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Local inventor premieres new product

By PAM GIBBENS
Observer Reporter

After being laid off from Enron, Eric Eden had time to sit back, relax and watch the grass grow.

Instead, Eden took the opportunity to work full-time on his invention that helps grass grow.

Eden's invention is a sprinkler station called "Watering Made Easy."

The device is currently sold at Lowe's in Kingwood and Cain's Ace Hardware in Atascocita.

In addition, Watering Made Easy should be available by June in select Wal-Mart stores surrounding Houston.

Eden recently teamed with Handy Hardware, a wholesale company, to gain access to 1,200 Ace Hardware stores in nine states.

Eden explained that the idea germinated because of his own frustration with older models of sprinklers.

"I was tired of struggling with them," said Eden, a Kingwood resident. "I'm a cheap sprinkler guy. I'd always have a pile of dead sprinklers. I'd buy two or three a year."

In his "backyard lab," Eden began experimenting on various methods of watering a lawn.

The former draftsman with a background in computer graphics, designed the basic model in 1998 and constructed the first sprinkler with parts purchased from Lowe's.

After his job with Enron was terminated in 2001, Eden began working on the system.

"The reaction I got from people was awesome," Eden said. "People told me to keep going."

With the grassroots effort of his friends and family, Eden began building the sprinkler stations in his garage.

"We'd have sprinkler parties," Eden said. "We'd built 75 to 100 sprinklers over the course of two months."

Eden's wife Sharon works from a home office to help mar-



Eric Eden and his new sprinkler station called "Watering Made Easy." Photo by Pam Gibbens

ket the innovative new sprinkler.

The couple's daughters, six-year-old Bailee and two-year-old Cassie, are interested in sales, according to their dad.

Many of the sprinklers sold by word of mouth. Others were sold on eBay.

On April 8, 2002, the Watering Made Easy company was officially formed. Eden's sprinkler business began to bloom.

Eden introduced his product to various markets. After a successful trial market, interest in

his invention was expressed by several corporate chains.

Since then, the business has relocated from the garage to a manufacturing company in Stafford called Fabriplast. Assembly, packaging and shipping are handled by a Houston company.

The design features a sprinkler head, which pops up out of the ground when activated, a "quick connect" hose connection and a protective plastic shell.

According to instructions, the apparatus is easily installed by burying it the ground in a hole large enough to fit both the head and the connector.

After the sprinkler is installed, grass soon begins to grow. Because the device is flush with the ground, mowers glide over the top unimpeded.

Consumers can choose between three different models; the original sprinkler station that sprays a 35 foot radius, a sprinkler station "junior" that mists a 15 foot radius and the sprinkler station squared which adjusts to mist a smaller area.

Eden's enthusiasm is second only to his ambition to succeed.

"I'll revolutionize lawn watering," Eden said confidently. "We see the future and potential. I am having the time of my life!"

He added that working for Enron for eight years taught him many lessons.

"I learned so much," he said. "The major lesson I learned was to keep people happy you have to keep them motivated. That's what Ken Lay did. I felt empowered because of him."

For more information about the sprinkler system, contact Eden at 832-527-4005 or visit his Web site at watering-madeeasy.com

