

## RICK THOMAS Team Spotlight

A love of horticulture and dedication to hard work, both instilled by his parents, have guided Rick throughout his life. It is this love and passion that have made Rick an integral member of the EC Team, bringing over 35+ years of experience to our clients.



A native of Maui, Rick was an avid surfer and loved all that the island provided. He has since traded in his surf board for golf clubs. Rick has been in the landscape industry since 1985, having worked with high-end properties, condos and large master planned communities. He and Ron Hill, owner of EC, have long roots in the Inland Empire working together to install landscaping in many of the large master planned communities. Rick joined EC in the fall of 1999 and actively works to run our Murrieta Branch, overseeing training, safety, quality control and customer service.

His life motto is "get the job done!" and we love it!



## In This Issue

Rick Thomas - Team Spotlight [P.1](#)

Spring Lawn and Shrub Care [P.1](#)

Understanding Fertilizers [P.2](#)

Water Management Tip [P.2](#)

## Spring Lawn and Shrub Care

Frost regularly occurs in our area starting in the fall and continuing until spring. However, plants are more vulnerable to a hard frost, which typically occurs in January and February. Lawns start to turn yellow and shrubs show signs of browning leaves.

You might have noticed in addition to the yellowing of your lawn, there are a significant number of dead grass blades, especially in the high traffic areas. While the lighter green grass will bounce back with fertilization, the dead grass must be removed to avoid thatch buildup.

To bring back the color and life to your lawn, start by mowing it at a lower mow height, followed by raking the remains of dead grass that were not picked up by the mower. Next put down a healthy dose of fertilizer (see page 2 for our article on fertilizers and what the numbers on the package mean), high in nitrogen content, which will bring back that deep green, healthy color to your lawn.

Spring is also a good time to aerate and fill in the bare spots. A healthy lawn in the spring will last through the summer and cut down on your watering needs.

Shrubs also need attention to bring them back to life and to promote new growth. Start by removing all the dead leaves. Next, check the health of the branches by running your fingernail or knife gently down the stem. If you see a greenish color, you have a living stem. If there is no life in the stem, keep working your way down the branch until you reach living plant material.

Remove dead branches and stems with a pair of sharp pruning shears, making a 45° downward cut. In some cases, it may be necessary to remove up to one third of the shrub if it needs rejuvenation, cutting off the oldest and weakest branches first. Check with your local nursery or garden center to learn more about pruning.



## WATER MANAGEMENT TIP

As the weather patterns continue to predict a rainy season, we want to remind our customers of water use regulations before and after imminent rain. New regulations are in effect that prohibit irrigation during and 48 hours after measurable rainfall. The general rule of thumb is for every inch of rain we receive, watering should be delayed seven to 10 days for your thirstiest plants. If you aren't sure if it is time to turn your irrigation back on, check the soil for moisture.

EC is implementing water management techniques, monitoring water use and participating in various water districts to stay abreast of water use regulations and guidelines. This expertise has helped in delivering exceptional results, including reducing irrigation water by 25 million gallons in 6 months for just one of our master planned clients in the Temecula area.

Contact Ty Jaglowski (cell 951.326.7736 or via email at [tyj@eclmi.com](mailto:tyj@eclmi.com)) on how we can help in maintaining and improving your community while implementing water management techniques.

## Fertilizers

### The Numbers on Fertilizer Labels & What They Mean

Whenever you see a fertilizer product, it will have three numbers listed on the package, usually on the front of the bag. These numbers are very important and tell a great deal about what this fertilizer will do.

**Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (N, P, K)** are what the numbers refer to. They are always listed in this order. It is the percentage within that package of each component. For example, a common type of all-purpose fertilizer is referred to as **15-15-15**. This is a balanced blend of equal portions of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium. If you purchased a 50 lb. bag, five lbs. (or 10%) would be Nitrogen, five lbs. would be Phosphorus, and five lbs. would be Potassium. The remaining 70% is simply filler, which are there mostly to help disperse the chemicals.

#### Up, Down, and all Around

A common way of describing the purpose behind each chemical is to think “up, down and all around.” Applying this simple phrase will help you remember that **Nitrogen (N)**, helps with plant growth above ground. Nitrogen promotes the green leafy growth of foliage, and provides the necessary ingredients to promote lush green lawns. Lawn fertilizers frequently have a high first number for this purpose.

#### Environmental Concepts Landscape Management, Inc.

PO Box 1788, Temecula, CA 92593  
Phone 951.587.6551 | Fax 951.587.6771  
[www.eclmi.com](http://www.eclmi.com)  
Follow us on [www.facebook.com/eclmi/](https://www.facebook.com/eclmi/)



**Phosphorus (P)**, is very effective at establishing growth below the ground, in the form of a healthy root system. It is also the component most responsible for flower blooms and fruit production. You'll notice that fertilizers designed for flower production or starter-type fertilizers have a higher middle number.

**Potassium (K)**, is considered important for overall plant health. It is primarily due to its ability to help build strong cells within the plant tissue. In turn, the plants withstand various stresses, such as heat, cold, pests, and diseases. For example, winter fertilizers will have a high component of potassium.

When shopping for fertilizers, be mindful of their intended use. Fertilizers that have equal numbers can generally be used as an all-purpose fertilizer. If you had only one product to work with, **15-15-15** would be our recommendation and remember to always follow the manufacturers' application rate and application directions shown on the package.

