

**All Gardens
Great & Small**
by
York Co.
Horticultural Agent
Tom Becker



Avoid 'Sour' Mulch

Lots of things are sour; grapes, cherries, bark mulch, etc.

Even wood chip mulch can go sour if not stored properly.

Decomposing, large (6-12 feet high) mulch piles occasionally sour.

Without oxygen, a toxic by-product results of various organic acids and alcohol. If mulch is spread in landscape beds these acrid odors are highly toxic to plants. These strongly pungent odors are released after breaking open the pile.

If you are buying mulch (shredded tree bark, old sawdust, mushroom compost or bark chips) and storing it for later use, keep these precautions in mind. Most bark mulch that was stored properly, should not go sour. Mulches that have not soured should have a fresh garden aroma.

If the mulch smells like vinegar, sulfur or ammonia, it has probably gone sour and should

not be spread in flowerbeds.

Finely shredded mulches are especially prone to 'sourness.' Often caused by compaction, store mulch in several small piles rather than one large one. Mulch piles that remain intact for more than one week should be no higher than 4 feet.

Mulch piles that are used and replenished regularly can be higher than 4 feet. Shape piles so that water runs off and does not puddle into the center of the pile. Water fills pore spaces, displacing oxygen, resulting in sour mulch. Better yet, cover mulch piles with a tarp to prevent waterlogging.

Turn or mix much piles if they are stored in one location for a long time. This allows any

toxic byproducts to dissipate and incorporates fresh air to reduce further anaerobic decomposition.

If you do find your mulch went sour, spread the mulch out in a thin layer on a paved surface. Let the toxic vapors naturally dissipate for three to seven days. Then apply the mulch to a small area of plantings and wait for several days. If plants don't show wilting, discoloration or other abnormal growth indicative of sour mulch, the mulch is safe to use on the rest of your garden.

Avoid using sour mulch in containers, recently planted flower beds, or along the edge of landscape beds. Annual flowers planted prior to spreading sour mulch may die within 24 hours. Plants affected often have chlorotic leaves, leaf scorch or plant dieback.

Another way to check for sour mulch is to check the pH. Sour mulch will have a pH of 1.8 to 2.5 which makes neutralizing with lime unreasonable.

Lastly, do not overapply any type of mulch. Dense mulches like sawdust should not be more than 2 inches thick while shredded bark a maximum of 2 to 4 inches thick.



North Jackson Ag 4-H Club

A meeting of the North Jackson 4-H Ag Club was held recently at the home of Joe and Sandy Pavelski.

The club talked about the trip to Penn State for the Blue and White game and the tours of the mushroom plant and Mastitis Research Center. Questions were answered on project books and schedules were handed out. Dairy and horse camps were discussed.

Katie Onyon and Jessica Sartell talked about the Delaware Valley judging trip. Katie placed fifth and Jessica placed tenth.

Demonstrations were given by Katie Onyon and Holly Carey on cake decorating, Aaron Onyon on making a wooden race car and racing it, Abby Onyon on preparing a speech for school, and Andrey Onyon on reloading a bullet.

Golden Fleece 4-H Club

One new member joined the Golden Fleece 4-H Club during its last meeting in Thompson.

Members discussed a possible fund-raiser using Krispy Dream Donuts. They also discussed the possibility of purchasing electric clippers so the members can ready their sheep for the fair.

A trip to New York to see a Broadway show this summer was tentatively planned for the group.

Jason Corey updated members on County Council happenings and names of suppliers of market lambs were given to those needing to purchase them for their project.

**Bucks County
Holds 4-H
Fashion Revue**

DOYLESTOWN (Bucks Co.) — On June 19, Family Heritage Retirement Community in Doylestown served as host for the annual Bucks County 4-H Fashion Revue.

Twelve 4-H members participated in this event. During the afternoon, participants were involved in three work-shops and were judged.

Judges for this event were Valerie Gardener and Jean Flynn from Sew Smart Fabrics, Doylestown; and Nancy Moran and Mary Martinez, both family and consumer science teachers.

Kristen Strouse, former Miss Bucks County presented a workshop on modeling. Participants also applied children's clothing which were donated to a representative from "A Woman's Place" during the 7 p.m. 4-H Fashion Revue Program.

Family members, friends and Family Heritage residents were in attendance.

Senior 4-H participants were Amber Griffin, Chara Hestand, and Kim Reichner, all members of the Hilltown 4-H Club. Junior 4-H participants were Beth Dlorio, Melissa Gallagher, Sharla Remick, Trudy Yoder, Bridget Ziemba and Anna Hollenbach of the Hilltown 4-H Club; Elizabeth King and Jillian Mobus of the Levittown 4-H Club.

Those expected to compete in the Southeast Regional 4-H Fashion Revue on July 7 in Leesport include Griffin, Hestand, Reichner, Remick, Williams, Mobus, Gallagher and Ziemba.

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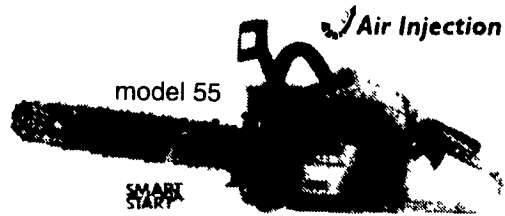
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