

THE PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA
GENERAL MEETING
March 12, 2019

The general meeting at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Ray Allison, President.

Ray welcomed everyone and passed out plumeria seeds to visitors. Ray also introduced Renee Riley as the new plant sales coordinator.

Presentation – John Ferguson of Nature’s Way Resources “The Dirt on Soil”

John writes an article for the weekly Lazy Gardener Newsletter.

Reasons for mulch:

- Aesthetics
- Nutrients
- Weed control
- Moisture retention
- Improve biology of soil
- Insect control
- Disease control

Two types of mulches:

- Organic – wood, bark, leaves
- Inorganic – gravel, rock

Life in soil – microbiology

- Bacteria and fungus create soil structure.
- Artificial fertilizers contain salts that kill microbes.

Mulch – anything that covers that ground

- Pine Bark is the most common mulch in the Houston area. It has a carbon to nitrogen ratio of 600 – 700 to 1 (C/N ratio 600–700:1). For comparison, animals have C/N ratio 30:1. Pine bark contains chemicals that kill microbes.
- Hardwood bark is the second most popular mulch in the Houston area. Hardwood bark is full of toxins and repels water.
- Cedar mulch has C/N ratio 500:1.
- Cypress mulch does not rot, but it does not feed the soil. It has C/N ratio 500:1.
- Redwood does not rot and has a high C/N ratio
- Pine needles are loose, airy, and good for acid loving plants.
- Grass clippings provide nitrogen, but goes anaerobic quickly. It should be used in compost piles.

- Leaves encourage fungus.
- Red mulch is made from pallets and is dyed. The C/N ratio is 500:1.
- Black mulch contains carbon black chemical which is a carcinogen. It also attracts termites.
- Paper mulches are very effective. They control weeds without chemicals.
- Nut shells (pecan, etc.) repel animals.
- Cocoa shells kill dogs.
- Native mulches are made from trees and plants indigenous to the area. Native mulch feeds plants as it decomposes. It feeds microbes that break down clay.

Some mulches are highly flammable. Ignition sources:

- Lightning
- Static electricity
- Sparks
- Cigarette butts
- Reflected heat from low E windows
- The higher the C/N ratio the more flammable the mulch

It is illegal in 23 states to pile mulch around the base of tree trunks (volcano mulching). This practice kills trees so the landscapers can sell more trees.

After the presentation, tickets were drawn for the door prizes. The meeting concluded at 8:30 p.m.