine and very organic,"

says Krisjan Berzins, founder of Kingstowne Lawn and Landscape. "Literally, that 10 seconds can potentially be more powerful than a \$50 gift card."

*This article, authored by Lindsay Brisson, was originally posted on the National Association of Landscape Professionals' blog at <https://blog.landscapeprofessionals.org/>.*





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