



Interiorscape Hall of Fame



Allen Secret

1996 Allied Trade Professional

In 1979, little did Allen Secret know that his new position as a Consumer Products Sales Manager would lead to the establishment of a 17-year pursuit of the only true automatic self-watering container.

It seems that one of the products he was hired to launch was a "self-watering" planter. The company that manufactured the container had numerous problems making it work properly and quickly went out of business. However, Allen was intrigued with the concept, since he felt that if most people are like him, then they probably have a difficult time in watering plants properly. "I set out to provide a reliable watering system that would make it easier to keep plants alive and healthy and also be easy to use," he stated. Therefore, he decided to pursue the idea on his own.

Working on the project out of his home for well over a year, he tested, developed a marketing and business plan, designed and initiated patent work and sought financing for his new company "Planter Technology." Allen quickly discovered that the commercial use of the product was more accepting than the consumer market, as businesses were quick to see the benefits of a product that saved time, plants and, therefore, dollars.

As the interior landscape industry was growing very quickly in the early '80's, Planter Technology grew rapidly with them as the interiorscapers learned what Natural Spring containers could do for them. In fact, Natural Spring has won many national landscaping awards for product excellence and endorsement from many respected industry leaders, such as the late Julius Roehrs. Most recently, NASA has shown interest by testing his self-watering containers for use in future space flights. There are now over 30,000 projects that are installed with Planter Technology's Controlled Watering System in the United States and abroad.

Allen has been sought after by many associations as a speaker at industry functions on the development and benefits of sub-irrigation. He has been a key industry supporter and, usually at his own expense, has encouraged his employees to become involved in industry activities and to support both the national and state associations with time, labor and money.

Planter Technology also shared its offices in Mt. View for some of the first meetings of the Northern California Professional Plantscape Association. Additionally, they provided their database of customers for the early California associations. As a Charter Exhibitor, Planter Technology is one of only six vendors who have exhibited at all the CalScape Expositions. "We have found it a privilege to not only regularly sponsor meetings of all

the regional associations before their merger in 1992, but also to support their efforts with our advertising and membership dollars," he reported.

It was in recognition of Allen and Planter Technology's faithful and generous support that the NCPPA Association planted a redwood tree in Allen's honor, along with those for the late Julius Roehrs and George Vaughn.

Since his 1994 bypass surgery, Allen has sold Planter Technology to new owners. He remains an investor in the new ownership and has reduced his schedule to spend more time on the important things in life: his health, family, golf and volunteer projects through alcohol and drug prevention and rehabilitation programs.

Having surrounded himself with motivated team-players, Allen characteristically gives much of the credit for this award to the support, contribution and efforts of the Planter Technology staff over the years.

