



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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CONSIDER MULCH ALTERNATIVES, ADVISES SIERRA CLUB

NEW ORLEANS – It’s hard to believe, but some of Louisiana’s majestic cypress trees may be harvested, chopped into small pieces, and sold as mulch.

“When I see a bag of cypress mulch, I am reminded of the protection the state of Louisiana has lost,” says Harvey Stern, Sierra Club member and coordinator of the Louisiana Purchase Cypress Legacy campaign (www.lapurchasecypresslegacy.net). “In addition to the habitat they offer, our wetlands and cypress forests provide natural filters that clean our waterways and serve as catch-basins during high water. They even act as a buffer against tidal surges during storms. They are much better at protecting us than serving as mulch.”

He recommends that gardeners use other alternatives that help the local economy – pine bark and pine-straw mulch logged by those in the local forest industry. “Many horticulturists advise that the garden plants and shrubs most popular in Louisiana actually do better with pine bark and pine-straw mulch,” says Stern.

He recommends the following alternative to cypress mulch.

Recycled Yard Waste

Mulch made by your parish or city from recycled urban plant debris is very inexpensive. To locate your closest source, contact your Solid Waste Department or parish extension service.

Eucalyptus

Produced from plantation-grown trees, this mulch is naturally insect-repellent, with a rich, long-lasting color.

Pine Bark

An excellent mulch with long-lasting color, it is often less expensive than purchased pine straw.

Pine Straw

Available commercially by the bale, or free if you rake it yourself. Fallen leaves, especially oak leaves, make great mulch too.

Promulch

Made from recycled rubber tires, this is used in some playgrounds. It stays in place even in areas that flood occasionally, comes in different colors, and does not emit toxins. It is somewhat expensive.

“It’s still possible to find cypress trees that were here when Thomas Jefferson signed the Louisiana Purchase,” says Stern. “They can live up to 1,500 years, grow up to 150 feet tall and 25 feet in girth. They are just magnificent – that’s why they are Louisiana’s state tree. They shouldn’t be used for mulch.”

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The Sierra Club's 700,000 members work together to protect communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Delta (Louisiana) chapter of the Sierra Club has more than 3,500

members and has been active in local conservation projects for more than 30 years. For more information, contact the organization's website: www.louisiana.sierraclub.org.