



**Scrap into dollars.** Contract applicators, arborists, municipal treemen, etc., can use their chippers to turn waste brush trimmings into valuable mulch which can be used in unlimited ways. Shown above is a Fitchburg chipper at work in photo (left); a Mits & Merrill chipper is pictured right.

## Where to Sell Those Wood Chips

WOOD CHIPS, a longtime favorite as a mulch for trees and plants, are finding ever-increasing numbers of applications in other areas and offering a potential new source of income to custom applicators, nuserymen, and tree surgeons.

Given a source of wood wastes or brush, and a woodchipper, a number of enterprising operators have converted wood scrap into dollars and cents, selling the end product at prices ranging from \$6.50 to \$12.00 per cord. Among the many novel new uses for wood chips are such applications as animal bedding, poultry litter, overall ground cover, paving, highway barriers and even as an emergency cattle feed mixed with molasses. Homeowners also use hickory and apple wood chips for backyard barbecuing.

The University of Massachusetts spreads wood chips on its ski slopes at Thunder Mountain instead of using straw as in the past. The Forestry Sciences Laboratory at Athens, Georgia, is trying to develop skiing into a summertime sport and is experimenting with ski slopes covered with sawdust and wood chips. Ski pros claim that a 20% grade of sawdust chips was "... not unlike some snow conditions..." Uses for chips, in fact, seem to be limited only by the imagination of chipper owners.

Cushioning cleats on golf

shoes is the reason Walter Leix orders wood chips for the paths, rest areas, and golf cart paths at the Shannopin Country Club in Pittsburgh, Pa. Since the practice has caught on with other golf courses in the area, he claims competition for wood chips has created a demand which suppliers cannot meet. Leix cites one other additional benefit of wood chips: "If they get caught in the lawn mower," he says, "they don't harm the blades."

Davey Tree Expert Company is the supplier of the Shannopin Country Club. The reason for Davey entering the supplier field was simply as a convenient method for disposing of brush and scrap accumulated in large rights-of-way clearance projects. Currently the company is supplying wood chips for a number of users in the Buffalo, N. Y., area and discounting income derived from this source from its land clearance project.

Using wood chips as a mulch suggested one further use to nurseryman James Cookman, Southboro, Mass. As wood-chip mulch decays into organic humus (usually, in 6 to 7 years) it adds valuable nutrients and conditions the soil. Cookman speeded up the process to one year by composting chips in pits with alternate layers of garbage from local restaurants, saturating the compost with a 35% solu-

tion of urea nitrogen and bagging the finished product for sale at \$1.79 per 10 pounds. Appearance of the compost after processing is similar to good black garden loam.

F. E. Maltby, Maltby & Co., Stoughton, Mass., claims that wood chips from his company's tree-service operations are worth roughly the same as loam soil, a price which might vary between \$1.75 to \$4.50 per cubic yard. "The general public," Maltby says, "is at last realizing that the easiest and cheapest way to control weeds in a landscaped area is with wood-chip mulch, which we make with our Fitchburg chippers. The watering ban in the Northeast has been a factor in this too.

Foresters for Saginaw, Mich., are helping to prepare the soil of a recreation area on Ojibawa Island by spreading it with chips from its three Mits & Merrill chippers. Next year, these chips, when plowed into heavy soil, increase its workability, keep moisture in and weeds out. This is another market for waste chips.

Nurserymen supplying shrubs and trees to Connecticut State Highway Department also find that chips make maintenance easier. The state requires that spring-planted stock must be guaranteed for six months and fall plantings for one year. Under this same provision, the nursery must replace any stock

that dies during the guarantee period. Also, the nursery must water and weed the areas they landscape.

To help meet these three demands, wood chips were spread 4 inches deep around trees and shrubs after planting and the root area was thoroughly soaked. Results of the project show that the need for watering is cut by 60 to 70% and weed growth by 90%. With the current water ban in much of the Northeast, mulching with wood chips will probably increase this year.

From fertilizer to mulch, wood chips are catching on, not just as a means for disposing of wood wastes but also as a profitable sideline enterprise in themselves.

### Vary Mowing Height According to Grass Species

In most respects, warm season grasses, such as bermuda, zoysia, or buffalograss, require different management than do cool season bluegrass or fescue lawns, according to Jim Nighswonger, Kansas State University extension landscape architect.

He points to mowing height as an example. "Warm season grasses prefer a mowing height of 1 to 1½ inches, while cool season grasses grow best when mowed to 2½ to 3 inches," Nighswonger explains.

Bermuda and zoysia lawns benefit most from fertilization in early May and July, while cool season lawns respond best to March and early September fertilization, he notes.

In Kansas, Nighswonger advises, 1½ to 2½ inches of water applied every 10 to 14 days provide the right moisture conditions. A simple water gauge, such as a coffee can placed near the sprinkler, can measure approximate applications of water.

Buffalograss, an extremely drought-resistant species, requires even less water. Nighswonger reports that buffalograss is preferred in the western one-third of Kansas if irrigation water is not available.



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