



For Immediate Release

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**Midwest Ecological Landscape Alliance (MELA) to Dissolve:
ILCA to Become the New Professional Home for MELA Members**

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MELA History

In 2002, the founding members of the Midwest Ecological Landscape Alliance (then Association) started a movement dedicated to creating, restoring and preserving sustainable landscapes. MELA pursued this through education, collaboration and networking. MELA's vision is to transform the green industry so that sustainable design, materials and methods are the professional standard.

Over time, MELA began to face what many small associations encounter in terms of attracting new people to key leadership positions that are committed to seeing the association continue to grow. In light of these challenges, MELA will dissolve their alliance as of January 1, 2017.

The Aftermath of Dissolution

It was the goal of MELA's leadership to work with another professional organization to carve out a home, complete with a suite of benefits that would draw their members to the new organization. MELA viewed the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA) as the strongest association to best advance the interests of sustainable and ecologically-focused landscape professionals. Current MELA Treasurer, Shawn Kingzette, said "We met with former and current MELA leadership and we came to consensus that the best way to carry on the goals, vision, and objectives of MELA was to join ILCA and take advantage of the great resources that they can provide."

Stronger Together

MELA members are committed to sustainability and have a vision for a prosperous future of environmentally responsible landscaping and horticulture. ILCA will continue that commitment in the following ways:

- ILCA to change the name of the Sustainable Landscape Committee to the Sustainable and Ecological Landscape Committee (SELC). ILCA will welcome a transition team to work with the ILCA's current Sustainable Landscape Committee to integrate MELA members and causes to the SELC.
- ILCA to create a Sustainable and Ecological Landscape Committee page on their website that will handle all notifications and upcoming events.
- ILCA will continue the extremely popular MELA Conference.

- ILCA will add MELA/sustainable landscape professionals to the Regulatory and Legislative Committee. The role of the R&L Committee is to track and take issues on legislation that impact the landscape industry.

To help build a bridge from MELA to ILCA, ILCA is offering an Organizational membership package that includes access to seven ILCA events at no cost. The goal is to integrate MELA members into the ILCA as quickly as possible. In addition, individual members of MELA will receive a discounted member rate. This only applies to MELA members who are not currently members of ILCA. MELA members who fit these criteria can expect an email with ILCA membership sign-up information.

The ILCA Board is very excited about aligning the two organizations' missions. The ILCA Board commends MELA for over 12 years of education, collaboration, and networking.

About ILCA

Since 1959, ILCA has provided its members with the resources needed to enhance their performance and ensure continued growth and success. The Association's mission is to enhance the professionalism and capabilities of members by providing leadership, education, representation, and services while promoting environmental awareness and the value of the landscape industry. ILCA employs a wide variety of means to fulfill its mission including; seminars, workshops, publications, trade shows, awards, networking, scholarship grants and social events. ILCA is a 501 (c) (6) nonprofit trade association with more than 800 member companies.

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