



## **The Green Community of Laguna Woods Village**

Laguna Woods Village is the largest retirement community in California, featuring 12,736 homes privately owned by approximately 18,000 residents on 3.8 square miles of rolling hillsides in south Orange County. The Village and its community management company Professional Community Management (PCM) have long been innovators in waste reduction and recycling efforts. It's no coincidence that the community logo is a beautiful green leaf!

An example of green living in the Village was recently featured on the Discovery Home Channel show "Greenovate". The program featured resident Chris Prelitz, who was "greening" his residence with improvements including the installation of solar electrical panels approved by the association board. James Wade, producer for the show said, "We wanted to make this a positive experience showing the progressive nature of your homeowners association in allowing him to make these changes."

The boards and the managing agent, PCM, work together to ensure the services provided in the community are environmentally conscious. The community of Laguna Woods Village encourages its residents to recycle, and there are numerous methods available to recycle non-hazardous materials. Most of the recycling in the Village, however, is a product of the environmentally responsible programs used extensively throughout the community in areas such as landscaping, maintenance, and transportation.

Beginning in 1990, the Laguna Woods Village PCM landscape division has operated an in-house composting operation to divert green waste from local landfills and to produce a valuable horticultural product for use within the Village. The composting operation produces approximately 8,000 cubic yards of mulch each year, which is used by the landscaping department in ornamental beds, as potting soil in the in-house nursery, and to enrich the soil in the shared community gardens. The composting operation creates approximately \$250,000 a year in offset costs and revenue.

PCM staff takes care to save any construction debris that can be recycled or reused. For example, in 2007, 634 tons of concrete were recycled. Retired equipment, including everything from cars to computers to sports supplies, is sold or donated whenever possible. All seven clubhouses in Laguna Woods Village have programs in place to reduce the use of water and the energy utilized for lighting, heating and air-conditioning.

Laguna Woods Village has a bus system that serves the residents of the

community and their guests. The transportation fleet consists of 12 wheelchair accessible buses, and all are fueled by biodiesel. Use of the bus system eliminates countless vehicle trips, and provides seniors who do not drive a way to get around. In 2007, over 435,000 passenger trips were taken on the community bus system. In addition, thousands of Village residents use their golf carts to get around, thanks to a golf cart path system that allows them to travel anywhere in the community and to surrounding shopping centers.

The State of California Integrated Waste Management Board has honored the Village and PCM as a California Green Business that makes extraordinary efforts to reduce waste, granting special recognition through its Waste Reduction Awards Program (WRAP). In fact, PCM and the Village have earned twelve WRAP awards since 1995!

Laguna Woods Village and PCM staff have also been recognized by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California numerous times for their achievements in water conservation.

The boards and the PCM staff at Laguna Woods Village strive to research and promote environmentally conscious procedures. Their goal is to sustain the natural beauty of Laguna Woods Village through ethical and sustainable procedures, while offering the finest facilities, world class beauty, and of course, "Resort Living- California Style"!

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Some eco-friendly landscape tips your association can use, courtesy of Professional Community Management and Laguna Woods Village:

1. Use proper pruning techniques, which minimize the amount of new growth, reducing the amount of green waste that needs to be recycled.
2. Add mulch around the roots of plants to increase the water permeability and the water retention of the soil. Mulch also prevents weed seeds from germinating thereby reducing the amount of pesticides used for weed control.
3. Check your sprinkler heads, and reposition where needed to prevent overspray and run-off.
4. Cut grass with a mulching mower to reuse grass clippings as mulch and divert green waste from landfills. Recycling the clippings back on the turf also recycles valuable nutrients and reduces the amount of fertilizer required to sustain the lawns.

