Island-Wide Pine Straw Alternatives

For more information, contact the Sunset Beach Planning and Inspections Department at:

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This pertains to property and landscaping only on the ISLAND.

We encourage you to replace existing pine straw with an alternative material and discourage any future use of pine straw.

In light of recent events, the Town of Sunset Beach has evaluated the use of pine straw for landscaping purposes on the island. In order to reduce the spread of fire, the Town of Sunset Beach encourages the use of alternative materials for landscaping on the island. The density and close proximity of structures on the island creates a fire hazard that is further enhanced by the presence of flammable materials such as pine straw.

The municipalities of Raleigh, Durham, Cary, and Carrboro have recently adopted ordinances restricting the use of pine straw near commercial and multi-family structures. At this time, the Town is not pursuing an ordinance to restrict the use of pine straw, but does discourage the use of such material on all properties on the island – ***including single-family and duplex dwellings.***

Mulch is the cheapest alternative to pine straw. There is a wide range of mulches available and each provides its own qualities. Listed below are the most common and economically feasible mulch products.

- *Economy Mulch:* Wood chips or ground land clearing debris; tends to hold its natural color very long and will break down more slowly than others; and helps with moisture retention and erosion control.

- *Natural Bark Mulch:* Typically hardwood or pine barks; mostly pure bark; great for organic value and visual appeal; hardwood is better for erosion control; pine bark will hold its natural color a little longer and breakdown a little slower; and needs to be replenished yearly for visual appearance and mulch depths due to decomposition.

- *Designed/Colored Mulches:* In brown, black or red; dyed with EPA approved colorant for lasting visual appeal; last almost two years before replenishment; good for erosion control and visual appearance while providing a slow, organic breakdown; and a high up-front cost but significantly cheaper when the materials and labor costs are divided over the life of the product.

Thank you for your cooperation!