

NORTHWOODS YARD & GARDEN

Weekly Column

April 29, 2024

Anglers Guide to Yard Care

With the fishing season opening on Saturday, many of us are torn between spending our leisure time tending to the yard or going fishing. There are some effective ways to minimize yard work, which are sound horticultural practices, to allow more time for other outdoor activities.

Mulching is one of those practices. Mulching gardens and landscape beds helps keep down weeds, conserve soil moisture, keep soil temperatures uniform, and even make landscape beds look better while you are gone. Pull up any existing weeds, roughen the soil surface, and allow soil to warm a bit before applying mulch.

Several types of shredded or chunk bark products spread 2 to 4 inches deep make ideal mulches in the landscape. Avoid the "volcano" pile of mulch along tree trunk bases. Straw can be used around vegetables. Avoid using plastic except in the vegetable garden, where it is an excellent choice for crops like tomatoes, melons, and peppers.

Matching the plant to the specific site conditions can also help reduce maintenance. As mentioned here previously, before adding any new plantings to your yard, research their needs.

Plants that need frequent watering, fertilizing, and pruning require lots of attention. Typically, the biggest issue area gardeners face is trying to grow sun loving plants in shade areas. Plants growing in the wrong place will decline.

Lawns are exceedingly difficult to maintain in shade; consider shade tolerant groundcovers like pachysandra, periwinkle, or several other available species as alternatives. Once established, the groundcovers will require minimum care and will resist weed invasions, in addition to looking nice.

For your lawn, mowing higher this season is the best advice to keep time-consuming problems to a minimum. Set the mower at about three inches for the season. That will lead to deeper roots and help keep problem weeds like crabgrass at bay, plus the grass will be healthier and look better than is mowed too close.

Ornamental grasses can be an anglers' friend as they are exceptionally minimal maintenance and attractive at the same time. They do not need much water or fertilizer, have very few if any insect problems, deer do not eat them, and hardy species come back every year. The only maintenance concern is to cut back their old foliage, which if you have not yet done so, you need to do right now before taking the boat out of the garage.

Wise decisions for the yard will lead to more time to make decisions like which lake to go to, what to fish for, and what bait to use.

Interested in learning more about Horticulture in Iron County? Feel free to contact:

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