

(“Brown Gold” cont’d.)

ty. We have used it in our shrub beds, winterizing our Miscanthus plants, and for new tree plantings. We also used some of the older chips to start up a compost pile. However, due to the fact that wood chips decompose very slowly, we realized that the end product we wanted would be a long time in coming.

What we did then was to introduce these two sources of organic matter to form a “symbiosis”. We would take 1 or 2 yard loads of wood chips and dump them in a previously mentioned designated areas on the course. On a weekly basis, as the clippings would be dumped on the chip piles, would mix the pile using either a pitch fork or for larger beds: a tractor. What this procedure has done was to effectively reduce the odor problem to practically nothing.

When the mulch piles would start to grow in size, we remove them to our compost pile and replace it with a new chip pile. In effect the grass could decompose easily. Since the wood chips would break up the grass clumps, the grass would get plenty of oxygen to help the decomposition process. Also the wood chips would benefit from the increased nitrogen from the grass and help it decompose.

At the end of that season we noticed that the clippings in these piles had practically disappeared and that the wood chips were rotting faster than if they were left alone.

Well, this year (1991), we finally have been reaping the harvest of our efforts. Using a small soil shredder, we started using the grass/chip compost on a few of our beds with very favorable results. The compost at this time is still chunky in nature, however, we would raked out the large particles and put them back on the compost pile or as we say “back in the oven”.

Results from our other program of dumping straight into the beds had mixed results. Last season we saw no ill effects from the green compost. However, due to the extremely warm May we had, some of the beds failed at first due to the increased soil temperatures caused by the decomposing grass. This could be either a good aspect or a bad one. The previous Spring I felt that the warm soil temperatures were a benefit due to the cooler air temperatures we had at the time. The warmer soil seemed to simulate a warming bed in a greenhouse thus causing improved growth. What I am trying to get at is that this procedure probably should be used with caution. In the future, we will not allow any dumping past mid April and will concentrate on dumping in the fall.

We are planning to expand this program by having more dump sites and using the compost in other areas. We feel that this program has been very successful. It might not be a good program for everyone but we hope that others might be interested. This will not replace peat moss, however, it adds to our arsenal and creates a good neighbor outlook to be portrayed in our community.

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Compounding and an early start really add up!

Investing regularly to meet your long-term goals can have dramatic effects when you get an early start. For example, if your investment time horizon is 30 years, consider the results of contributing \$100 monthly for the first 10 years to a hypothetical investment plan yielding 6 percent annually. Then assume that no further contributions were made and the ending sum was allowed to grow for another 20 years at the same hypothetical 6 percent investment rate.

Now, compare the ending results with another hypothetical 30-year plan where no investments were made for the first 10 years, and then \$100 a month was contributed for the remaining 20 years (see chart above).

The first investment plan yielded **\$8,804 more** in the long run — **even though \$12,000 less was invested!** The difference is the amount of time that the first plan had to compound. Clearly, starting early can make a dramatic difference over the long term.



Judging Your Tolerance for Investment Risk

by F. Bill Billimoria, MBA, CPA, CFP

If you had a 100% chance of winning \$5,000 or an 80% chance of winning \$10,000, which would you choose? If you had a 100% chance of losing \$5,000 or a 20% chance of losing nothing, which would you choose? What is your “comfort level” when it comes to risking money in a financial investment? Investments can be like a roller coaster. Some people love to ride rollercoasters at the amusement park, but for others, the very thought is terrifying.

If you are like many people, you tend to view yourself as a financial risk-taker, at least to some degree. Yet, in response to the first question, most people choose the “sure” choice to win money, while in the second, they gamble at the chance to lose nothing. In reality, the alternative choices are better risks.

(cont’d. page 26)