



# Quality News

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2015

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- [Composting Essentials](#)
- [Yard 'To-Do' Checklist](#)
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Do you have a compost pile or bin, or have you been thinking about getting one? Compost is very beneficial to the yard. Not only does it create rich nutrient soil, but it will cut down on the amount of household waste. Here are the essential steps of composting....

Pick a level location about 5 feet square, preferably out of direct sunlight and away from roof drainage. Then clear the ground of grass. Pile up the material directly on this spot, or put it in a composting bin or tumbler bought at your local home center. You can also build a simple enclosure from chicken wire, scrap lumber, or cinder blocks. Make it about 3 feet square, and leave gaps in the sides to let air circulate.

Building a compost pile is a bit like following a recipe: You need to mix the right ingredients in the right amounts. A compost pile needs "browns" and "greens," shorthand for carbon- and nitrogen-based plant material, respectively, to feed microbes as they break down the scraps. Browns can include leaves, twigs, and wood chips, as well as shredded newsprint and cardboard. Greens can be fruit and vegetable scraps, grass clippings, and, not so obviously, coffee grounds and eggshells. Layer browns and greens in roughly equal amounts in your pile. Be sure to chop up or shred bulky stuff like branches first, so it's easier to break down. Store food scraps indoors in a sealed container before emptying it into your pile. When you

## GOT COMPOST?

*Learn the essential steps of composting...*

start cutting the grass in springtime, you can add the clippings as long as you don't treat your lawn with pesticides, which could kill the needed microbes.

Microbes have a hard time breaking down things like cheese, butter, milk, cooking oil, or scraps of meat. So avoid using your pile as a trash bin—add only fruit and veggie bits. Animal waste from Fido or Fluffy doesn't belong in there either. Besides, you don't want this sort of stuff sitting around outside; it smells bad as it rots and attracts vermin.

Enough said.



Aerate the pile with a pitchfork or shovel (or by turning a compost tumbler) about once a week to distribute air and moisture. Or invest in a compost turner, which has a long straight handle and a "paddlelike" bottom to make turning easier in a bin that's hard to maneuver a shovel inside. Adding loose, lightweight materials like bark mulch helps create air pockets that prevent compaction. Keep in mind that if the microbes don't get enough oxygen, they'll produce hydrogen sulfide, which gives off a telltale rotten-egg stink—so don't let your pile get to this point.

Your pile should be as damp as a wrung-out sponge—any wetter and the microbes won't get enough air. As you add each layer of browns and greens, lightly mist the pile with a garden hose sprayer or a watering can. You can test the compost by squeezing a handful of it (wear gloves if you don't want to get messy). If water drips out, turn the pile a few times to let moisture evaporate.

## August 'To-Do' List



**Water 3 times per week...not between 11am-7pm**

**"Check for and remove spent flowers to allow new blooms, which may continue to appear well into September."**



We couldn't be more excited that we actually got rain last month! We know it's been a long time so for those of you who forgot what rain is, it's the wet stuff that falls from the sky. Rain can help the yard in ways that your average watering just can't compare to. You've probably noticed that since the rain, the lawn may look greener, the bedding plants have grown faster, and the weeds have taken off in size and numbers. That is because the rain contains nitrates that are 100% natural and since the nitrates are already dissolved, they have an amazing effect on your yard. That will influence this months' checklist...

**Weeds are everywhere!**

Plants love a good rainfall; unfortunately, so do weeds. It's only after a good week or so of rain that you notice how much weed seed you really had just waiting to get wet and germinate. Not only weed seed, but also unwanted grass seed that you didn't even know you had in your beds and gravel. Usually at this point, hand weeding is not an option anymore (unless you're lucky and

it's not too bad). It's time to consider chemical applications to get those weeds under control.

**Get another burst of flowers**

Make sure to keep up with the deadheading. The rain helps jumpstart flowers and encourages new blooms to appear. Check for and remove spent flowers to allow new blooms, which may continue to appear well into September.

**What should be pruned?**

This month you can relax a bit on the pruning. We are experiencing temperatures that most trees definitely don't like to be trimmed in. However, some flowering shrubs may be ready to trim. For example, Spanish Brooms and Forsythia should be done blooming those vibrant yellow flowers, so now would be the time to remove branches with spent flowers and add some shape to the shrub (never prune them before or during flowering). Pruning on other shrubs should be restricted to crossing branches, unsightly stragglers and deadwood.

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## Check Out Our August Plant Specials

This month we are giving 20% off some beautiful trees and shrubs. The weather is great so start planting now! Check out our website at [www.QualityLawnCareABQ.com](http://www.QualityLawnCareABQ.com) or scan the QR code to the right. You can also call our office at 836-4000 to ask about our discounted trees and shrubs this month.



## Got Compost? (cont. from page 1)

You may notice a few worms in that handful. Never fear—they're a sign of a healthy pile.

Even in chilly weather, the pile will get warm as the microbes chomp away. You may even see steam rising from it—this is normal. Ideally, the pile's internal temperature should be between 105 and 145 degrees F. You can use an elongated soil thermometer to take its temperature. A too-hot pile should be aerated, and it may need more material. If the pile is too cool, it may benefit from a sprinkling of packaged compost starter, available at garden centers. The starter provides an added dose of microbes; use it anytime decomposition slows down.

Finished compost looks like rich organic soil—dark and crumbly in texture, with no large chunks of material. To check if yours is ready, grab a handful, put it in a pot, and place a few grass seeds in it. If they sprout within a week, your compost is "cooked" and ready to spread. So go on....dig in!



## August 'To-Do' List (cont. from page 2)

### Protect the grass

When it comes to extreme heat, make sure you're taking the proper measures to protect your lawn. Keep the lawn longer in the heat. Cutting it too short lets moisture escape and causes the lawn to burn. When mowing, however, make sure you are only taking off 1/3 of the total length. Cutting any shorter can damage the grass.

As usual, this is just a small portion of what should be done this month. Give us a call at 836-4000 to see what other services should be done or to schedule us to help you out.

### Did you know...

The plant that takes the longest time to flower is the rare Bolivian herb *Puya raimondii*. The flowers emerge after the plant is about 150 years old, and the plant then dies.

A single coffee tree yields only one pound of roasted, ground coffee annually.

The bark of a redwood tree is fireproof. Fires that occur in a redwood forest take place inside the trees.

## August Specials



### \$10 OFF any Weeding/Cleanup

~Totaling \$100 or more~

Must mention coupon for discount. Expires 8/31/2015.

Not valid with any other offers.

Call 836-4000

### \$10 OFF Irrigation Check

~Based on \$70 minimum~

Must mention coupon for discount. Expires 8/31/2015.

Not valid with any other offers.

Call 836-4000



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**"Give your yard some Q.L.C."**

*Inside this issue:*

- August 'To-Do'
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- Discounts

Newsletter by Gina Williams  
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## A letter to our customers

August already! Out of one hot month, into another. Last month we had an article about heat stress in the yard that still pertains to this month. See our website if you missed it. We know its difficult to work in the yard in this heat so call us if you need any help. If you must work outside, please remember to stay hydrated, work in the shade whenever possible, and take regular breaks.

Thank you all so much for your business and your support!

-Your Q.L.C. Staff

## Or Current Resident

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