

# The Del Conte's Vision



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## Working Together for a Better Environment

Of all the environmental issues we can get involved in, probably the most personal and closest to home involves the lawn, trees and shrubs growing in our own yards.

Plants contribute to our health and comfort while improving the environment. They produce oxygen, filter impurities from the air, reduce the demand for cooling in the summer, act as windbreaks and insulators in the winter, and even filter pollutants from surface water. Plants also help to reduce global warming and noise pollution.

Taking good care of your property improves the quality of life for your family, your neighbors and the whole community. We're excited to work with you this year to enhance your property and the environment we all share.

## A Greeting from the President

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Del Conte's Vision*! Thanks for taking a look at our kick-off issue. We're striving to provide a newsletter for our clients that they can actually use! This won't be just a bunch of FYIs, but actual information from your landscape authority that you'll be able to put to practical and beneficial use. Here's what you'll find in each issue:

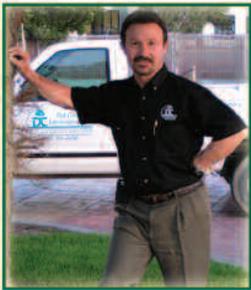
- Articles for you to download/reprint with helpful, seasonal landscaping/gardening hints for managing your garden or common areas, along with critical information your landscape service professional should be addressing.
- Seasonal specials where we can gear up for a seasonal landscape task and therefore offer you timely services at great savings.
- Fun information or games that just might help you to win some cool, fun stuff...so be on the lookout for how you can win!
- The latest and greatest company information or events we want to share with you. We're always striving to be the best service delivery company within our marketplace, and we'll keep you abreast of how we maintain this leading-edge culture as your landscape authority.

So, take advantage of these useful tips by reading through the sections that will benefit you the most. If you find information inside that you'd like to use, contact us to obtain landscape newsletter reprints for your company/association newsletter.

Thanks again for reading, and as Jackie Robinson once said, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

**Looking forward to seeing your vision,**

**Tom Del Conte**



Tom Del Conte  
President, Del Conte's  
Landscaping, Inc.



# Helpful Landscape Tips for You and Your Associations

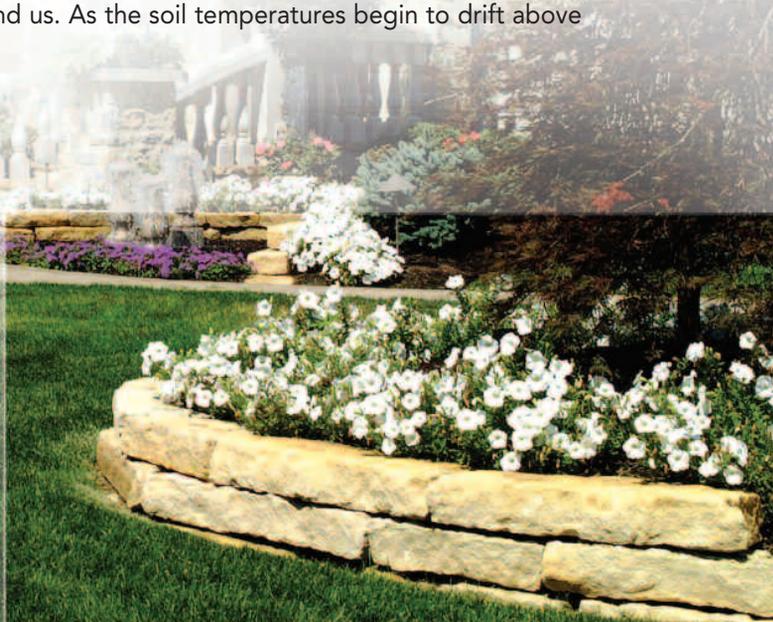
**Useful landscape information for you to use in your garden and/or to help direct your professional.**

*The following article is written to provide added-value for our clients. We'll be providing seasonal information just in time for you to use or pass on. The article is written in a format conducive to passing or reprinting for any of our clients' associations (private resident or community or property manager). You may contact us to receive this article in electronic media.*

Winter's rains are upon us, which means many trees and shrubs have lost their leaves and become dormant. It also means the ground has become soft (and muddy in places). Here are some landscape suggestions for this time of year that should be done while the ground is soft, plants are dormant and soil temperatures begin to warm:

- **Straighten those staked, leaning trees** – While the ground is soft, there's a window of opportunity for straightening those adolescent trees. If allowed to mature crooked, there will forever be a crooked picture in your window. While we love the value trees bring to a property, an unintentionally leaning tree actually detracts from curb appeal. While the soil is wet and pliable, take the chance to pull the adolescents into proper posture. Even if the tree is broken in the process, requiring removal, you still will have improved the property's appearance due to the absence of the crooked tree.
- **Remove any unnecessary stakes** – There's nothing worse than trees being held up by broken or hanging tree stakes. Set a systematic program for removing those obsolete tree stakes. Replace broken stakes or install guy cables only if necessary.
- **Rose bushes should be hard pruned during the winter to allow nice, plentiful, healthy blooms in the spring** – Now is the last chance to do this hard prune to get the nice spring growth. Also, feed with plant food and a systemic (transmits through the veins of the plant) insecticide. Do your best to keep water off the foliage as well. Low-trajectory spray to the root zone or drip irrigation is best.
- **Dormant sprays for many flowering trees** – Flowering cherries, ornamental plums and several other trees have microscopic fungus harboring on the branches and stems through the winter that damages the leaves as they develop during the spring. It's best to use dormant treatments applied to the limbs prior to leaf development, killing the micro fungi and allowing clean, beautiful leaf development.
- **Annuals, succulents and grass-looking perennials like agapanthus and flax are snail magnets** – Monitor for snails (they like the wet weather!) and treat aggressively before they catch hold. Typical signs of snail damage are holes in the centers of the leaves, since the snails can't be supported on the edges of most leaves (and they eat from the center outward).
- **Winter is also a good time to start planning your spring landscaping** – Including any renovations or just what flowers you might want to plant to brighten your landscape. Planting early in the season will put nature on your side, since soils maintain moisture better before the warm, dry Northern California summer arrives. Mulching also adds extraordinary water retention. Take advantage of the variety of mulches available at great pricing from our sister company, Vision Recycling.
- **Now is the time to stop the return of annual crabgrasses** – Crabgrass is an annual that dies through the winter but leaves behind its seeds. The coldest of weather is behind us. As the soil temperatures begin to drift above the 50-degree mark (typically mid to late February), seeds will begin to germinate. Spread a pre-emergent (seed stopper) to the known areas of last summer's crabgrass population to virtually arrest the reinfestation this season.
- **Olive fruit control has a specific timing window to control the development of the ultra-messy black olive fruit** – Be sure that your horticulture professional is on the watch for the exact proper timing to control this carpet-staining landscape menace. Once you see the fruit, it's too late!

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# Del Conte's Adds Two More Way-Cool Accolades: Top 100 & Diamond Certified

KUDOS to everyone at Del Conte's Landscaping for all their hard work and dedication. *Lawn and Landscape* magazine, a national publication, has rated us within the top 100 landscape companies in the country! Wow! Top 100, way to go! As many of you know, DCL has received many industry awards, is a Bay Area Green Business in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, and has now been awarded Diamond Certification status. This exemplifies all that DCL stands for: integrity, hard work, proactive planning and a commitment to all clients. The independent Diamond Certification American Ratings Corporation interviewed approximately 100 clients who were randomly selected from a client list of over 400. It's required that a company receive a minimum score of 90 (out of 100) to achieve certification. Del Conte's Landscaping received a score of 94! Some of our clients commented on how pleased they were or are by our responsiveness, timeliness and quality of work. It's always great to get a pat on the back from the people for whom you work hard to please!

Look for Diamond Certified companies with other service providers to ensure the very best.

**The Best Never Rest!** Del Conte's Landscaping is committed to continuously learning and investing to bring the very best techniques and service delivery systems to our family of clients by improving not only individual employees, but the company as a whole. Recently, 15 employees alternated to spend some valuable time at conferences and benchmark other successful companies throughout the country. DCL delegates went to Chicago, Atlanta, St. Louis and Orlando. It wasn't just "management" who attended, but all maintenance account managers and some office personnel were able to attend at least one conference. They all brought back valuable information and pride-building motivation to help Del Conte's become an even better company for our clients, and for our employees as well. Way to go team! The Best Never Rest!



Members of DCL's award-winning team gather to celebrate our Diamond Certification.

## Does Del Conte's Landscaping Have Staff Landscape Designers?



Trish Zambalatti and George Schultz

Many of our clients don't realize that we have not one but two designers on staff at Del Conte's Landscaping to help you design or redesign your landscape. DCL is thrilled to have on board a talented and enthusiastic landscape designer for our Construction Design/ Build Team. Trish Zambalatti comes to us with a graphic arts degree and a minor in photography. Trish fervently made the decision to use her talents in landscaping since she didn't like the humdrum of working inside all the time. She came outdoors to join the landscape industry five years ago, operating as a landscape designer for a Southern California firm as well as owning her own landscape design/ build company. She brings to DCL more than her design experience; she's been in the field...hands dirty, trenching, planting and grading. She has a full grasp of what it takes to create a successful, beautiful garden environment. Trish says of designing, "The outdoors is my palette. It's my canvas."

Trish really enjoys her work at DCL and is involved in a variety of projects, working with residential clients to expand their living spaces into beautiful

landscaping masterpieces. Trish looks forward to working with homeowners or anyone else needing some new landscaping design and installation.

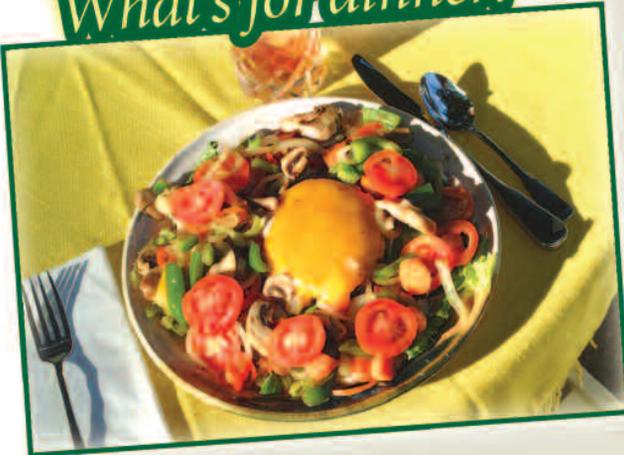
George Schultz has a degree in landscape construction with a concentration in design, and has worked in the landscape industry for seven years. Most of his time has been spent on golf courses, with extensive grading issue experience. George has also worked a great deal on **spectacular clubhouse** renovations and enhancements. George will be working within our Maintenance Division to facilitate all those landscape renovations and outdoor facelifts that are needed (following the current trend of bringing older properties into this century's style). George's primary responsibility will be to work on upgrades or other enhancements for DCL's maintenance clients. He will respond to any requests you make for designs or whenever your maintenance account manager sees a cost-effective opportunity to improve a site under his/her stewardship.

DCL is proud to have on board these two very capable talents as part of our service repertoire. At your request, either of them will be happy to help you with your landscape design needs. Furthermore, since their offices are merely 30 feet apart, they'll be collaborating on many of their designs...bringing you the imagination of two designers at once!



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## What's for dinner?



### Cheeseburgers in the Garden

*Next time you grill cheeseburgers, try them atop this salad instead of on a bun.*

- Chopped lettuce or other salad greens
- Red, green or yellow peppers
- Onions
- Sliced mushrooms
- Baby carrots
- Fresh tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon fresh dill

Place generous portion of mixed greens on a dinner plate. Toss with mayonnaise.

Saute peppers, onions, carrots and mushrooms lightly in frying pan in olive oil and spoon over lettuce. Top with cheeseburger and sprinkle with dill.

## Steam Cleaning Sidewalks Adds WOW! Curb Appeal



Having problems with stains on your property's sidewalks? Want to get rid of those ugly stains? Coming out of winter is a great time to steam clean those sidewalks and prepare your property for that fresh, clean spring look. We can help. Del Conte's Landscaping does more than plant trees and mow lawns. We can assist in many different areas to help you manage your property more effectively.

Contact us today for our Early Spring Special Offer to steam/pressure clean your sidewalks, hardscapes and walls to rid them of those ugly stains. You'll be amazed at the difference! Cleaning cobblestone beds and even adding an application of wet-look sealer directly to the rocks can dress up a tired-looking cobblestone rock area. We're gearing up to do the cleaning during March and April. Since we're focusing on this service during those two months only, we can pass on to our clients the best pricing. Give your DCL contact a call today to find out how you can get your sidewalks, hardscapes or walls scheduled for a good spring cleaning!

Pssst! Now that you've perused our newly formatted newsletter, let us know what you think. Go to our Web site and send us an e-mail, or call us and we'll send you a cool, free gift to say thanks!