

# News & Views

## *for New Hampshire's Green Industry*

September, 2001

### Too Much Mulch!!

Overmulching has become epidemic in parking lots and landscapes. Why do we think that a beneficial practice like mulching will be even better if we carry it to extremes? In fact, the effects of overmulching can be the same as planting too deep. Soil oxygen is reduced—especially in poorly drained soils—roots suffocate, and above ground parts suffer a long-term decline. Symptoms may take more than two years to become obvious, but growth will be slow, twigs may die back, and excessive sucker growth may occur. Mulch piled high against the trunk or stem of woody ornamentals also creates a continually-moist environment which stresses and can kill the inner bark (phloem) tissue. Decay organisms and boring insects easily invade stressed, moist tissue.

Mulch wider, not deeper. Allow for two to four inches of mulch after settling. Use no more than two inches if the soil tends to stay wet. Organics that tend to mat together (such as leaves) should be applied in thin layers. Coarse or large particle mulches such as pine bark nuggets can be applied up to four inches deep. Keep the mulch well away from the trunk or stem. When replenishing mulch, do not remove the old mulch or incorporate it in the soil. Simply add fresh mulch over the top, not exceeding the recommended depth.

The size of the mulch circle around newly planted trees should be three times the root ball diameter. Extend the diameter by three feet per year to allow for optimal tree growth (Figure 2). In our climate, 18 inches of root elongation is expected annually. Keeping turf from competing

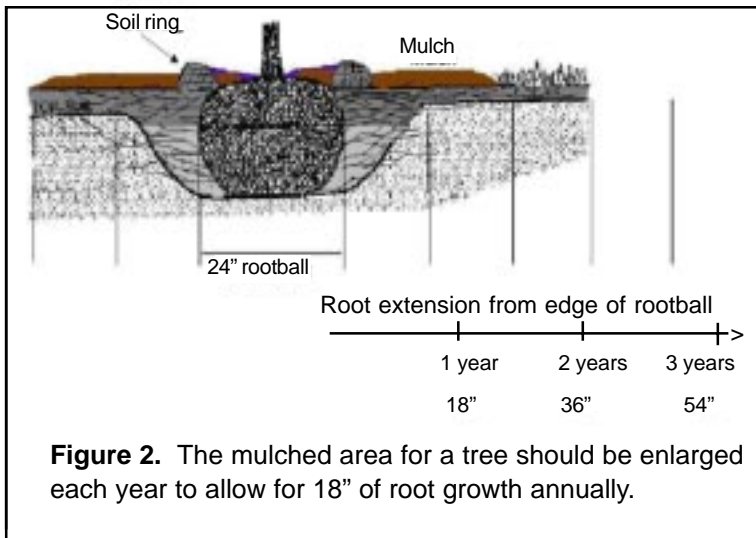
with tree roots is one of the best ways to insure vigorous growth of trees and shrubs.

Refer to Table 1 to determine the amount of mulch needed for circular areas. For other areas, calculate the square feet of surface area then multiply by .25 to get the number of cubic feet of mulch required for a 4" depth. To convert cubic feet to cubic yards of mulch, divide by 27. A full size pickup truck holds about 2 ½ cubic yards; a mini pickup holds about 1 ½ yards.

**Cathy Neal**



**Figure 1.** Mulch mounds up to a foot or more deep are detrimental, unattractive and epidemic. To make matters worse, tree wraps were left on these trunks. The same amount of mulch, if spread only 2-4" deep in larger diameter circles would be very beneficial.



**Table 1:** Amounts of mulch needed for circular areas.

Circle Diameter (in feet)	Mulch (cubic feet) Required for Given Depth		
	2"	3"	4"
2'	0.5	0.8	1.0
4'	2.1	3.2	4.2
6'	4.7	7.1	9.3
8'	8.4	12.6	16.6
10'	13.1	19.6	25.9
12'	18.9	28.3	37.3
14'	25.7	38.5	50.8
16'	33.6	50.3	66.4
18'	42.5	64.6	84.0

**Turf Q & A**

**Q.** New Kentucky bluegrass cultivars enter the market each year. Can you provide an update on their overall quality ratings?

**A.** Here's the final NTEP report (1996-2000 data) of mean quality ratings of Kentucky bluegrass cultivars grown under medium/high input at 29 locations (full sun) in the U.S. and Canada. Turfgrass quality ratings are based on a 1-9 scale; 9 = ideal turf.

*John Roberts*

Name	Quality Rating Mean	Name	Quality Rating Mean	Name	Quality Rating Mean
Midnight	6.4	Serene	5.9	Fortuna	5.7
Liberator	6.4	Chicago	5.9	Classic	5.7
Brilliant	6.4	Limousine	5.9	Raven	5.7
Total Eclipse	6.3	Champagne	5.9	Baritia	5.6
Award	6.3	Explorer	5.9	Ascot	5.6
Nuglade	6.3	Allure	5.9	SR 2100	5.6
Odyssey	6.3	Baronette	5.9	Marquis	5.6
Unique	6.3	Chateau	5.9	Goldrush	5.6
Impact	6.3	Conni	5.9	Envicta	5.6
Showcase	6.3	SR 2109	5.9	Abbey	5.6
Apollo	6.3	Coventry	5.9	Dragon	5.5
Rugby II	6.2	Baronie	5.8	Nimbus	5.5
America	6.2	SR 2000	5.8	Baron	5.5
Princeton 105	6.2	Platini	5.8	Misty	5.5
Blacksburg	6.2	Livingston	5.8	Bluechip	5.5
Blackstone	6.1	Haga	5.8	Cardiff	5.4
Moonlight	6.1	Seabring	5.8	Sidekick	5.3
Arcadia	6.1	Challenger	5.8	Sodnet	5.2
Absolute	6.1	Bariris	5.8	Lipoa	5.1
North Star	6.1	Caliber	5.8	Compact	5.1
Jefferson	6.0	Baritone	5.7	Pepaya	4.9
Wildwood	6.0	Shamrock	5.7	Baruzo	4.8
Rambo	6.0	Jewel	5.7	Kenblue	4.7

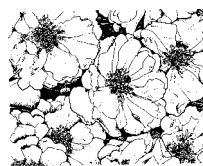
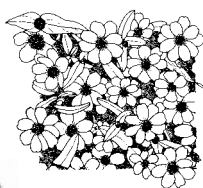
## View These All America Selections Before the Frost

The 2002 [All America Selections \(AAS\)](#) have just been announced to the public, so growers should plan now to have supplies available next spring. A plot of each of the new flower and bedding plant selections is planted at the UNH Horticultural Farm; you may want to take a peek at them before the frost. The AAS selections have been thoroughly tested under a wide range of conditions for reliable performance. They have all performed very well this season with very little attention.

Consumers want annuals that are beautiful but fool-proof. Varieties that look best in six-packs or 4-inch pots aren't necessarily the ones that are top performers in the garden. Do your own garden trials if you have room, and visit public display gardens to identify outstanding selections that will keep your customers coming back year after year. New Hampshire has three AAS display gardens you can visit to see previous years' winners: Prescott Park in Portsmouth, Fuller Gardens in North Hampton, and the Balsams in Dixville Notch. What better way to spend a beautiful September afternoon?

*Cathy Neal*

2002 AAS Award Winner	General Description	Outstanding Characteristics
Cleome 'Sparkler Blush'	3' tall x 3' wide, no staking needed. Heat and drought tolerant.	First F1 hybrid; smaller than most cleome.
Geranium 'Black Magic Rose'	Chocolate leaf centers and green edges especially when grown cool. 10-14" tall x 14-18" wide.	Unusual bicolor design.
Ornamental Pepper 'Chilly Chili'	Very heat tolerant and fruitful. 8-12" tall x 6-10" wide.	First non-pungent ornamental pepper with excellent garden performance.
Pansy 'Ulitma Morpho'	Upper petals mid-blue with bright yellow lower petals and rays radiating from the center.	Unusual bicolor pattern.
Petunia 'Lavender Wave'	Trailing habit; 4-6" tall x 3-4' spread in full sun. Flowers all season.	Same traits as 'Purple Wave'
Petunia 'Tidal Wave Silver'	Silvery white blooms with dark purple centers; size determined by spacing; vigorous growers.	Unique bicolor flower pattern
Rudbeckia hirta 'Cherokee Sunset'	Double to semi-double flowers in gold, bronze, orange, and mahogany shades. Excellent cut flower. 24-30" tall x 12" wide.	Large flowers in sunset colors.
Vinca 'Jaio Scarlet Eye'	Flowers all season in full sun; rose-scarlet color.	Distinct color.



**2001 AAS Selections**



If you received a [postcard](#) with this newsletter, you did not return the form which was in the June issue. By law we are required to annually update our mailing lists. If you would like to continue to receive the News and Views Newsletter, please fill in the enclosed post card and return it to us. Please let us know by October 15th that you **wish to remain** on the list.

## Events

- **Sept. 19 - Poinsettia Breakfast: Scheduling, pinching, and graphical tracking.** Pleasant View Gardens, Pembroke, NH, 7:30-9:30 a.m. To register contact Paul Fisher at 603-862-4525, fax: 603-862-4757 or e-mail at [Paul.Fisher@unh.edu](mailto:Paul.Fisher@unh.edu).
- **Sept. 26 - Field Grown Cut Flowers video teleconference.** Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, MA. Sponsored by UMass Floriculture Program. Contact Paul Lopes at 508-295-2212 Ext. 24 or Tina Smith at 413-545-5306.
- **Sept. 30-Oct. 3. International Plant Propagators' Society, Eastern Region annual meeting,** Lexington, KY. For more information call 860-429-6818.
- **Oct. 3 - Poinsettia Breakfast: Height control and temperature management.** Newton Greenhouse, Newton, NH, 7:30-9:30 a.m. To register contact Paul Fisher at 603-862-4525, fax: 603-862-4757 or e-mail at [Paul.Fisher@unh.edu](mailto:Paul.Fisher@unh.edu).
- **Oct. 14-16. International Society of Arboriculture, New England Chapter annual meeting,** Mystic, CT. For more information call 978-266-8990 or [www.newenglandisa.com](http://www.newenglandisa.com).
- **Oct. 17 - Poinsettia Breakfast: Late-season plant management.** McLeod's Greenhouse, Concord, NH, 7:30-9:30 a.m. To register contact Paul Fisher at 603-862-4525, fax: 603-862-4757 or e-mail at [Paul.Fisher@unh.edu](mailto:Paul.Fisher@unh.edu).
- **Oct. 31 - Poinsettia Breakfast: Technology options and energy efficiency.** Churchill Garden Center, Exeter, NH. 7:30-9:30 a.m. To register contact Paul Fisher at 603-862-4525, fax: 603-862-4757 or e-mail at [Paul.Fisher@unh.edu](mailto:Paul.Fisher@unh.edu).
- **Nov. 13 - Poinsettia Breakfast: Cost accounting and marketing, cultivar ranking, research trials.** UNH Research Greenhouses, Durham, NH. 7:30-9:30 a.m. To register contact Paul Fisher at 603-862-4525, fax: 603-862-4757 or e-mail at [Paul.Fisher@unh.edu](mailto:Paul.Fisher@unh.edu).
- **Nov. 15 - Ideas and Innovations in Garden Center Management.** Gateway Gardens and Makris Lobster & Steak House, Concord, NH. 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Sponsored by UNH in cooperation with NHPGA. For more information contact Cathy Neal at 603-862-3208, fax: 603-862-2717 or e-mail: [cathy.neal@unh.edu](mailto:cathy.neal@unh.edu). [Click here for a copy of flyer.](#)

This newsletter is a cooperative effort of the Ornamentals Extension Educators and Specialists at the University of New Hampshire. It is published quarterly. Its purpose is to inform and update industry members on issues and research relevant to the production, use and maintenance of ornamentals and turf in New Hampshire. Contributors for this issue:

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