

# TREETISE

SUMMER 2012

ROOTED IN KNOWLEDGE

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 2

## Mucho Mulch

Almost every customer we work with knows about, buys and wants: MULCH! But very few people truly know how beneficial it is to an abundant landscape. That's why I'm excited to share more about this inexpensive, though highly valuable and effective, protective ground covering.

First of all, mulch is easy to obtain; tree care companies produce it every day and it's readily available at recycling facilities and hardware stores. Although there are very common uses for mulch (we use it to decorate our planters, suppress weed growth and accent trees in the landscape), some of the most important applications of the product are often overlooked.

### “Mulching” is the best way...

to protect the root collars and surface roots of trees from lawnmower and weed-whacker damage and is an amazing tool for reducing the overgrowth of groundcovers around the base of trees. Mulch is also the best resource for transforming urban dirt into fertile, nutrient rich, biologically diverse and all-around lovely soil. Contemporary research by plant pathologists in the UC Extension program and soil scientists at the Morton Arboretum is illuminating just exactly what mulch does to improve our landscapes.



I'll start with what the plant pathologists are seeing first: Dr. Jim Downer is one of the top plant pathologists in California and, in my opinion, the nation. Dr. Downer has shown that applications of fresh mulch with coarse textures, such as mulch generated from tree chippers, have had a suppressive effect on several pathogens in soil such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi* - a root rot disease. Now, not all diseases are suppressed by mulch, but this is a start!



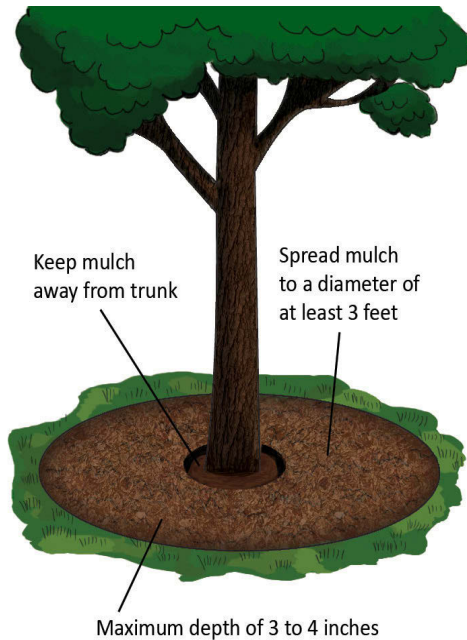
### Message from the President

Next month we'll be celebrating our 5th year in business! We've been very blessed to care for the trees of so many communities and commercial properties these last few years. The professional relationships and just pure friendships we've made have brought us so much joy. Through our growing business we are also thankful for the opportunity to create jobs and support families. Without those we work with, this company would not be where it is today!



n. (tree• tis) a formal and systematic exposition of the principles of a subject; more detailed than an essay.

FOUR SEASONS TREE CARE | 760-477-7795 | WWW.FOURSEASONSTC.COM



Dr. Bryant Scharenbroch, a soils scientist at the Morton Arboretum, has also performed exciting research on the benefits of mulch. In a study where a variety of mulch types were used, such as fresh mulch, organic compost, fertilizer, manure and compost teas, he found that mulch outperformed every other ground covering in a variety of tests. He showed that overall tree growth as well as available water, carbon, nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus all increased with mulch. He also showed that soil pH decreased with mulch applications whereas applications of compost caused an increase in soil pH. Overall, fresh mulch appeared to increase the likelihood of altering soil texture and composition to eventually mimic that of soils found in the natural forest.

Though these results are extremely persuasive, a few things must be addressed before spreading mulch; here are a few that come to mind:

- Make sure the location where mulch will be spread is well irrigated, but not over-irrigated, that turf is moved away from the trees, that the trees aren't too deeply planted, and that the area below the tree is relatively exposed to sunlight.
- Mulch must be applied at least 3-4 radial feet from the trunk, cannot be piled up onto the root collar of the tree, and should be applied no more than 3-4 inches thick. For larger trees, try to mulch underneath the entire canopy when feasible.
- Be sure there aren't any other circumstances affecting your tree that might require attention before applying mulch. For example, is the tree infected with a particular disease? Is there a pest problem that should be examined first?

## Now, some believe...

adding mulch reduces available nitrogen in the soil; however, those feelings aren't supported by research. In fact, studies show fresh mulch mineralizes and adds nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium over time. If you'd like more information on mulch research we'd be happy to forward references or reprints upon request.

I am so glad to share with you how a simple resource can have exceedingly positive effects on your landscape and trees. We are big supporters of mulching and you'll probably hear us mention it a time or two if you're one of our customers - all in an effort to help improve the overall care of our San Diego landscapes together! - Adam Heard

n. (tree• tis) a formal and systematic exposition of the principles of a subject; more detailed than an essay.

Four Seasons Tree Care (FSTC) is proud to announce a new member to our team, Mick Bostwick. Mick, who has taken the position of chief operating officer, has been consulting for FSTC since our company's founding. Now that he's on staff fulltime, Mick can focus 100% of his attention and expertise on streamlining our operations and expanding our relationships within the community.

After nearly 30 years of running his own consulting firm, Mick is very excited to concentrate on just one company, as he did when serving as general manager and controller for two corporations prior to starting his own business. We are excited to see what the future has in store for FSTC and are very thankful for this opportunity to bring him aboard.

## VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3 OF TREETISE

Dude, Where's  
My Tree?

