

January 2010

Member of:
Desert Empire District,
California Garden Clubs,
Inc., Pacific Region,
And National Garden
Clubs, Inc.

Desert Trumpet

Newsletter for
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The President's Corner

By Shirley Craver

THEME: *Gardener's We Are, We Plant
Our Gardens With Beauty*

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES. We had a great time at the Christmas party and those of you who were unable to come, missed a wonderful buffet. The amount of food is always overwhelming but oh so good. Santa Claus was good to all. There were about 15 of us. Some of our members were out of town, or other commitments. We were sorry that Arthur and Judy could not make it. We hope that you're feeling better by now Judy. Janet Eyre came from Boron.

As you know by now, the January general meeting has been changed to the 3rd Saturday, Jan. 16th at 1 P.M. at the church, usual room. THIS CHANGE IS DUE TO THE CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUBS, INC. WINTER BOARD MEETING IN SAN DIEGO, WHICH YOUR OFFICERS ARE ATTENDING TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FOR OUR GARDEN CLUB. REMEMBER THAT THIS MONTH'S CLUB MEETING IS JAN. 16th -A WEEK LATER THEN USUAL, THIS MONTH ONLY.

Remember to bring food goods (none perishables) for the church food bank. We have taken on this effort to help

the less fortunate in Ridgecrest. A little helps a lot when you have nothing. I bet baby food and cereal would even be welcome. As your president, I am especially interested in going to the San Diego meetings. I really want to help our club in any way I can. We need to grow and obtain younger members to take over in the club, some of us are getting up in years, but we really want to see Desert Planters grow. Encourage your friends and neighbors. and BRING THEM TO OUR MEETINGS, THEY MIGHT FIND

*Happy New Year
to all our Members!*

US A GREAT GROUP OF FUN LOVING PEOPLE. Maybe they might join after a meeting or two.

See all of you on Jan 16th, come to lunch first at the Carriage Inn, at 11 A.M. to meet our guest speaker Mike Prather, then travel down to the church a block north of the restaurant for the club meeting. HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERY ONE STAY SAFE. Shirley

Thank you:

Thank you Lucille and son David for graciously hosting the Christmas party in your home. It was a delightful evening, good food and friends.

Charter Motto:
"Make Ridgecrest Clean"

January 4, 2010

Monday—Take down the Christmas decorations at the Ridgecrest Branch, Kern County Library. 9 A.M. Monday. Enter the library by the west-side office door. Librarian Marsha Lloyd will have the door open just for DPR.

January 8 to 10

CGCI Winter Board Meeting. Location: The Dana on Mission Bay, San Diego. Sponsor: Palomar District.

January 12

Chamber of Commerce Membership Luncheon, 2nd Tuesday, 12:00 noon at Victoria's at the Heritage. (in courtyard at Heritage Inn). RSVP 375-8331

January 16

January Meeting day change due to CGCI meeting in San Diego:

DPR Monthly Meeting, 1 PM — Immanuel Christian Center, 1201 N. China Lake Blvd. At 11:00 A.M. meet for lunch prior to the meeting at Carriage Inn at the Potpourri restaurant.

Speaker: Mike Prather, lives in Lone Pine. He is a member of the Owens Valley Committee OVC that was instrumental in getting the DWP to direct water flowing back into the Owens River in 2006. Prather will update us on the Owens Valley water issues that have happened over the past several years. Check this website www.ovcweb.org for more information on the OVC and to read their newsletter.

- Horticulture Grow & Show by: All members please bring plant cuttings from your garden. Door Prizes awarded, come and be the lucky winner.
- Refreshments graciously provided by: Rozella Eyre and Karla Christiansen.

January 26

Please note: DPR Business Meeting location change: **DPR Business Meeting is the 4th Tuesday.** 1 PM. Meet at Lucille Nielson's home, All members welcome.

February 8

Desert Empire District Winter Board Meeting. Coffee, 9:30 A.M. Host Desert Rose & Boron Garden Clubs. The meeting is being held at the Community Center, 10400 Heather Street, California City.

February 13

DPR Monthly Meeting is the 2nd Saturday, 1 PM —

Speaker: Aida Stafford is planning to demonstrate how to make "Floral Wreaths for *Valentine's Day*."



If you have a place to keep plants warm—get a head start and keep potting up plants for our spring plant sale.

IN MEMORIAM:

By Arthur Spiegel

Three members of Desert Planters of Ridgecrest passed away in 2009. Desert Planters remembers Harriet Newman, Gudrun Doud, and David Perry. All three were active members of our club - Art Spiegel remembers when Harriet Newman, as part of a nominating committee, called him to ask if he would run for office as treasurer when Jim Appleton wished to relinquish that office. David Perry gave us excellent gardening programs. (You could tell because people were taking notes.) Gudrun Doud wrote funny skits about members that she would read at social gatherings. We miss them all.

Pine Needle Mulch:

From: <http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/2702>

pH of 7.0 is the ideal soil pH, because so many plants do well at this level, which is neither acid nor alkaline. The exceptions are acid-loving plants such as azaleas, camellias, and blueberries and alkaline-loving plants such as cosmos, daylily, and foxglove (see also table in file "pH Ideal pH for some plants"). I've mulched the bed with pine straw for 20 years. Today, especially for this article, I measured the pH again. The meter registered at 7.0, exactly where it was when I started the bed so many years ago.

Here are some other facts to consider:

- * Pine straw in itself is slightly acidic at 6.0 - 6.5.
- * Normal rain water tests at 5.6.
- * So why hasn't the soil at a pH of 7.0 in the salvia bed become more acid?
- * Soil is not a static medium. Its components react with one another. In the case of rain water and pine straw, those interactions have a neutralizing effect on their initial acidity.
- * Research by others, more carefully and scientifically done than my experiment with the salvia bed, shows both small increases and small decreases in soil pH from using various mulches such as oak leaves, pine straw, and shredded cedar. However, the changes were so minuscule that they were totally insignificant, and there was no

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CGCI, DED AND NGC, UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 8 - 10, 2010, CGCI Winter Board Meeting, San Diego, Sponsor: Palomar District.

February 8, 2010 Desert Empire District Winter Board Meeting. Host: Desert Rose of California City

February 18-20, 2010 Flower Show School, Course 4, Encinitas. Sponsor: Palomar District. Chairman: Laura Crenshaw

April 7-9, 2010 Flower Show Symposium, Sacramento. Sponsor: CGCI. Chairman: Gloria Aminian

April 20-21, 2010 Gardening Study School, Series 21, Course II, Loomis. Sponsor: Golden Foothills District. Chairman: Patsy Jeffery

May 17, 2010 Desert Empire District Annual Spring Meeting. Host: Desert Planters of Ridgecrest. United Methodist Church, 639 N. Norma Street, Ridgecrest

June 4 - 7, 2010, CGCI 79th Convention, Westlake Village. Sponsor: Channel Islands District. Co-Chairmen: Jean Reiley & Beverly Brune

June 14, 2010 Desert Empire District Post Convention. Host: Oasis Garden Club of IWV

July 12, 2010 Desert Empire District President's Council/Planning Meeting. Host: Boron Garden Club. Boron Senior Center, Boron

September 23 - 26, 2010 NGC Fall Board, Great Falls, MT.

October 12-14, 2010 Flower Show School, Course 1. Sponsor: Sacramento River Valley District. Chairman: Mary Arakelian

For more information about meetings, schools and brochures see the CGCI website. www.CaliforniaGardenClubs.org

- CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUBS, INC. (CGCI) State Garden Club information www.CaliforniaGardenClubs.org.
- PACIFIC REGION www.PacificRegionGardenClubs.org
- NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC. for National Garden Club information—www.GardenClub.org.
- Desert Empire District (DED). To download the *Desert Trumpet*—www.DesertEmpireDistrict.org.

Pine Needle Mulch:*(Continued from Page 3)*

negative impact on plant health.

Another issue sometimes raised in the pine-straw-as-mulch debate is that of terpenes in the needles. Terpenes are chemical molecules said to retard germination and new growth. Since I don't mulch seed beds and use pine straw only in established beds, retardation of germination is a good thing. It helps to keep weed seeds from germinating.

The terpene effect turns out to be short-lived. Terpenes dissolve readily in water and dissipate into the air, leaving behind only trace amounts that may discourage germination but certainly don't harm established plants. By the time pine needles are brown and dry, most of the terpenes have evaporated. Once that wonderful pine fragrance has gone out of the needles, so have the terpenes, the source of that fragrance.

So why is pine straw a good mulch? Let me count the ways:

1. It lasts a long time. Pine straw doesn't float and wash away. It breaks down more slowly, so it doesn't need to be reapplied as often as other mulches.
2. It's lightweight, lighter per cubic foot than most other mulches. The bales are easy to carry and offer more coverage for the equivalent weight of other mulches.
3. It's sustainable. No trees are harvested to produce it.
4. It promotes soil health. The soil breathes better, doesn't compact, and allows for better water infiltration with pine straw than with other mulches.
5. It promotes plant health. Its decomposition adds organic material and nutrients to be taken up by plants.
6. Its uniform color and fine texture is visually appealing.
7. It doesn't attract termites.
8. It's easy to apply.
9. It's free! I'm fortunate to have free access to a nearby source. If you'd like to try pine straw, but don't have any pine trees on your property, scout around to see who does. If you don't

mind being a bit forward, ask the owner/owners if they use their pine straw. If not, or if they have a surplus, ask if you may stop by to collect some.

Other sources for pine straw include your local nursery or garden center. Pine straw is generally sold in bales. The needles in the bales are compacted. When you untie a bale, you'll be amazed at how much the needles expand and how much coverage a single bale will provide. Failing local sources, you can also find pine straw online. Here are a few sources: "By the box, By the bale, By the bale".

And the larger question: Why mulch at all? At this time of year (fall) my number one reason to mulch is the prevention of alternate freezing and thawing of the soil between now and spring. This process can lift plant roots right out of the soil and is called "heaving." Our strawberry bed, in particular, is subject to heaving, so we make sure to cover it with at least three inches of pine straw every fall.

Other reasons to mulch:

- * It helps prevent loss of topsoil from wind and water erosion.
- * It reduces water usage by maintaining soil moisture.
- * It reduces rainwater runoff.
- * It reduces soil compaction.
- * It improves soil tilth.
- * It makes the landscape more attractive.
- * It reduces weed growth.
- * It insulates soil to keep plants cooler in summer and warmer in winter.
- * It improves soil fertility.

Submitted by Penelope LePome

Remember: Meeting change to 3rd Saturday January 16, 2010. This month only.

And: to bring a nonperishable food item to the meeting for the food pantry.

Desert Planters of Ridgecrest,
P. O. Box 841, Ridgecrest CA 93556-0841
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