

# COMPANY BACKGROUNDER

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## **RAIN BIRD CORPORATION** *The Intelligent Use of Water™*

It is often but one person's vision, fueled by passion and need, that leads to innovation -- and nothing thereafter is ever the same. So it was with Thomas Edison's light bulb, Henry Ford's car transmission, Alexander Bell's telephone, Eli Whitney's cotton gin and Orton Englehart's impact sprinkler. Englehart, a Southern California citrus grower, revolutionized the food production industry and ushered in a new era in worldwide irrigation when he invented the impact sprinkler in 1933.

Clem and Mary LaFetra, neighbors of the inventor, recognized the potential impact of Orton's device and began to market it. Subsequently, the LaFetra family set up a manufacturing facility in the family barn, which evolved into today's Rain Bird Corporation. The company's name comes from an ancient Native American legend about a great bird that brought life-giving rain following a terrible drought.

Today, nearly 70 years since its dramatic entrance into the market, Rain Bird is still a private company based in Glendora, California. Headed by son Anthony LaFetra, the company has become the largest manufacturer of irrigation systems in the world. Rain Bird manufactures and sells over 4,000 irrigation products, meeting the needs of growers, golf course superintendents, homeowners, contractors and commercial property managers -- in over 130 countries.

The first Rain Bird patent for the impact sprinkler, filed in 1933, was designated a historic landmark in 1990. Over the years, Rain Bird has been awarded more than 130 patents. Examples of the company's innovative irrigation technology introduced over the last several years include Rain Curtain™ Technology that offers superior water distribution; battery operated controllers that bring automatic irrigation to areas lacking independent access to power; wireless remote control units and central control systems that manage irrigation sites from a PC.

While the company initially focused on irrigation of citrus crops, one of its first commercial customers in the early '30s was the Los Angeles Country Club. Today, Rain Bird sprinklers, valves and controllers are used to control water flowing to landscaping at sprawling amusement parks, sports arenas, golf courses, botanical gardens, private homes and vineyards, both domestically and internationally.

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For example: worldwide soccer fans have marveled at the irrigated turf at such noted sites as Rome's Olympic Stadium and the Glasgow Range Soccer Club in Scotland; baseball enthusiasts will have noticed similar irrigated turf at Franklin Covey field; golfers can enjoy year-round tournament conditions at Pebble Beach Golf Links®, CA; then there are the wonderful gardens at Sea World and China's famed Tiananmen Square, which recently completed the transformation of a huge concrete area into a beautiful park of lush grass and shrubs, maintained by a new Rain Bird system; or the Westley Ranch Vineyards in Patterson, CA, with its PC Dripline installed to irrigate its 530 acres of wine grapes.

Rain Bird is committed to The Intelligent Use of Water and is dedicated to educating the public about water conservation and its critical role in the environment. As such, since 1997, Rain Bird has taken that message to be heard and seen worldwide with its annual participation in the Tournament of Roses Parade – exhibiting its beautiful inventive floats, and capturing 8 straight awards including the coveted Sweepstakes Trophy in 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005 for the most beautiful entry and outstanding floral presentation and design.

Rain Bird's commitment to focus on the most efficient use of water can be found in Rain Bird's innovative products; it shows in its services, such as Rain Bird's Sprinkler Design Service for homeowners; in seminars and training programs for landscape and irrigation professionals; and in greener landscapes accompanied by lower water bills. Additionally, in pursuit of its educational commitment, Rain Bird has partnered with California State Polytechnic University, Pomona to present the Rain Forest Teaching Curriculum, which can be accessed through Rain Bird's web site at [www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com). The curriculum is an educational teaching tool, organized by grade level to help children learn about science and the environment through fun, hands-on activities. In addition to the teaching module, Rain Bird is also the primary sponsor of the three Rain Bird Learning Centers that make up the Cal Poly Pomona BioTrek Project. These learning centers provide real-life environmental experiences for students, educators, community, government and industry leaders.

In the spring of 2004, Rain Bird released the industry's first *Irrigation for a Growing World* white paper examining the core issues behind the world's growing water crisis and how water-efficient irrigation is an important part of the solution. In addition, Rain Bird was honored as the 2003 R. Marlin Perkins Conservation Organization of The Year in recognition of the company's commitment to environmental conservation.

Rain Bird has offices in more than 20 countries. The company maintains state-of-the-art manufacturing and assembly facilities in the United States, (California and Arizona) and in France, Sweden and Mexico. For more information, visit Rain Bird's web site at <http://www.rainbird.com>.

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