

Mardee, Michigan, United States

The Taylor Conservatory Foundation has a mission to create and maintain beautiful gardens for public enjoyment. The Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, located on Northline Road, just east of Pardee in Michigan are testimony to that goal, and the Foundation is fundraising and planning for more gardens in the future.

Keeping the gardens healthy and thriving requires an extensive irrigation system. When the first season of water bills arrived in 2008, it was apparent to the foundation board that the cost of watering would be a significant expense, and would only increase as more gardens were installed. They asked their irrigation specialist, Apex Systems, for help in managing their water



costs.

Jeff Jones, President and CEO of Apex Systems, offered to pilot a new smart controller module called Solar Sync, by Hunter Industries, which adjusts programming for solar exposure, temperature, and rainfall. The Solar Sync automatically calculates the proper watering times based on air temperature, solar intensity, rain events, and regional weather characteristics by season.

Apex installed the Solar Sync module on the Conservatory's existing irrigation controller this spring. "This tool takes the guesswork and the labor of manually adjusting our watering times," states Patty Donahue, Executive Director of the foundation. "Results so far have been impressive, showing almost a 50% decrease in water consumption for the month of June. The beauty of the system is that if weather is cold and damp, the system automatically reduces the water output needed. Likewise if it's super hot out, it adjusts to add more water to the correct zones. This helps us conserve a precious resource, and saves us money, too," says Donahue. The always efficient MP Rotators were installed as well, along with over 800 feet of dripline, so the Conservatory's thousands of plants get water just where they need it without any waste.

Effective water management is a goal of both Apex Systems and Hunter Industries. The number one use of water for the typical household and non-manufacturing business in summer is lawn and plant watering. Partnered with Hunter, Apex has the technology to greatly reduce that cost to a fraction of the price of just a few years ago. Solar Sync installation for existing irrigation systems starts at \$279.00 depending on the type of sprinkler controller. Most home and small business owners will realize that much in water cost savings the first year.

