

NEWS, NOTES & QUOTES



National Newsletter of the Mulch & Soil Council

AUGUST 2021

JULY COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS



In conjunction with the MSC Board of Directors meeting held on July 22 & 23 in Key West, FL, two Council committees also met to discuss special issues impacting the industry.

Standards Committee Report:

The Standards Committee is charged with keeping the Voluntary Uniform Product Guidelines up to date and monitoring the industry's need for additional product guidelines, BMPs, Statements of Uniform Interpretation and Policy (SUIPs). The committee reviewed the agenda for the summer AAPFCO meeting and confirmed its support for deleting the proposed definition for "Buffered Coir".

A discussion was held regarding an invasive species known as "jumping worms" (JW). JWs are found in the SE, S, NE, and upper MW states. There is no eradication or control method available other than physical removal. The threat is JW eat forest duff and generate castings like coffee grounds that are nutrient deficient and destabilize native soils. The JW issue has become more public as a result of UMN extension making highly public efforts to educate the consumer gardeners and sound an alarm for an invasive species that is ALREADY extensively in place around the country.

While the adult JW lives only one season, there is no known pesticide or other preventative or removal treatment other than physically collecting the worms from the soil, placing them in sealed bags and throwing them away. They propagate via extremely small and difficult to detect egg cocoons the size of a single mustard seed. However, the seed cocoons are destroyed at temperatures of 104°F.

Though not on the APHIS quarantine list, what brings JWs to the Council's attention is that MnDNR is investigating declaring JW a "*prohibited invasive species in Minnesota. This would make it a misdemeanor to possess, import, purchase, transport or introduce jumping worms without a permit.*" There is concern that other states may follow their lead; so, making a statement that separates mulch & soil producers from the natural spread of JW is recommended.

The committee reviewed a draft position statement on JW prepared by Bob LaGasse for inclusion on the MSC website. A discussion of the language relating to mulch & soil products and recommending consumers check their gardens for JW before adding new landscape plants and products was held and a modified statement was agreed upon by the committee members. The committee-approved *Policy Statement on Jumping Worms* was then given to the MSC Board of Directors for their approval and adoption.

Certification Committee:

The committee reviewed program activities since the January 2021 meeting of the committee. In July 2020, the total number of certified products was 288. Since then, the program has decertified 16 products and added 23 new products for a net growth of 2.5% and

JULY COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS (CONTINUED)

a current total of 295 certified products including 176 mulches, 59 landscape soils and amendments, 53 premium growing media, 5 standard growing media and 2 specialty soils. The certification audit team has collected product samples for testing from the Southern, Southeastern, Northeastern, Central and Western regions. There are currently 83 soil products in greenhouse trials and 32 mulches remain to be tested.

The Council's 20-year-old Innovx Alpha-2000 XRF (X-Ray Fluorescence) analyzer for heavy metals detection was finally replaced with a new SciAps, Inc. X-505 XRF device. Staff will receive training on the new device on August 3 and complete the testing for the 35 remaining mulch products.

Without identifying or discussing any specific product, the committee reviewed some program concerns for new issues with product labels that have arisen over the past year. Compliance with NIST labeling regulations is required for certified products which includes Identity, Responsibility, and Quantity (IRQ) statements on bags as well and product label claims and use directions. The Certification Committee directed staff to send a memo to all certified product producers reminding them to check, verify and/or correct any label claims, directions, use calculations, IRQs, etc. before printing new bags for the remainder of this season or next Spring. Pay special attention to approving bag design proofs for the IRQ on private labels. If any member would like assistance in reviewing product labels, please contact Bob LaGasse the MSC office at 806.832.1810 or execdir@mulchandsoilcouncil.org.

JULY BOARD MEETING REPORT



On July 23, the MSC Board of Directors held an in-person meeting at the Hyatt Centric Hotel in Key West, FL. Council President Jim Weber (Ohio Mulch) opened the meeting noting the industry faces new and on-going challenges as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact labor shortages, transportation/freight/driver shortages and expanding supply chain shortages/cost increases. He asked that everyone be vigilant for opportunities where MSC could use its influence or group action to help improve business for Council members.

Bob LaGasse reported on office activities since the last meeting noting action on the Ohio Ag department W&M review, the annual meeting program activities, AAPFCO and numerous other programs. It was also noted that the MSC membership and finances have remained extremely stable during the past year even in the face of the pandemic. The prospects for attendance at the Council's 50th Annual Meeting in Memphis in September were also running well ahead of expectations.

The Board then reviewed committee reports. It approved the Certification Committee request to send a label review memo to all members. Then the Standards Committee report was received and approved. The proposed Policy Statement on Jumping Worms was adopted and will be published in the NNQ Newsletter and posted on the Council's website.

The Nominating Committee reported that President Jim Weber (Ohio Mulch), VP Byron Morgan (Mountain West) and Director Andrew Godfrey (Kellogg Garden Products) will run for re-election. Past President & Director Mike Lange will not run for re-election; so, a new candidate is needed to fill the full slate for election at the Memphis meeting.

For the Industry Statistics Committee, there was a brief discussion of the draft report on industry compensation. Since the government legislation stalled and unemployment compensation has passed the \$15/hr wage rate, the information may already be moot. Rather than publish this historic data report, it was the consensus of the Board to offer an electronic copy to any member who requests it and inform them of its availability in the August NNQ Newsletter.

Director and Annual Meeting Program Chair Kimberly Rygielski (Scotts Miracle-Gro) reported on the final program arrangements for the Memphis Annual Meeting. All program speakers are confirmed and several are coordinating with each other to customize their presentations for our industry. All indications are that this year's meeting will be larger than we expected and we look forward to a great industry event.



Memphis

Join us in the birthplace
of Rock n Roll
to celebrate MSC's
50th Annual Meeting!

Covering topics for everyone from
owners and plant managers to
account and marketing managers to
industry suppliers.

This year's meeting topics will include:

- Insight into the new administration & policy changes
- Advanced Production Measurement: Understanding yield and shrinkage to maximize profits with load volume scanning
- Consumer insight & gardening trends
- The Art of Innovation: helping uncover the next big breakthrough
- The Crow Report

Keynote Speaker: Erica Orange

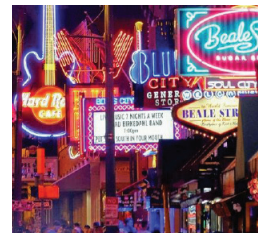
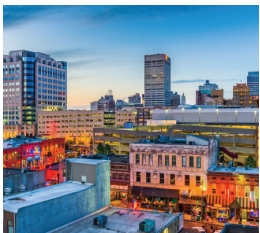
Executive Vice President & Chief Operating
Officer of The Future Hunters

We hope to see you there!

**Mulch & Soil Council
2021 Annual Meeting**
Celebrating 50 Years

September 21 - 23, 2021
The Peabody Hotel
Memphis, TN

For more info, go to
www.mulchandsoilcouncil.org



2021 MSC Annual Meeting

Celebrating 50 Years

September 21 - 23 • The Peabody Hotel - Memphis, TN

Tuesday, September 21

1:30p-4:45p MSC Committee Meetings

Members in good standing are welcomed to participate in the meeting as observers.

5:00p-6:30p Meet the MSC Board of Directors

Join the MSC Board of Directors for informal talks over cocktails as they share information on the programs and activities of the Council and the industry. *Sponsored by nVenia*

Wednesday, September 22

8:00a-12:00p Board of Directors Meeting

Members in good standing are welcomed to participate in the Board meeting as observers.

1:00p-1:30p Official Opening and Welcome

Hear from MSC President Jim Weber, Program Chair Kimberly Rygielski, Legal Counsel John Hazard and Executive Director Robert LaGasse as we invite you to celebrate our 50th MSC Annual Meeting.

1:30p-2:30p Crow Political Report

Join us as MSC Legislative Representative DAVID CROW presents our annual update on the state of politics in the U.S.

2:30p-3:00p Snack Break *Sponsored By Reliance Packaging*

3:00p-4:30p 50th MSC Annual Membership Meeting

Hear reports from MSC leadership and committees, elect Council directors and discuss MSC programs and activities as they may impact your business and the industry.

Moderator: Robert LaGasse, MSC Executive Director

4:30p - 7:00p Opening Reception & Affiliate Member Displays

Join us to meet with old friends and new members over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres while visiting with the industry's leading suppliers and vendors.

Sponsored By Vermeer Corporation

Thursday, September 23

8:30a-9:00a Coffee Break *Sponsored By Chromascape*

9:00a-10:00a The Art of Innovation: Lessons to Help

Uncover Your Next Big Break Through

For many mulch and compost operations that strive to be competitive they attempt to innovate by tweaking their process, how its delivered, or improving customer service. This type of innovation is intuitive and comes natural for many business leaders. It is often based on instinct and anecdotal feedback. It results in mixed outcomes and relies mostly on luck. Too often this hopeful approach is taken, which can result in thousands of dollars wasted. The goal of this presentation is to inspire the audience to think differently about how they can take ideas and evaluate them to uncover their next big break through.

Speaker: Ted Dirckx, Vermeer Corporation

10:00a-10:30a Snack Break *Sponsored by Faltech Industries*

10:30a-11:30a Consumer Insights & Gardening Trends

The Covid19 Pandemic made a massive change in Americans' lives with a BIG new emphasis on gardening. Hear the latest information on what is happening in consumer trends, an update on Millennials, and a look at the "Big Picture" market place for the Lawn & Garden Industry.

Speaker: Luke Custer, Scotts Miracle-Gro Company

11:30p-2:00p Keynote Luncheon - Silver Linings:

Reimagining the Future Landscape from a Macro Perspective

Talk of an eventual "return" to the way things were is unrealistic. In-

stead of preserving our tried-and-true ways of doing things, we must adapt and innovate quickly, and in real time to what will be an entirely new world. Erica Orange will put these changes within a broader context and discuss several emerging trends that are shaping and impacting the future. Using macro technological, sociocultural, demographic and economic trends as a catalyst, she will talk about how the major growth areas will uncover both the short- and long-term opportunities of tomorrow, and how all will transform the current landscape.

Speaker: Erica Orange, V.P. — The Future Hunters

2:00p-3:00p Advanced Production Measurement

This session will present how to understand both product yield and shrinkage to maximize profits using load volume scanning.

Speaker: Lawson Lamar, II, Loadscan

3:00p-3:30p Snack Break *Sponsored By T.H. Glennon Co.*

3:30p-4:30p Everything You Need to Know about DC and How it Affects MSC Members

Hear an overview of what is going on in DC, the balance of power, topics and items they are tackling and (more importantly) what MSC members SHOULD be paying attention to at the federal level.

Speaker: Jim Esquea, Vice President of Public Affairs, SMG

4:30p-6:00p President's Reception

Join us for our closing event as the President's Reception gives participants the opportunity to recap the bounty of information presented at the meeting and say goodbye to old and new friends before returning home.

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Everyone is Welcomed to Participate!

From owners to plant managers or marketing and sales executives to industry suppliers, the MSC invites all interested parties to Memphis for the 50th MSC Annual Meeting. Come in person to network with industry people and to hear what the Council is doing for your benefit.

General Meeting Guidelines:

Non-Members: Participation from non-member companies is welcomed. Non-member participants may attend one association meeting as a first-time registrant and are entitled to the member registration rate. Participation at a second meeting as a non-member is permitted at non-member registration rates. Attendance at additional meetings is by special invitation. Non-members of MSC may join the Council at any time prior to the Annual Meeting and receive an immediate discount on the registration fee. For information on becoming a member, contact the MSC office at (806) 832-1810.

Meeting Registration: Registration fees include participation at education sessions, handouts, coffee breaks, receptions and the Keynote lunch. Travel to the meeting and hotel accommodations are NOT included in the registration.

Cancellations & Refunds: Cancellations at any time due to changes in TN or home state Covid-19 travel regulations will receive full refunds. Other cancellations must be received in writing at the MSC office by September 6, 2021 and will be subject to a cancellation fee of 25%, which will be deducted from the refund. No refund will be made for non-Covid-19 cancellations received after September 6, 2021.

Limits of Liability: The planners, sponsors and host hotels owners, management and staff of the MSC Annual Meeting and its associated events claim no liability for the acts of any supplier to this meeting, nor for the safety of any attendee while in transit to, in residence at or in transit from this event. Attendees who purchase non-refundable airline tickets do so at their own risk. In the event of meeting cancellation, the total amount of liability of the planners and sponsors will be limited to a refund of the registration fee. Submission of the registration form acknowledges acceptance of these provisions.

Hotel Information:

With a style and tradition befitting one of Memphis' grandest, most legendary hotels, *The Peabody Memphis* offers a magnificent bridge between the "Blues City's" celebrated past and cosmopolitan present.

Nestled in the heart of downtown, the historic Forbes Four-Star, AAA Four-Diamond hotel offers a one-of-a-kind experience just blocks from Beale Street, the Memphis Rock 'n Soul Museum, the Gibson Guitar Factory, Fed-Ex Forum, Sun Studio, the Orpheum Theatre and the Renasant Convention Center.

Known as the "South's Grand Hotel," The Peabody is legendary for its charm, elegance, gracious hospitality and rich history. The Peabody's story as one of the grandest, most historic hotels in downtown Memphis dates back to 1869 when the original Peabody Hotel opened on the corner of Main & Monroe, immediately becoming the social and business hub of Memphis. In 1925 a newer, grander Peabody was built at its present location of Union and 2nd Street, continuing the legacy of the "South's Grand Hotel." It was 1933 when ducks were originally placed in the hotel's lobby fountain, setting in motion an 85-year tradition that continues today with the March of the Peabody Ducks, who parade daily through the lobby at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

When you're ready to experience Memphis' most unique and distinctive hotel, The Peabody is waiting. Stay at The Peabody in style in its newly renovated guestrooms and suites. In addition to opulent designs, décor and furnishings, each of the smoke-free guest rooms and suites has two features in common: every modern luxury imaginable and the unparalleled guest service that has earned The Peabody Memphis Forbes Four-Star and AAA Four-Diamond ratings.

Host Hotel Reservations: A special block of rooms has been set-aside for MSC meeting participants. The preferred guest rate for MSC members is: \$214 (+tax)/night. The deadline for discounted room rates and space availability is when the block is filled or AUGUST 31, 2021 - **WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.**

TO MAKE A ROOM RESERVATION FOR THE MEETING:

By Phone: 1.800.732.2639, Group Code: Mention Mulch & Soil Council

On-line: <https://reservations.travelclick.com/95096?groupID=3211722#/guestsandrooms> *

**If this link does not load when clicked, copy and paste it into your browser.*

TO DOWNLOAD A FORM TO REGISTER FOR THE MEETING: [CLICK HERE FOR FORM](#)

MSC POLICY STATEMENT ON JUMPING WORMS



The following is a Policy Statement on Jumping Worms in mulch and soil products that was prepared by the MSC Standards Committee and adopted by the Council Board of Directors in July 23, 2021:

MSC POLICY STATEMENT ON JUMPING WORMS

(AKA: Crazy Worms, Alabama Jumpers and Snake Worms)

Adopted July 23, 2021

Overview

Jumping worms (*Amyntas* spp.) are an invasive species native to eastern Asia. They cause forest ecosystem disturbance and are also troublesome for homeowners and gardeners.

- As their name implies, they jump, wiggle and are very active.
- Jumping worms live in the leaf litter and the top few inches of soil on the forest floor.
- They can be found in much of the Northeast, Southeast and Midwest states.
- They change the soil texture to appear like coffee grounds, strip the soil of nutrients and can kill plants.
- Prevention is the only known way to manage them.
- Jumping worms should be disposed of in the garbage. Do not release them into the environment.
- Research indicates the worm egg cocoons are killed at 104°F temperatures. Primary ingredients of soils and mulches are typically aged or composted at temperatures that exceed 104°F; so, processed soils, compost and mulch are much less likely to contain these pests.

Description

- Jumping worms can be 1.5 to 8 inches or more in length
- They are similar in size to other earthworms such as nightcrawlers or some of the larger angle worms, but their clitellum (collar-like ring) and coloring are different
- The clitellum is located 1/3 the length down the worm from the head, and it is smooth, cloudy-white and constricted, unlike the swelled saddle-like clitellum of European earthworms.
- As their name suggests, these worms may jump and wiggle noticeably when disturbed. They can move across the ground in an “S” pattern like a snake.
- Jumping worms live for only one season:
 - They hatch in late spring in 1-4 inches of soil
 - The worms grow during the summer and the adults start laying eggs in August
 - It is not known how many eggs each adult can lay
 - Eggs are very small but can be identified. Removing eggs is likely impractical

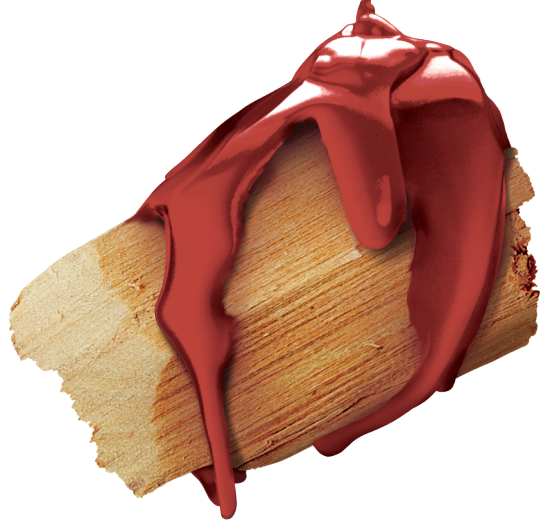
Management

There are no pesticides labeled for jumping worms in the United States. Prevention is the only known management for jumping worms

Prevention

There are currently no chemical controls or methods to eliminate them from your property. Prevention is the first step in limiting worms spreading in your lawn. Here are a few precautions you can take to help stop the spread of these voracious worms:

- Research indicates the worm egg cocoons are killed at 104°F temperatures. Primary ingredients of soils and mulches are typically aged or composted at temperatures that exceed 104°F; so, processed soils, compost and mulch are much less likely to contain these pests.
- Check your garden beds for jumping worms prior to adding any new landscape products or plants.
- Don't share plants as you may unintentionally be sharing jumping worms. Although the worms may be easy to see, the cocoon is not. And the last thing you want to do is share these invaders with your gardening friends.



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**JUMPING WORMS
(CONTINUED)**



- Don't move plants from a jumping worm-infested garden to another area. Limiting their spread can help you maintain soil and plant health in non-infested areas.
- Purchase plants from reliable sources and examine plants for signs of these unwelcome pests.
- Clean soil and debris from tools and clothing each time you move from one garden bed to the next. I used one set of tools and pair of boots when working in a garden bed where jumping worms were found. Be sure to clean your boots and clothes before visiting other's landscapes.

Disposal

Jumping worms should be bagged and disposed of in the garbage. Do not release them into the environment.

Additional Information Resources

University of Minnesota:

<https://extension.umn.edu/identify-invasive-species/jumping-worms>

University of Nebraska:

<https://neinvasives.com/species/insects/asian-jumping-worm>

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialanimals/jumping-worm/index.html>

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COME SEE OUR EXHIBITORS

Each year the Mulch & Soil Council hosts an evening reception featuring tabletop exhibits by our Associate and Affiliate member companies. This year's opening reception will be held on Wednesday, September 22, at 4:30pm at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. Come join us for an evening of renewing contacts and gathering new product and service information from the best vendors in our industry.

The Council is very thankful for the support provided by our Associate and Affiliate members throughout the year and especially during the annual meeting. Below is a list of the current member exhibitors and their contacts in the event you want to make plans to get together before, during or after the Wednesday event.

<u>Company</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Contact Email</u>
AgriCoatings/ American Colors	Jim Hallock	jhallock@americancolors.com
Amerimulch/Chromascape	Bryan Young	bryany@chromascape.com
BM&M Screening	Andy Turner	aturner@bmandm.com
Colorbiotics	Kent Rotert	kent.rotert@mbcc-group.com
Diamond Z *	Pat Crawford	pcrawford@diamondz.com
Faltech	Janet Bloodgood	Janet@bestadmix.com
Komptech	Kevin Yuncker	kyuncker@komptechamericas.com
Maverick	Lisa Gregory	lisa@mavequip.com
NOVA Automation	Van Claud	van.claud@novaautomation.com
nVenia	Amanda Peters	amanda.peters@duravant.com
Precision Husky *	Steve Brisco	steveb@precisionhusky.com
Premier Tech	Paul Soldberg	solp@premiertech.com
ProAmpac	Chris Jordan	Chris.Jordan@proampac.com
Reliance Packaging	Satish Sharma	ssharma@reliancepkg.com
Rotochopper	Jody Parker	jparker@rotochopper.com
Selene North America *	Nursel Wallace	swallace@selene-spa.com
Social Marks Media	Stephanie Marks	stephanie@socialmarksmedia.com
SPR Packaging	Jon Kent	JKent@sprpackaging.com
T.H. Glennon	Brian & Katy Shea	katy@glennoncompany.com
Vermeer	Ted Dirx	tdirx@vermeer.com
Walz Scale	Josh Bieber	jbieber@walzscale.com

*New Member

MSRF ELECTS OFFICERS & DIRECTORS



The Mulch & Soil Research Foundation is an independent but closely related scientific and research and organization (501(c)(3)) of the Mulch & Soil Council. Though legally a separate entity from MSC, its Board of Directors is comprised of the MSC Officers and Executive Director (ex-officio) and up to 3 at-large directors chosen by the MSRF Board. All officers and directors serve a 1-year term of office without compensation.

On July 22, the Foundation held its official annual meeting and installed its new officers for 2021-2022 as follows:

Officers & Directors:

President: Jim Weber (Ohio Mulch)
Vice President: Byron Morgan (Mountain West)
Sec./Treas.: Joe Ertel (Oldcastle Lawn & Garden)
Exec. Dir.: Robert LaGasse (MSC)

At-Large Directors:

Kay Jeong (Sun Gro Horticulture)
Kent Rotert (Colorbiotics)
Randy Tyre (Waupauca Northwoods)

In May, the Ohio Department of Agriculture began a 5-year review of its weights & measures regulations. In reviewing the proposed changes to its sections on §AOC 901:6-9-01 – “*Minimum Training Requirements for Weights & Measures Inspector Personnel*”, we noted references to NIST Handbooks 44 and 133 were being deleted from the original document. Although the text of the subjects in NIST Handbooks 44 and 133 remained in the proposal, they would no longer be anchored to the source of the information.

One of the key issues for W&M regulations is the absolute necessity for uniformity among states. That uniformity is provided by the rules and regulations carefully documented in NIST Handbooks 44 and 133. Without that text anchoring states to the uniformly recognized and accepted authority of NIST W&M regulations, every state could wander away from uniform practices at some future date.

Since there is no logical reason to eliminate proper reference to universally accepted regulations, MSC drafted its recommendations to strengthen its references to NIST Handbooks 44 and 133, and we advised and requested every member company doing product sales in Ohio to send comments supporting that position. Virtually everyone did and we thank all MSC members who took time to respond on this important issue.

Here is an excerpt from the Council’s response:

AOC 901:6-9-01 – Minimum Training Requirements for Weights and Measures Inspector Personnel.

In paragraphs (C) (1)(d), (e), and (f), the draft proposes to delete reference to “handbook 44”. The National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) handbooks are referenced several times in the proposed draft for AOC 901:6-8-01 specifically to clarify the universally accepted technical measures or forms adopted by a majority of states through the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM). Uniformity is essential in regulating interstate commerce in a fair and equitable application of rules and regulations for free market trade.

Rather than risk possible confusion of a critical technical resource by eliminating reference to “handbook 44”, we recommend following the procedures used in AOC 901:6-8-01 and add the complete reference in full or by the generally accepted acronym as either “*National Institute of Standards and Technology Handbook 44*” or “*NIST Handbook 44*” either of which would absolutely solidify for all parties the uniformity, authority and source for the universally accepted standard of the referenced training. In paragraphs (C) (2)(b), (c), (d), and (e), the draft proposes to delete reference to “handbook 133”. Here again we recommend not deleting these partial references to the universally accepted training manuals of NIST. Consistent with AOC 901:6-8-01 and our comments relating to paragraphs (C) (1)(d), (e), and (f), above, **we recommend strengthening the clarity, uniformity and authority of the Ohio training program** by either adding the full reference to the most authoritative resource for *Checking Net Contents Of Packaged Goods* by replacing the proposed deletion of “handbook 133” with either the full reference “*National Institute of Science and Technology Handbook 133*” or the generally accepted acronym “*NIST Handbook 133*” for all paragraphs [(C) (2)(b), (c), (d), and (e),] in the proposed amendments to AOC 901:6-9-01.

In July, all comments were reviewed by the Agriculture Department’s Review Committee and a new draft was sent to the Common Sense Initiative Office for review. We will monitor the process and hope the Common Sense Initiative Office will live up to its name in approving the proposed changes.



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2021 INDUSTRY COMPENSATION SURVEY REPORT



USCC & USCIC SUPPORT PROPOSED COMPOST ACT



Last March, the MSC began investigating the potential impact of a \$15/hr minimum wage on the industry. There were two issues of concern:

- How many industry jobs historically pay less than \$15/hr,
- What would raising wages to \$15/hr cost the industry?, and
- How many other jobs at or above \$15/hr would be pressured to increase as well?

A survey asking for the recent past pay scale for the high and low wages for 14 industry job positions was sent to all Council members. A total of 23 member companies responded with data across 7 regions. As expected, results vary by region in a 118-page report showing national results and regional sub-reports.

In the interim between starting the survey and finally reporting the data, the political environment and the economic impact of unemployment PLUS \$600 and then \$300 drastically changed the labor landscape. Historic wages have been turned on their ear due to extreme labor shortages, ongoing pandemic issues and government intervention policies. As a result, the current industry compensation survey is a historical view of PRE-PANDEMIC compensation for a very different labor pool.

Regardless, the report is done and is being made available in electronic format only for members to download. To get a copy, [CLICK HERE](#) or call the MSC office.

The US Composting Council and the U.S. Composting Infrastructure Coalition issued a statement in support of the Cultivating Organic Matter through the Promotion of Sustainable Techniques (COMPOST) Act (H.R. 4443) introduced in the House by Representatives Julia Brownley (D-CA-26), Chellie Pingree (D-ME-01), and Ann Kuster (D-NH-02), and S.2388 in the U.S. Senate introduced by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ).

According to USCC/USCIC, the COMPOST Act meets the growing demand from individuals and businesses to compost food scraps and certified compostable packaging. Assisting the transition to a circular economy, the COMPOST Act would create new USDA grant and loan guarantee programs for composting infrastructure projects, including large-scale composting facilities as well as farm, home, or community-based projects. The bill would add composting as a conservation practice for USDA conservation programs. Both the act of producing compost from organic waste and using compost on a farm would qualify as conservation practices. This bill addresses a critical need for regions and communities around the country looking to expand access to food waste composting, an important step to lead the shift to net-zero.

“By investing in composting infrastructure, we can help address our climate crisis, create local jobs and improve both our agricultural and urban soils,” said Frank Franciosi, Executive Director of the U.S. Composting Council, a member of the Coalition. “The






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USCC (CONT'D)

benefits of increased compost production include reduced volumes of organic materials flowing to landfills, lowered methane emissions, sequestering carbon back into the soil and closing the loop on a circular economy.”

“Compostable products, unlike recyclables, are not collected on their own. They are collected as part of a broader organics stream that includes food scraps. USCIC partners estimated that it would take about \$2 billion to expand compost access nationally, which is why the Act is calling for this level of funding.”

OREGON APPROVES HUMAN COMPOSTING



Oregon has become the third state in the US to legalize a new end-of-life process of human composting or “natural organic reduction” of the human body. Governor Kate Brown (D) signed the House Bill 2574 into law in June, which will allow burial by composting bodies apart from limited options of burial or cremation – both of which are adding to the environmental crisis.

The state has followed the footsteps of Washington, that first legalized human composting in 2019, and Colorado that also followed suit in May of this year. The law, that went into effect July 1st, also clarifies rules surrounding alkaline hydrolysis, an existing burial process in the state, also referred to as aqua cremation and specifies that the resulting compost may not be used to grow food for human consumption.

The natural reduction of the human body to organic compost is done by placing the body in an eight feet by four feet steel container filled with wood chips and other plant material. After the microbes and bacteria break it down for 30 days, the remains are then stored in separate containers for another few weeks. One body and the additional organic material used in the process can produce up to 1 cu yd of compost. The families can take the human soil home or donate it to conservation lands.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Mulch & Soil Council is pleased to welcome the following companies as new members:

Producer Member:

Sierra Pacific Industries

Contact: Steve Carey
19794 Riverside Ave
Anderson, CA 96007
Tel: 530.532.6630
Email: scarey@spi-ind.com
Web: www.spi-ind.com

Affiliate Member:

Diamond Z

Contact: Pat Crawford
11299 Bass Lane
Caldwell, ID 83605
Tel: 208.484.4448
Email: pcrawford@diamondz.com
Web: www.diamondz.com

CERTIFIED PRODUCT NEWS

New Certified Products

Mulch

Amerigrow Recycling

Premium Black Mulch

Premium Soil

Terrace Brands

Bonnie Harvest Select Raised Bed Soil 0.12-0.006-0.009

Standard Soil

Terrace Brands

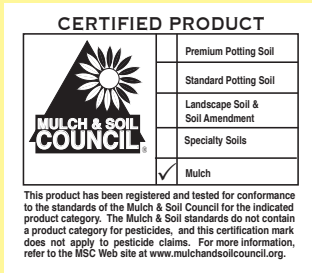
Country Soil Organic Raised Bed Mix 0.05-0.03-0.04

Recertified Products

Mulch

Amerigrow Recycling
Austin Wood Recycling
Austin Wood Recycling
Austin Wood Recycling
Garick Corporation

Premium Brown Mulch
Texas Native Hardwood Mulch
Texas Native Red Shredded Cedar Mulch
Texas Native Royal Black Colored Mulch
Black Landscape Mulch



CERTIFICATION AUDITS IN NEW ENGLAND

While it is the responsibility of product producers to maintain compliance with industry standards for certified products, the MSC Certification Audit Team continues to conduct field audits for random compliance sampling. In June, the team ventured to the northeast states for a 5-day, 1,001 mile tour of retail and manufacturing facilities.

The Council extends its thanks to all the company representatives and retail employees who help the team gather samples around the region.





CERTIFICATION AUDITS IN THE MIDWEST

The last of the regions for this season was the Midwest where the MSC Certification Audit Team continued to conduct field audits for random compliance sampling. In June, the team ventured to the central states for a 5-day, 1,383 mile tour of retail and manufacturing facilities.

The Council extends its thanks to all the company representatives and retail employees who help the team gather samples around the region.



