



MULCH: Too Much of a Good Thing

The proper choice and application of mulch can dramatically improve the overall health and vitality of trees and other landscape plants. Improper mulching, on the other hand, can needlessly stress and potentially kill plants. The two basic mulch choices are inorganic and organic. Inorganic mulches such as lava rock, mineral rock and gravel do not decompose. They do not need to be replenished often, but neither do they contribute to the organic matter in the soil. Organic mulches usually are derived from plants and plant parts. Examples include cocoa hulls, leaves, grass, newspaper, straw and softwood (conifer) bark wood chips and other wood products. Organic mulches have more effect on soil structure. The fact that they decompose means that their longevity in the landscape is shorter than that of the inorganic. Organic mulches decompose slowly, helping to build soil structure that is better aerated and more sponge-like. Organic mulches have the distinct advantage of returning essential nutrients to the beneficial soil microflora upon decomposition. Because of this decomposition, organic mulch needs to be replaced periodically and that is where many problems arise. The plague of overmulching is a waste of mulch. It is becoming a significant cause of death to some landscape plants.

Over-mulching can:

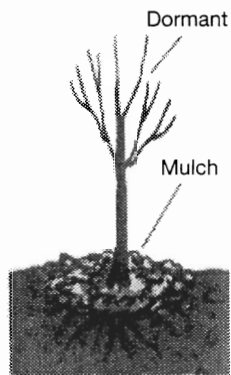
- Promote excessive soil moisture and subsequent root rot.
- Cause inner bark tissue death of above-ground stem flares.
- Prevent moisture penetration into the soil.
- Promote nutrient deficiencies and imbalances.

Mulching is a covering used for weed control and to protect the base of trees from lawnmowers. Remember to control the weeds as they rob moisture from the soil, and do not build the mulch too close to the base of the tree or shrubs.

Mulching can gracefully extend the edges of tree and shrub zones and enhance the beauty and value of your home.

TREE FACTS

Fall is a good time to plant. Follow planting instructions, making sure the soil is moist so the roots do not dry out. Even though the tops of deciduous trees are dormant, some root growth continues beneath the surface. This will help get your tree established and ready to grow earnestly in the spring.



Roots can start growth in fall and winter.

A Friendly REMINDER

We wish to remind residents that we have had several complaints about skunks over the past few months. The Borough does not have any skunk control plan in operation. However, if you are bothered by the smelly creatures, please consider how you are keeping your trash pickup area. Garbage *must* be in sturdy cans with lids or heavy-duty bags. When bags are torn open by birds, animals, etc., the litter and debris is not the garbage collector's responsibility; it is the property owner's responsibility. Perhaps this is why we have so many skunks, opossums, and raccoons. Police the area around your collection site. Residents are reminded that garbage should not be placed at curbside for pickup until the night before collection day.

Frequently asked questions from residents about two problems. Once again we repeat the answers, as follows:

HOW TO SOLIDIFY PAINT? Use an absorbent material, such as clay kitty litter. Do not use a paper absorbent, as spontaneous combustion may occur.

SKUNK SOLUTION? Mix 8 oz. castor oil, 8 oz. dish detergent (Dawn, Joy), and one gallon water. Spray area frequented by skunks.

ORDINANCE NO. 420 clearly spells out the specific guidelines of trimming trees along the sidewalks, roadways and alleys. If you have any questions, contact Shade Tree Commissioner Bill Krupa. Violators may be fined up to \$600.00.

We all need to follow the rules to preserve the beauty and life of our shade trees.





Borough Happenings

The annual budget has been prepared and will be up for tentative approval at the November meeting. The year 2003 budget will show an increase in the garbage collection fee. A charge has been imposed on all municipalities for a Title 27 Environmental Resource Law effective July 1, 2002. A surcharge of \$4.00 per ton of solid waste disposed at municipal waste landfills has been added. The fee is deposited into the Environmental Stewardship Fund in Harrisburg. Because of the surcharge, the garbage fee will increase from \$70.00 per year to \$76.00 annually. Council has also passed an ordinance to eliminate burning within the Borough. You are still permitted to have barbecues or toast marshmallows. Another ordinance residents need reminded of is you are responsible to clean up after your pets, both while walking them or securing them on your property. Please carry a plastic bag to clean up after you walk your dog. Fines can be imposed for up to \$600.00.



The road crew is preparing for the first blast of winter. If the almanac is true we should see some heavy snow storms. Please park cars in driveways where possible. Do not shovel snow into the streets. When clearing driveways, always place snow to the right side of your property. Your cooperation is appreciated.

From the Mayor's Desk

Mayor Sloat had recommended that several intersections in the Borough be highlighted with a bold bar at the "stop" signs and some areas "slow" be painted in the street, as a reminder to motorists that a stop sign means a complete stop. In the areas where children play the word "slow" is painted on the street, meaning to be cautious. Please be aware of the markings. With the holidays coming, Mayor Sloat reminds residents of Southmont to please put safety first, both in their home or while driving. Be cautious in all you do. Have a wonderful holiday.

Have a safe winter! Mayor Gerry Sloat

From the Fire Department

The Fire Company has discontinued the annual turkey raffle this year and instead has initiated a Holiday Cash raffle. This is in response to numerous suggestions from the residents. Many have told us that you receive turkeys from other sources but can always use money. So, we took your suggestions and began the cash raffle. We wish to thank you for your past support and hope you continue to support the Fire Department so that we may continue to serve you. Many of you have probably read that volunteer fire companies, along with other groups, have been

experiencing a decline in both financial support and volunteers. We are no different, but fortunately we have been able to "hold our own," thanks to a group of loyal volunteers who devote numerous hours to the fire company and to those of you who financially support us. So please return your raffle tickets before December 6. The raffle will be held December 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Fire Company Activity room. We invite everyone to attend and witness the drawing. The fire company would like to thank the Boulevard Grill & Warehouse for their support of the fire department.

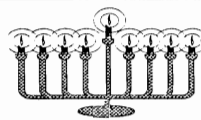
— Fire Chief Chet Borosky

RECYCLING NEWS

At the end of the year 2003, Southmont Borough will be advertising for garbage bids. Because of the new Title 27 Environmental Resource Law, fees are going to increase. The annual fee for garbage pickup in 2003 will be \$76.00, billed semi-annually. Recycling is the way to keep your garbage cost down. We hope to continue to keep the costs down. The volume of recycled materials this past year was much lower than previous years, due to the discontinued collection of colored glass. If we want to continue to receive lower garbage bills, we must recycle. PLEASE do your part!

Recycle only the items listed inside the center. Other items contaminate the entire load and the Borough must pay because of the contamination. This is in violation of the Recycling Ordinance and subject to fines. Borough employees spend valuable time sorting to eliminate the items not allowed. No food items allowed. Council has installed surveillance cameras. Colored glass is no longer accepted by Total Recycling. Please do not jeopardize our program. See the newspaper collection schedule in "Clip and Save." Spring 2003 Cleanup will be May 14 and May 15 in conjunction with your regular garbage pickup. Watch newspaper for schedule. Batteries, tires, auto and truck parts, construction materials or liquids excluded. No appliances with freon. Trimmings must be tied in 3-foot bundles. If you have any questions, please call Waste Management at 479-4011. Recycling hours are 7:00 a.m. to dusk Monday through Saturday. Closed Thursdays 7 a.m until 11:00 a.m. Use outside bins provided for plastic bags. Rinse cans and plastics. Please compress plastics. Ordinance 389 provides \$300.00 fines for contaminating and littering.

Thanks for participating!



PLEASE CLIP & SAVE

Newspaper recycling in 2003 will be done on March 29, June 7, August 17 and October 18, 8 A.M. until noon only, at the Borough Building. Newspapers must be bundled. Waste Management will be doing the Spring Cleanup collection, thru 2003. For the year 2003 **Spring Cleanup will be May 15 and 16**, with your regular weekly collection. If you have any questions you can call Waste Management at 479-4011. Crack sealing is scheduled in April 2003. Brush cleanup is done the third week of October. **NO GRASS OR LEAVES WILL BE PICKED UP WITH THE BRUSH. AT NO TIME** should you rake yard waste and twigs into the street. Bundle twigs and place out with your garbage.

WATCH NEWSPAPER FOR SCHEDULES.



Plant with Care

One of the most important steps you can take to ensure the health and long life of your trees is to plant them correctly, as follows:

#1. DIG THE HOLE

When planting a tree, first examine the soil at the site. The soil quality will determine the diameter of the planting hole. If the soil is rich and well drained, the hole needs to be wide enough only to allow for shifting the plant and getting it properly oriented. Make sure the planting hole is no deeper than the depth of the root system of the plant. Find the "root flare," the part of the trunk that widens out just above the first roots. The root flare will be at the level of the surrounding soil. In most cases, it is best to backfill the hole with the soil that came out of the hole. Only if the soil quality is very poor, or if it contains a lot of clay or clumps, or is very sandy, should you consider adding some organic matter to the backfill soil.

#2. PLANTING

Set all plants into the hole so the top of the root system is no deeper than the surrounding soil level. If the tree is balled and burlapped, remove all twine and wire from around the base of the trunk.

#3. STAKING

Most trees do not need to be staked or supported after planting. In fact, staking too rigidly can actually interfere with a tree's development and can girdle the stem.

#4. MULCH & CARE AFTER PLANTING

Place a two- to three-inch layer of organic mulch over the root zone of a tree or shrub bed area. Keep mulch away from trunks. Water weekly during the first year. Avoid shallow, frequent watering because it will encourage the growth of shallow surface roots, which will be vulnerable to drying out. A light application of fertilizer at planting and in the second and third year after planting will help establish the tree.

Basic Tree Care

A dead or broken branch can be an entry point for tree-damaging organisms or diseases. Should dead wood be pruned from a tree or is it better to let nature take care of this? It is usually impractical to remove every twig that may die, but dead limbs and jagged stubs of limbs lose their flexibility and are likely to snap off in the force of winds, snow or ice, or being stepped on by someone climbing in the tree. The other reason is for the health of the tree. A tree has a marvelous way of forming a chemical barrier between dead tissue and living tissue. For example, when a limb is sawed off properly the tree responds with its protective layer and woundwood soon grows and eventually seals the exposed areas.

The tree will "try" to do this even when a branch dies and remains on the tree. However, the buildup of rot causing fungi is so great in the dead branch that it can overwhelm the tree's defense system and spread into the trunk or adjoining limbs.

< < FYI FACTS > >

Fall is a good time to plant. Make sure the soil is moist so the roots do not dry out. Even though the tops of deciduous trees are dormant, some root growth continues beneath the surface. This will help you get your tree established and ready to grow earnestly come spring. To prevent drying of small evergreens from harsh winter winds, create a wind break with burlap. Also be sure to water thoroughly in autumn.



*Silence is Golden
when you can't think
of a good answer.*

*Have a Safe Holiday and
a Wonderful New Year*
SOUTHMONT BOROUGH COUNCIL

TREE SPONSORSHIP

As we say good-bye to the beautiful array of color displayed by the bountiful trees along the Borough's streets and urban forest area, we begin to prepare for the winter. Because of the drought this summer, several of the newly planted street trees did not make it. Even with regular watering some have died. The Shade Tree Commission will be busy next spring replacing these trees. There are several trees that still need to be planted from this year's schedule.

Many residents who sponsor trees in memory or in dedication of a tree to someone special in their lives have shared their thoughtfulness with all residents and visitors to Southmont. Even with the fall of the leaves it still provides a wonderful show of nature's benefits. Southmont has received two awards this past year from the Cambria County Conservation District and from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. The Borough has received many compliments from neighboring municipalities due to the dedication of our residents, Shade Tree Advisory Committee and Mr. Bill Krupa, Chairman of the Shade Tree Commission. Contributions of \$100.00 or more are added to our Shade Tree Contribution Plaque displayed in the Municipal Building. Sponsorship of a tree provides a lasting memory and a visible reminder of your caring for family or friends, living or deceased. Please continue to support our Shade Tree Commission.

Arbor Day 2003

The Shade Tree Commission has completed its annual inventory of street trees in the Borough and began planning the tree removal schedule for the year 2003. The Committee met in October to review the schedule for the year 2003. Anyone interested in participating in the Arbor Day celebration, tentatively scheduled for May 3, 2003, please call the Borough office and leave your name and number. Mr. Krupa will be in touch with you.