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Garden Greenery

By Maxine Cheshire

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The Secret Service employs a full-time gardener to tend the grounds of President Nixon's San Clemente home at an annual cost of \$12,000.

A spokesman confirmed this week that the Secret Service has had a contract since 1970 with White's Landscaping Service in Los Angeles to supply "one man and equipment" to make sure that grass and shrubbery don't grow tall enough to interfere with "security" devices.

"If something grows up in front of one of our sensor devices, we're in trouble," said John W. Warner, assistant to the director of the Secret Service.

The job is more than enough to keep one workman busy with the lawn mower and pruning shears, according to Warner. "We probably could use *more* than one," he said.

The gardener's salary did not show up among other figures released last month by the General Services Administration on the Western White House because the money comes out of the Secret Service budget.

Not counting the gardener's annual \$12,000, the U.S. taxpayers investment in the landscaping at San Clemente over the past four years has come to \$137,617.

According to Warner, the Secret Service does not need a gardener at the Florida White House in Key Biscayne because "the GSA has someone there to do it." About \$15,000 was spent on landscaping there.

Among the items purchased for use at the Presidential complex at Key Biscayne were a "Little Wonder Trimmer" (\$71.96), an electric "weed eater" (\$71.96) and a rotary lawn mower (\$141).