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Phipps Executive Director Richard V. Piacentini Receives Urban Green Council Award

Sustainability leader reduces water footprint by 45 percent through repairs, patchwork and resealing.

Pittsburgh, Pa. —Richard V. Piacentini, the mastermind behind Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens' [Center for Sustainable Landscapes](#) (CSL), one of the greenest buildings on Earth, has won the [Urban Green Council](#) award titled *Take Me to the River*. This national award honors a particular building with the highest percentage of savings in indoor and outdoor potable water usage based on before and after data.

Since his tenure began in 1994, Piacentini has focused on the interconnection between human and environmental wellness. Utilizing natural resources is not new to Phipps. The CSL earned Net Zero Energy Building Certification under the Living Building Challenge™ (a program of [the International Living Future Institute™](#)) in March 2015. Phipps was also named as the first LEED certified visitor center in a public garden and as the first greenhouse to earn LEED certification. Paving the way as a global model of sustainability, Piacentini's next focus was finding a solution to reduce Phipps' water footprint. This was a campus-wide project that was executed by installing automated control boards, timers and level sensors to decrease water waste.

In addition to these installations, Phipps grouped specific plants together that have similar watering needs inside the Conservatory. In the Outdoor Garden, Pa. native and climate-appropriate plants were planted to eliminate the need to use an underground irrigation system. After these additions and modifications, water consumption was reduced across the entire Phipps campus by 45 percent. It was this accomplishment that caused Piacentini to be appropriately named the winner of the Urban Green Council's award.

The Urban Green Council's [EBies](#) award ceremony was held on June 22, 2015 at the Hard Rock Café's LIVE Theater in Time Square, New York. Seven other building managers from around the nation were awarded for their efforts in other green initiatives.

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About Phipps: Founded in 1893, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, Pa. is a green leader among public gardens with a mission to inspire and educate all with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and promote human and environmental well-being through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse. Learn more: phipps.conservatory.org.

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