

Caplan, Larry A.

Subject: HORT ALERT: 11-21-2017 Ev. Courier, Wood Ashes, Equipment Recalls, Recycling Events

11/21/2017

As you may have already heard, the Evansville Courier and Press has decided to cancel my "Extension Notes" column, which has been printed in the Sunday edition of the paper. This decision was made by the Courier's editors. The reason they sent me stated: "With our shifting resources and new leadership, we are no longer producing local content for the features pages meaning we are eliminating some of that content, including your column."

As I mentioned in my farewell column on November 12, I had written my column, free of charge, for 19 years. While I am sad to be parting ways with the Evansville Courier and Press, I will use this as an opportunity to change the way I share information with you, the gardening public. Instead of sending out a Hort Alert whenever something grabs my attention (which has admittedly created a rather uneven distribution of Alerts), I will endeavor to send out a message once or twice per month. I haven't decided quite on the format these new Alerts will take, so I'm starting to create a short survey to get your opinion. I'll probably share that survey with you in December.

In the meantime, you can access my Extension Notes archive by visiting here:
<https://extension.purdue.edu/Pages/article.aspx?intItemID=23564> .

If you have friends, family, or neighbors who you think would like to receive Hort Alerts, please share this issue with them, or have them email me.

Storing Power Equipment for the Winter

Late fall or early winter is a good time to service power equipment such as mowers, tillers and garden tractors. Run the equipment out of gas or treat the existing gas with a stabilizer as untreated gas can deteriorate over time. If using a stabilizer, run the engine long enough for untreated gas in the carburetor bowl to be burned and replaced. This is also a good time to replace the oil (and filter, if present) since the engine is warm. Check and replace the spark plug if necessary. Some gardeners will also apply a light, sprayable oil into the cylinder through the spark plug hole. Check and clean air filters and replace if necessary.

Many mowers and tillers will have a foam prefilter that can become filthy with use. If allowed to become too dirty, engines will run poorly or may not run at all. Sharpen blades, clean tines, tighten screws, replace broken parts and do all the other things needed to keep equipment in good shape. Though such maintenance takes some time and effort, it pays for itself by reducing frustration and lost time due to poorly performing equipment during a hectic spring.

Should I Put Wood Ashes in the Garden?

Many families enjoy fireplaces, fire pits, and wood-burning stoves, but are left to wonder what to do with the resulting ashes. Many gardening books advise throwing these ashes in the garden, but that's not always the best answer.

Though ashes do contain significant amounts of potash (potassium), they contain little phosphate and no nitrogen. Most southern Indiana garden soils already contain adequate levels of potash, so adding more isn't usually necessary. On the other hand, the extra potash won't usually hurt anything.

The largest component of wood ash (about 25 percent) is calcium carbonate, a common liming material that increases soil alkalinity. Wood ash has a very fine particle size, so it reacts rapidly and completely in the soil. Increasing the alkalinity of the soil DOES affect plant nutrition. Nutrients are most readily available to plants when the soil is slightly acidic. As soil alkalinity increases and the pH rises above 7.0, nutrients such as phosphorus, iron, boron, manganese, copper, zinc and potassium become chemically tied to the soil and less available for plant use.

Specific recommendations for the use of wood ash in the garden are difficult to make because soil composition and reaction varies from garden to garden. Acidic soils (pH less than 5.5) will likely be improved by wood ash addition. Soils that are slightly acidic (pH 6.0 to 6.5) should not be harmed by the application of 20 pounds per 100 square feet annually, if the ash is worked into the soil about 6 inches or so. However, if your soil is neutral or alkaline (pH 7.0 or greater), find another way to dispose of wood ash. If you don't know your soil's acidity or alkalinity level, have it tested for pH.

Crop tolerance to alkaline soil also should be considered. Some plants, such as asparagus and juniper, are more tolerant of slightly alkaline conditions than "acid-loving" plants, such as potatoes, rhododendrons and blueberries. Wood ash should never be used on acid-loving plants.

Bush Hog Recalls Riding Lawn Mowers Due to Laceration Hazard

Name of product: Bush Hog HDE riding lawn mowers

Hazard: The mower blade can separate from the spindle, posing a laceration hazard to the operator or bystanders.

Recall number: 18-036

Description:

This recall involves Bush Hog Zero Turn Radius (ZTR) HDE riding lawn mowers sold in black with gray wheels and gray rollover protection structures (ROPs). HDE is printed on the left side of the unit beneath the seat. The mowers were manufactured on or before August 4, 2017. The manufacturing date is located on a plate on the right rear frame, underneath the fender. The 15-digit serial number includes the manufacture date in digits 9-11. Recalled mowers have a date code that represents the number of days since the beginning of the calendar year of 001 through 216 (January 1 through August 4). Mowers with a yellow bolt fastening the blade to the spindle have already been repaired.

Remedy: Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled lawn mowers and contact a Bush Hog dealer to arrange for a free repair.

Incidents/Injuries: The firm has received two reports of blade disengagement during product demonstrations. No injuries have been reported.

Sold At: Bush Hog dealers nationwide from February 2017 to September 2017 for between \$6,200 and \$7,200.

Manufacturer(s): Bush Hog Inc., of Selma, Ala.

Manufactured In: U.S.

Consumer Contact:

Bush Hog toll-free at 877-873-0145 from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT Monday through Friday, or online at www.bushhog.com and click "Safety Recall" for more information.

John Deere Recalls Lawn Tractors and Service Part Transmissions Due To Crash Hazard

Name of Product: John Deere D105 lawn tractors and service part transmissions

Hazard: The transmission can fail, posing a crash hazard.

Remedy: Repair. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled lawn tractors and contact a John Deere dealer for a free repair.

Consumer Contact: Deere & Company at 800- 537-8233 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET Monday through Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET or online at www.deere.com and click on Recalls under the Parts & Service drop-down menu for more information.

Pictures available here: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls/2017/John-Deere-Recalls-Lawn-Tractors-and-Service-Part-Transmissions>

Recall Details

Units:

About 25,000 tractors and 500 transmissions sold as service parts (in addition, about 1,200 were sold in Canada)

Description:

This recall involves John Deere model D105 lawn tractors with serial numbers beginning with 1GXD105, and service transmissions sold by John Deere authorized dealers for use in the D105 lawn tractor. John Deere and the model number are printed on the side of the engine hood. The serial number is located on the rear frame of the machine above the left rear tire. A complete list of serial numbers included in this recall is available at www.JohnDeere.com/D105-Transmission-Recall. If the lawn tractor serial number is not on the firm's website and the transmission had been replaced from March 2016 through August 2017, consumers should contact their John Deere service dealer to check if the recall applies to their replacement service transmission.

Incidents/Injuries: None reported

Sold at: John Deere dealers, Home Depot and Lowe's stores nationwide from February 2016 through July 2017 for about \$1,500. The service transmissions were sold by John Deere authorized dealers from March 2016 through August 2017 for about \$300.

Manufacturer(s): Deere & Company, of Moline, Ill.

Upcoming Events

Here are some recycling events for 2018 that you might want to get on your calendar. These are all sponsored by the Vanderburgh County Solid Waste District; for information, please contact them at 812-436-7800.

Holiday Recycling - Saturday, January 6, 7:30 am – 12:00 noon, old Walmart west parking lot.
Standard recycling items, plus Christmas trees, wrapping paper, etc.

Tire Recycling - Saturday, April 28, 8:30 am – 12:00 noon, Civic Center parking lot.

Tox Away Day – Saturday, September 15, 7:30 am – 1:00 pm, Civic Center parking lot. Household hazardous wastes.

2018 Recycling Drop-Off Days 8:00 am – 12:00 noon

January 6 - old Walmart west

February 3 - old Walmart west

February 10 - 4-H Center

March 10 - old Walmart west

April 7 - old Walmart west

April 14 - 4-H Center

May 5 - old Walmart west

June 2 - old Walmart west

June 16 - 4-H Center

July 7 - old Walmart west

August 4 - old Walmart west

August 18 - 4-H Center

September 1 - old Walmart west

October 6 - old Walmart west

October 13 - 4-H Center

November 3 - old Walmart west

December 1 - old Walmart west

December 8 - 4-H Center

ITEMS TO BRING: (Please be sure items are clean and sorted.)

Aluminum cans, Cardboard, Junk Mail, Catalogs/magazines, Metal food cans, Newspaper, #1-#7 plastic containers

no glass, styrofoam or plastic bags

On behalf of my family, and my coworkers at the Purdue Extension Office in Vanderburgh County, I would like to wish you and your family a happy and healthy Thanksgiving!

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<https://extension.purdue.edu/Vanderburgh/Pages/article.aspx?intItemID=9300>].

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