Innovation at the EXPO by Russ Klettke

More than 320 companies will fill the EXPO floor at the Annual Conference on Landscape Architecture. All create innovative products and provide client-centric services in support of the industry.

Quite a few companies will be exhibiting products and services for the first time in San Diego, while many more are making a return appearance. We queried a broad mix of exhibitors to learn about the innovative products they’d be showing at the EXPO and they didn’t disappoint us.

For some it’s about proprietary technologies while others have new aesthetic designs to share. A number of vendors have products that continue to perform years after they were developed. Notably, several companies employ craftspeople and designers to develop one-of-a-kind products in collaboration with landscape architects.

Plan now to find the innovations that intrigue you most – but don’t overlook what you might need in a year or two.

**Associations and Foundations**

The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF), booth 1117. The Cornelia Hahn Oberlander International Landscape Architecture Prize, to be awarded biennially, beginning in 2021, to honor a living practitioner, collaborative or team for their creative, courageous, and visionary work in the field of landscape architecture. It includes a US$100,000 award and two years of public engagement activities.

**Construction and Maintenance**

STIHL, booth 817. STIHL iMOW® robotic mower, designed to automatically mow your lawn on a consistent basis in a quiet and efficient manner. Equipped with smart technology and mulching functionality that returns nutrients and moisture back to the soil for greener, thicker and healthier lawns.

**Fences, Gates and Walls**

Carl Stahl Decor Cable, booth 2142. X-TEND® GXS NEO Cut to Fit Cable Mesh Railing System, designed to provide a high-end custom rail look without long lead times or complicated installation. Mesh is easily field-sized; mesh is available in 1.5 mm rope and can be installed into any guardrail system.

Marshall’s Landscape Protection, booth 2055. RhinoGuard® Steel GateKeeper, a hostile vehicle mitigation solution that is crash-tested to protect places with high footfall (e.g., public realm areas outside sports stadia and special events) enabling quick and temporary deployment without anchorage, kerbing or structural aids.

Unilock, booth 1941. U-Cara™ Multi-Face Wall System with Sure Track™ backer blocks in an expanding pallet of design colors and finishes. Usable for design-forward single- and double-sided walls, or engineered for site-specific low or high walls.

**Green Roofs and Living Walls**

ACH Foam Technologies (Atlas Roofing Corporation), booth 2453. Foam-Control® Geofoam is approximately 1/100 the weight of soil, allowing faster installation without heavy equipment. It does not degrade from freeze-thaw cycles, is dimensionally stable and requires no maintenance.

**Irrigation**

DIG Corporation, booth 202. LEIT Controllers are self-contained irrigation controllers that harness ambient light (solar) for supercapacitor power sources (no batteries) to run the system day and night in all weather, enabling irrigation control where power meters can’t reach (e.g., median strips, pocket parks, restored habitats, etc.).

FLOMEC, booth 927. QS200 FLOMEC Flowmeters measure flow in drip zones in turf irrigation. With no moving parts, it utilizes ultrasonic technology to accurately measure even low flows, provide leak detection, and is designed to retrofit Data Industrial paddlewheel sensors.

Hunter/FX Luminaire, booth 2054. Every blade of Playfield Synthetic Sod has a slight variation in color, dimension and texture for a natural appearance. Playfield is the oldest continuously operating US synthetic grass manufacturer.

**Lighting**

Brilliance Chameleon WiFi smartphone control

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**LiveRoof & LiveWall**, booth 2445. LifeRoof® Hybrid Green Roof System unites the soil across the entire roof, allowing for equal distribution of moisture, fertility and beneficial organisms, lending itself to the long-term functioning of the green roof system. LiveWall allows plants a more true (natural) vertical growth.

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**Jain Irrigation, Inc.**, booth 2252. ETWater by JAIN, an AI-powered irrigation system that factors for real-time weather information (current and forecast), evapotranspiration, plant types, soil and slope conditions for maintaining water-efficient landscapes that maximize health, beauty and expenditures – favoring use of free rainwater where possible.

**Brilliance**, booth 3249. Chameleon WiFi Smart Lamp Series, providing full RGBW color and CCT Kelvin control from an Android or iPhone. From anywhere in the world, control multiple lamps, add smart scenes, set on/off schedules and more.
HessAmerica, booth 1127. **MOSAIC architectural illuminating column** in white or RGBW (color LEDs), with five organic panel designs (custom also available). Combines art with illumination functions, often as a decorative waymarker.

Hunter/FX Luminaire, booth 2535. **FX Designer Series Modern Path Lights** in three fixture choices in ultra-contemporary designs. Compatible with Luxor® technology for zoning, dimming and color capabilities, with no visible hardware and minimal glare.

Lumber, Decking and Edging

Humboldt Sawmill Company, booth 2742. **Humboldt redwood timbers,** naturally strong and beautiful, are FSC certified and ideal for shade structures, benches, garden/planter boxes, furniture, etc. in 8 to 20 foot lengths.

Thermory USA, LLC, booth 846. **Ignite** wood has the realistic look of wood preserved by burning (a Japanese method called Shou Sugi Ban), but without combustion involved. The signature dragon scale pattern is embossed, brushed and tinted on thermally modified Scots pine, enabling stability and rot resistance.

Wagners Composites, booth 3252. **Fibre Reinforced Polymer Boardwalk and Bridge System,** in kit format from its new US factory, designed to last 100 years with a full 7-year warranty. Innovative FRP material eliminates maintenance issues found with traditional materials.

Outdoor Furniture

Factory Furniture, booth 3051. **Sonobe modular seating system** made of FSC wooden and galvanized or painted steel elements that can be surface fixed or weighted and placed without fixing. Provides social spaces with simple, adaptable palettes.

Keystone Ridge Designs, Inc., booth 2343. **The Creekview series of benches,** table sets and litter receptacles, with an innovative counter height design that takes a linear approach to body ergonomics.

Omega II Fence Systems, booth 2040. **Gabion Benches** designed and made from durable fence panels (Elite, Evolution double wire or 2” mesh panels) to reduce costs and allow designers to use any infill they choose. Use color, lighting, glass or rock designs and vines to create seating in landscapes, urban and other green spaces.

Vestre, booth 827. **The Bloc Sun bench,** a carbon-neutral product from certified sustainable Scandinavian timber (manufacturing with 100% renewable energy).

Innovative materials and manufacturing processes enable its green status, while its design fosters social meeting places on waterfronts, rooftops and streetscapes.

**Parks and Recreation**

Berlin, booth 2727. **IKO, a large colorful spatial net** based on an Icosahedron, offers ample room for play on a small footprint (available in three different sizes) by way of a large, colorful spatial net.

Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds, booth 3426. **Carved from real trees and boulders,** these playground systems meet compliance and accessibility standards. Landscape architects work with their carvers, builders, educators and industrial designers.

Burke, booth 2517. **Nucleus® Evolution® play system** with age-appropriate risk features that include interesting roofs, barriers and Cobra Slides®, allowing designers to create towers up to 16 feet high.

Earthscape Play, booth 2835. **Rock Outcrop Playground Sculpture,** a custom-designed wood playground made of an inclusive play sculpture that references the geologic history of a region (Potomac River in Washington, DC). Sculpture (12’ tall) on display in booth.

ElephantPlay, booth 2041. **Designs for large family play areas** (Toddler, Spinneround, Bounce & Swing, Climbnet and other series) with innovative, playful, safe and inclusive products.

Flexground, booth 1244. **Polysplash** surfacing for splash pads, pool decks and other marine uses. Exceptionally durable, chlorine resistant and UV stable, it is anti-microbial and slip resistant.

Freenotes Harmony Park, booth 2222. **The Botanical Collection,** a group of high-quality tuned outdoor music instruments designed to complement natural environments of parks, botanical gardens, senior centers, schools, early childhood centers and children's gardens.

Gill Athletics, booth 920. **Hammer Cages/Easy Down Door Nets** alleviate unsafe removal of stuck hammers during practice and competitions. Eliminates need for ladders or other unsafe methods to remove offending hammer implement with the simple use of block-and-tackle to quickly lower and raise the net quickly.

Greenfields Outdoor Fitness, booth 3135. **Signature Accessible Shoulder Press** with adjustable resistance that promotes inclusion in outdoor fitness. It eliminates transfer requirements and enables users to customize their levels of difficulty.

Landrec, booth 308. **Playspaces** customizable playground products that are thematic, interpretative, signature and nature-based. Flexible design practices supported by high quality materials (steel, wood, concrete), fully customizable in material type, play elements and RAL colors that define communities.
Plastic, it increases the lifespan of permeable paver systems, decreases excavation and ADA accessible. Available in 40 colors.

X-Traffic, booth 2716. Solar System Trail audio guide with ten displays combines outdoor recreation with an educational experience, easily installed in parks, trails, promenades, resorts and campuses. Journey the solar system and consider the place of the Sun and Earth in deep space.

Concrete Collaborative, booth 1048. Trails terrazzo pavers match the company's indoor Venice terrazzo tile line, enabling a seamless flow from exterior to interior flooring with a one-of-a-kind exposed aggregate look. System is vehicular grade.

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Decorative Stone Solutions, booth 2427. Carbon Slate decorative gravel are deep black slate chips with a small percentage of earth tone and white pieces. More distinct than other ground covers, stone sizes and flat shapes resist maintenance disturbance (leaf blowers, etc.) and provides greater ground coverage than angular stones.

Invisible Structures, booth 1929. Grass and gravel pavers (Grasspave2, Gravelpave2, Rainstore3, Slopetame2, etc.) already installed over 100 million square feet worldwide. These enable porous paving, stormwater storage, erosion control, portable boardwalks and drainage, effectively filtering pollutants and reducing runoff.

IRONSIGHT, booth 1935. Paver-Grate® suspended paver system (suspended pavers, tree grates, radius trench grates, bollards) enables landscape architects to design over, instead of around, tree areas. Results are optimized planting, tree health (sufficient root space) and pedestrian comfort.

Kafka Granite, booth 1649. Stabilized Pathway Mix is a less-obtrusive path than traditional hardscape and cuts down on mud, dust and erosion while remaining porous and ADA accessible. Available in 40 colors.

L’Altra Pietra, booth 1645. HEXAGON full body sintered stone paving and cladding for outdoor surfaces, a natural stone reproduction made in Italy. Ideal for creating tailored and distinctive landscapes in five colors and 11 formats, in 2cm thickness; also available in a stepping stone walkway design.

Natina, booth 2940. Reactive Color Treatment for rock, concrete and galvanized steel, this long-lasting and earth-friendly color solution will not fade, crack or peel from sun. PaverGuide, Inc., booth 915. Permeable pavement stormwater storage chamber replaces 230 tons of stone per 5,000 square feet of installation. Made of 100% recycled plastic, it increases the lifespan of permeable paver systems, decreases excavation and labor costs, and with just a 3-1/2 inch void, it stores as much runoff as 10 inches of open graded stone.

Romex USA, booth 938. Romex Permeable Hardscapes, designed and created with natural and manufactured stone. Offering environmental benefits of permeability, efficient installation processes, reduced maintenance, aesthetic excellence and long-term warranties.

STONE-MART, BOOTH 2943. Superior flooring and hardscape solutions (STONE-MART, Ozer Tile & Stone, Natural Elegance, Bellissimo) in travertine, marble and porcelain collections for interior and exterior projects.

Renters, Sculpture and Garden Accessories

Blue Thumb, booth 2649. Turnkey, professional-grade water fountain systems remove guesswork on equipment sizing and packages. Kit ensures hassle-free installation.

Green Theory Design modular planters

bo-mar Industries, booth 1642. Full custom metal fabricators that create site amenities, signage, gates and railings, displays, facades, panels, grates, lighting, sculptures and large-scale public art. Engineers and craftsmen work with designers from concept to installation.

Concrete Creations, booth 837. Simplicity Edge Fire Bowl, the most popular from this manufacturer of fire bowls that create real heat for commercial and residential projects. The company's product line evolves with new materials, new additives and new sealers to maximize strength and durability, and specialists consult with designers on products that best fit the site.

Durable GreenBed, booth 2843. Raised Bed Garden kits that are rot-free, non-toxic and attractive, made of an innovative woodchip-cement composite that lasts 25 years. Available in 20 shapes and sizes.

Goodwin International, booth 2451. Vaso Camellia contemporary Italian terra cotta planters, an extensive new line completely handmade in Italy.

Hart Concrete Design, booth 2029. Custom-designed and hand-made concrete fire pits, sinks, flowerpots and architectural elements. Creative, thoughtful, ambitious and challenging approaches to blending the indoors with the outdoors.

Iron Age Designs, booth 1641. A cast iron panel, modular planter box system with 3-dimensional surfaces, available in a variety of configurations that include customizable seating options. Easily transported and installed on flat and sloped surfaces, also available in aluminum.

Planters Unlimited, booth 2349. Verso Fiberstone Planter, a lighter-weight fiberstone (fiberglass composite) planter that gives the appearance of heavier stone, enabling easier installation and moving. It can be customized and it withstands wear in commercial spaces and from inclement weather.

Prism Hardscapes, booth 1955. Custom-designed GFRC (glass fiber reinforced concrete) fire bowls and tables that are 50% lighter than standard concrete blends while retaining equivalent strength.
Plants, Soils and Planting Materials

Cool Planet, booth 2813. Cool Terra® Organic soil amendment features proprietary Engineered Biocarbon™ technology that is durable, porous and organically certified to improve soil quality, increase water and nutrient retention, add soil structure and promote microbial growth.

InstantHedge, booth 2044. InstantHedge™ pre-finished hedges enable a finished hedge in one day (vs. 4-5 years) via patented technology used on the company’s Oregon farm. Shipped pre-spaced in biodegradable boxes for exceptionally simple installation.

J. Frank Schmidt & Co., booth 737. Redpointe® Maple cultivar, presenting unusually dark green, chlorosis-resistant leaves, even in high PH soils, with superior heat and drought tolerance and resistance to insects and disease. Adaptable, symmetrical, easy care shade tree that thrives across a wide range of climates and growing conditions.

Northwest Shade Trees, booth 836. Urban Pinnacle® Oak, a uniquely narrow and upright selection of the urban-adaptable, pest-resistant, heat and drought tolerant Bur Oak. Petite acorns and deep green, glossy, mildew and anthracnose-resistant foliage make it suitable for landscape and street use.

RWP, booth 2511. Redwood Gorilla Hair is shredded redwood bark providing moisture retention, weed control and striking aesthetics. Performs well on slopes and in windy environments.

South Coast Wholesale, booth 1550. Medjool Date Palm (Phoenix dactylifera ‘Medjool’), shipped nationwide with support in photo submittals, sizing questions, planting recommendations and post-installation maintenance advice.

Street Furnishings and Site Amenities

Arrow Sign Company, booth 3342. Custom sign and architectural metal fabrication of wayfinding, gateway and monument signs and custom fabricated structures. Working closely with designers and landscape architects, services include development, engineering, permitting, fabricating and installation.

1-800-Bollards, booth 2752. Lighted Bollard Tops add lighted beauty and safety to low-light and dark settings. Suitable for wet conditions, available in stainless steel or carbon steel, these high-quality LED luminaries fit on top of most fixed or baseplate bollards; components are ETL tested.

GraniteScape U.S.A., booth 2249. Creative street furniture designs from natural stone granite, made with custom craftsmanship according to designer specifications, available in several colors and finishes.

Madrax/Thomas Steele, booth 1335. Wood Grain Embossed Recycled Plastic board material used in a number of Thomas Steele Site Furnishings. An excellent alternative to wood that is graffiti and UV resistant, does not crack, splinter or grey out, is resistant to mildew, rot, insects, salt and chemicals, and does not leech or bleed toxins or carcinogens into soil or marine environments.

Maglin Site Furniture, booth 2435. The Iconic Collection of street furniture is newly introduced to balance classic style and modern design, suitable for traditional parks and modern city streets.

Malik Outdoor, booth 2507. Benkert Banke Comfomy Bench Series uses an innovative construction method involving a removable colored PET casing around aluminum tubing. The new type of surface material allows for rapid repairs as well as complete color changes.

Myrtha Pools & Wellness, booth 2651. Freestanding modular stainless steel pool system with hot calendered rigid PVC waterproofing. Custom designs for competitive swimming, wellness, recreation or leisure pools.

Urban Fountains and Furniture, booth 2653. Apollo range of drinking fountains and bottle fillers, keeping people and pets hydrated while reducing the need for single-use plastic bottles. “Committed to providing products that help build better cities.”

Structures

ICON Shelter Systems Inc., booth 2355. ICON Rio Swing Shelter, with a Brazilian Walnut tower, integrated LED lighting with solar panels, and swing with limited motion hinges that eliminates pinch points and reduces side-to-side seat movement.

Myrtha Pools & Wellness, booth 2651. Stack seating range includes a compact sofa, comfortable armchair, and practical tables in wooden lamellas or steel gartes. Can be unanchored outdoor relaxation spots in hotel, school, business and terrace settings, indoors and out.

Renson Inc., booth 2705. Camargue modular patio cover with an innovative horizontal roof made of extruded aluminum blades that can be rotated to regulate sun protection and ventilation (blades controlled by a Somfy remote control). Optional side elements include motorized screens, glass sliding doors and loggia sliding panels.

Technology

CADdetails.com, booth 2823. High-Quality Building Product Information, 2D CAD and 3D MODELS that enable designers to specify new and innovative building products to meet project inspiration. Download CAD, BIM, SPECS, 3D and more.

Vectorworks, booth 2527. Landmark BIM software solution sketches, models and documents any size project. Standalone BIM software integrates 2D and 3D landscape-specific design, modeling and presentation workflows with intelligent objects, powerful databases and flexible documentation features.

Water Management and Amenities

Architerra Designs, booth 2153. RECURO bioretention planter is self-contained and modular, designed to filter and slow on-site storm water discharge. Applicable to single-family residential, commercial and civic use, ideal in smaller and uniquely shaped locations where standard methods are impractical.

PlanIT Impact, booth 1551. A stormwater management web app that helps designers quickly size BMPs by integrating reliable climate data and calculating runoff. Can be used even in the earliest design conversations.