



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

I would like to think that I am a tech savvy individual. I try to keep current with all the new phone, tablet, and computer apps and devices. I like to read about all the new automotive advancements and medical science breakthroughs. I generally just like science and technology. So, when I heard someone talking about new paver and concrete technology, I was intrigued. It's just a brick, right? Wrong! So, I want to talk about just two of the new processes being utilized. I apologize for the food references to follow. We work next to Karl's Cabin, its noon, and the smells are unbearably good!



The first is called "wet cast". To simplify this process, think of that jello mold your grandma used to make in fun different shapes with fruit and marshmallow inside. Sometimes she got crazy and would even layer two different flavors together. The concrete manufacturers use a similar process as they take a liquid base concrete, add an aggregate to it, mix in the colors and pour into a mold. The molds that they use can be cast from real rock formations, or symmetrical shapes with varying textures

and designs. Colors can be added in at different times and ways to produce two, three or more color shades and blends that are completely random or perfectly consistent. Some producers will add in extra binding material such as fiberglass to increase the strength of their products. The end result is a product that will be consistently stronger, have better color retention and a unique design that will be easy to install. Most wet cast products are designed to look like natural rock. As many of you know, Mother Nature is not consistent, and trying to find that right size piece or color sometimes proves to be quite challenging. With the wet cast products, you know what you're going to get every time.

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Another process that has become very popular is something called "face mixes". To simplify this process, think of it like a cake. Cake itself is good, but cake with frosting is better! The face mixes are just like the frosting. You take an already high quality product and fuse to the top different materials and textures. Some of the materials used on top are like granite and quartz minerals that will not fade or wear out. The manufacturer can also add a coating to the top portion making it stain resistant, or on certain products even virtually stain proof. The end result is a product that will last much longer than a regular dry cast product, and will not fade or discolor, all for a reasonable price. The array of colors, textures, shapes and designs of these products can fit any style and budget. With the benefits of everlasting beauty, low to no maintenance and a unique look to call their own, these products can be an easy up sell.

Now, please don't misunderstand that you shouldn't still consider Holland, Vintage, Brussels or other dry cast style products if this is what fits your needs. These are still great products, and they are still making noticeable improvements in the manufacturing process as well as coming out with more unique colors and textures. What I am stressing is that there are more choices now than ever before, and some of these choices will offer vast improvements that have come from the blend of creativity and technology.



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The technology involved into making these two styles of product is both extensive and impressive. They have huge digitally controlled mixers with sensors constantly adjusting and correcting for color and moisture to deliver a consistent product. Then you add in a huge array of colors, coatings and additives all controlled by computers for an infinite amount of variations. And this whole process is automated, so sit back and watch the show if you ever get the chance. The standards will only continue to get higher, and the demand for new innovative designs, colors and textures will only grow. And the technology will only get better. The days of a brick being just a brick are long gone. Welcome the days of personalized style and value blended just for you!