


What's In My Truck: Utopian Landscapes



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Terra Phelps, the “handler” (because she “handles it all”) at [Utopian Landscapes LLC](#), says that her 2014 Ford F-150 short bed is a little more “geared toward running around” than the rest of the trucks in the company’s fleet. As someone who truly has a hand in almost every aspect of the business, there is no typical day for Phelps at Utopian, a full-service landscape, hardscape and outdoor/holiday lighting company in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Co-owner and wife of Nikos Phelps, Terra was previously working for the federal government at a time when her husband was actively seeking someone to bring into the business that he could trust to help run things. She decided to give it a go and has since found herself doing everything from selecting plant material to working with clients to bringing her eye for design to holiday lighting jobs. With so many different roles in a single day – and a lot of time spent on the road – Phelps says that what’s in her truck can make or break her efficiency.

 **My day can be really varied with many different stops.** My truck is not as branded as the others, which is intentional, as my jobs for the day vary and I do a lot of crossover work. However, we’ve been considering branding my truck as the nighttime décor/landscape lighting truck since that’s less represented on the road. We’re still identifying whether that makes sense.

I never go anywhere without my [Kaenon](#) sunglasses. With their copper lenses, I can look at a plant and detect imperfections that would go unnoticed with the naked eye. I can look at a client’s grass and notice stress or even small changes that might have been missed sooner.

I keep my [Hydro Flask](#) with me to stay hydrated. The technology is amazing – it can keep drinks cold for up to 24 hours, and I’m often amazed that at the end of the day there’s still ice in there. Staying hydrated is essential in the green industry as we spend a lot of time out in the sun.

You can find our rescue dog, Bailey, in my truck most of the time. He's over 12 years old now, and I want to spend as much time as possible with him, so he comes along to pick up plants or run to a job site.



Last year our only advertising was our trucks. With our crews constantly on the roads – driving around town, on major highways or even just sitting in traffic – we knew it was silly not to have the vehicles branded. It would be a huge opportunity missed.



The Essentials


Utopian Landscapes' Terra Phelps says these key items stored in trucks keep the company's crews running smoothly from job to job.



My measuring wheel – Efficiency is essential so if I'm running out to a job in a certain area, I'll often combine an estimate into my trip if need be.

Sunscreen – In our industry, this is always an essential. We use Coppertone Sport; it's much more practical for reapplying.

Bug spray – You never know when those pesky gnats will appear or you'll end up in a mosquito- infested area. We use OFF! brand insect repellents. Most of the time our people simply spray it on their work caps and that seems to be about all they need.

My cellphone – Nikos and I use Apple iPhone 6S phones for communicating with the crews, GPS/ navigation, a client management app ([Insightly](#)) and to check the weather.

Ear plugs – You don't realize how harmful noise from equipment can be. Ear plugs not only prevent long-term hearing damage, but I have found they can prevent me from getting a headache during the day.

A first aid kit – All of our trucks contain these; luckily, we haven't needed them for anything serious.

Tablet – Our tablets are all Android; that is how we track our teams

Read more: [Utopian Landscapes Switched to a 4-Day Workweek](#)