

NURTURE NATURE NEWS

Indiana Lions Club; District C

Authors note: This month is about mulch. March is the time to think mulch before the plants wake up.

March is also the month to trim Roses. If your rose bush is a bit out of control, trim back to the bud of choice height or length of branch. Don't trim mid-branch.

Could your yard use a tree for shade or cooling? A tree can drop temps 5-10 degrees under the canopy. April for planting trees.

Review Recycle Numbers.



Plastic Household containers are marked with a number that indicates the type of plastic and whether it can be recycled or not.

#1 PET (water, soda bottles food jars, microwaveable trays.) **Acceptable.**

#2 HDPE (plastic bags, milk jugs, detergent bottles, water, soda bottles) **Acceptable.**

#3 PVC (blister packs, clamshell containers, bags, pipes, some building materials) **Not recyclable. Not biodegradable!**

#4 LDPE (bags, shrink wrap, coating for milk cartons, beverage cups, container lids, squeeze bottles) Sometimes **NOT acceptable.** Similar to plastic bags, check grocery stores for recyclable bins.

#5 PP (bottle caps, medicine bottles, yogurt cups) **NOT always acceptable.** Polypropylene has a high melting point and strong material but is often not acceptable.

#6 PS (takeout containers, foam packaging, packing peanuts, CD cases) Most curbside recycling will **not accept.** Look for specific programs that will accept.

#7 OTHER (bio-based plastics made from corn, potato or sugar derivatives, 3- and 5- gallon reusable water bottles) **Acceptable.**

Why Mulch?

If you are trying not to use a chemical herbicide then weed control with mulch is the way to go. However not all mulches are made the same.

What to avoid: Cypress mulch, least expensive, but this mulch has been too popular and results in over-harvesting of needed cypress trees that protect our wetlands.

Rubber mulch is made from old tires and contains contaminants that leech into the soil and kill plants.

Cocoa bean shells also contain a chemical that can be toxic to your dog.

Last year's leaves can work as long as not from diseased trees.

Sawdust works but if made from particle board or plywood it will also leech chemicals.

Pure decomposed compost works as long as it is not used on seedlings as it can be too rich.

What to use: Use mulch that is certified from the Mulch and Soil Council as it's pure of chemicals. Often made of pine, and certified byproducts of lumber milling and processing.

Colored mulch is ok as red is from iron oxide, and black is from ordinary carbon.

Read the label and make certain your mulch is made from natural forest products and is certified by the Mulch and Soil Council.

Don't pile mulch against the stems and trunks of trees and plants. This just makes it easier for insects and diseases to attack the plant.

Don't pile mulch up against the building. This will encourage bugs and especially termites.

Stone and rock mulch is often the most animal friendly. It may cost more in the beginning, but it does not decompose and it helps to retain moisture. But, it also retains heat so be careful of where and around what plants you use it.

Mulch is a good way to control weeds, add esthetic value to your home, and in many times help to retain moisture.

March is a good time to mulch your gardens before perennials get too big.



Tulips and Daffodils:

Spring and Daffodils and Tulips! Special time to see flowers return to the garden.

Enjoy but don't cut the stems and leaves back. Let them dry and remove in the heat of the summer. The leaves are needed for bulb growth.

What is your favorite color tulip? Mine is yellow!



Spring: Plant a Tree!

By providing shade and evaporative cooling, a tree can reduce the air temp by 10 degrees!

Now is a good time to look around and decide where to put nature's cooling tower: a tree. Don't discount ornamentals or even fruit trees as a choice. Stay away from Bradford Pears as they are so susceptible to wind damage. Look for the Cleveland pear which is just as beautiful and stronger.

Spring is when you can find bare root trees. These can be a bargain-buy and grow very nicely when planted as soon as you purchase.

Don't just stick a tree in the ground; it needs a bit of TLC the first two years: watering, mulch, and staking.

If you have the time to watch them grow: the National Arbor Association has some great seedlings to order at a minimal cost. Having bought some of these seedlings in the past; they grow very well! And there are the free giveaway trees at the county Garden Exposition.

Stay cool and Enjoy!