

**Worried about infested mulch?
Forget about it.**

If you've received an e-mail within the past few weeks regarding termite infested mulch deriving from the splintered trees and homes of Hurricane Katrina, then you've fallen victim to an urban legend or prank (so to say). These e-mails claim to originate from Louisiana State University (LSU), but, they do not. At William Quinn and Sons, we only use premium grade mulch. It is completely safe and pest free.

The termite these e-mails warn about, the Formosan Termite, is native to China. While it is possible for this termite to survive the warmer climate of the southern United States, it cannot survive the harshness of an Illinois winter. Termites cannot reproduce and usually feed below ground. The likeliness of these pests being in the mulch while it is ground is slim to none.

David Robson, an educator with the Illinois Extension service, says "...if for some reason the termites did survive the chipping, there is a strong possibility that few termites would be packaged together, limiting

the chance that termites would colonize quickly up north." The LSU website clearly states "plant material, living or dead, has been quarantined in the Gulf Coast states, eliminating shipments to other parts of Louisiana and the rest of the country until the state and federal agriculture departments rescind the quarantines." The quarantine has been in effect for months, and will most likely continue for quite some time.

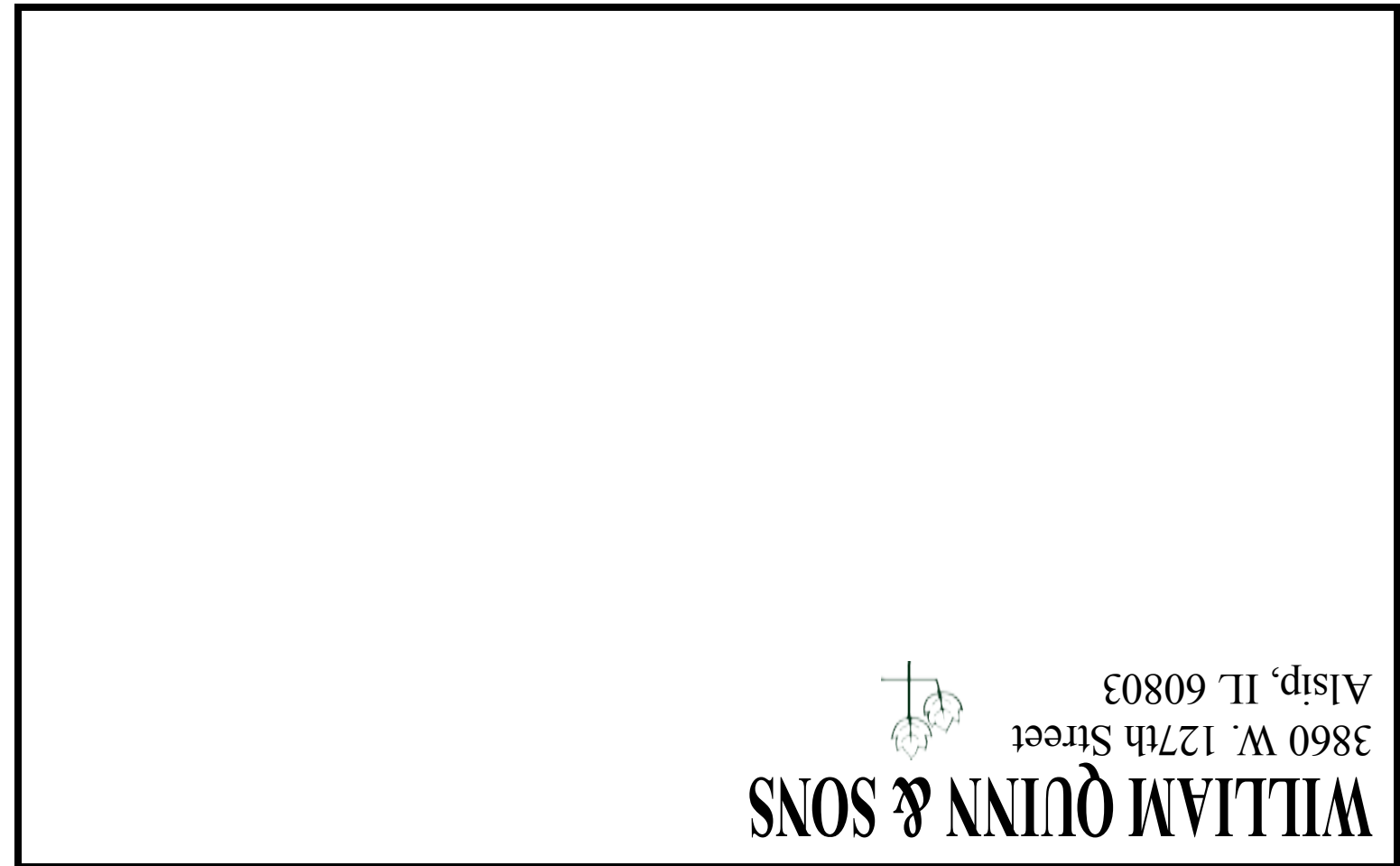
- Hot Buy! -
6' - 7' Austrian Pine

Regular: \$385
Sale: **\$150***

*Price includes installation




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WILLIAM QUINN & SONS




William Quinn & Sons Newsletter

April 2006 VOLUME 1

UNIQUE GARDENING

in Illinois

What makes gardening unique in Illinois?

Spring is often cool and wet with snow common until April. Spring can be so wet, in fact, that planting is delayed, or so cool that leaf budding may not occur until the end of April. Summers in Illinois are typically warm with temperatures in the 80's, 90's and occasionally reaching 100 degrees. Typical rainfall averages are 3 inches per month throughout the summer. Fall can be the most beautiful season of the year in Illinois. Temperatures are generally moderate in the 60's and 70's in the early fall. By late November, daytime temperatures average in the mid to upper 30's. Drought is not uncommon, and the first measurable snow usually appears by mid October.

Winter weather varies in Illinois. During some years, there is little snow with moderate temperatures; other years see the extreme opposite. A normal Chicago-land winter sees an average of three feet of snow and temperatures as low as minus 10 degrees. The growing season in Northern Illinois is approximately 150 days and the average date of the first frost is October 20th.

That is a typical year in Illinois. As everyone is well aware, 2005 was anything but typical. Spring of 2005 was unusually dry. As summer approached, the temperatures continued to climb, and the lack of rain significantly added to the problem. As of Mid March this year, we are 11.3 inches below normal snow accumulations. The effects of last year's drought, however, may not be apparent for another 5 years. I have seen more sudden death of shrubs than ever before. Water bans made it nearly impossible to keep up with landscaping requests. Large areas of turf all over Illinois show various signs of drought damage. The experts are predicting a wetter and colder than normal season (Although they predicted record high snowfall this year, and it did not happen).



The question we are asked most these days is "When and where do we start with restoring damaged plants and turf from the drought?" The answer is the following: it is still early in the season. The first step is to identify and slit seed all turf areas that have been affected. After the trees and shrubs bud out (late April, early May - weather depending), we will be able to identify any dead or damaged plant material. Usually



Spring or Fall is the ideal time to replace these plants, but if we do not receive the amount of rain that we desperately need, planting should be put on hold for areas that do not have automatic sprinklers or irrigation.

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CATHY'S CORNER

I would like to welcome back all returning and new customers for the 2006 season. I can't believe that spring is already here! We're excited about starting a new season and eager to get back to work. During the winter months you may have seen the crews out dormant pruning and cleaning up debris. The mild winter allowed us to complete a great deal of work.

I want to say thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our employee evaluation last fall. The information has been very helpful. We're always trying to improve the quality of our maintenance services. Joe Martinez was awarded the Outstanding Employee of the Year award for 2005. Joe has been part of the Quinn family since 1991.

During the months of April and May, I will be scheduling walk-throughs on the properties and writing up my assessments. The mild weather has allowed me to get out and about with the winter cleanup crews and survey a lot of the properties. I have seen a lot of drought damaged turf. It's too soon to tell what effects the drought has had on trees and shrubs. Anyone interested in slit-seeding or over-seeding can contact me at anytime. Thank you for your business, and I look forward to seeing everyone soon.

- Cathy

Salt Damage to Plants & Salt Resistance

Using salt on roadways and sidewalks has become common practice for improving the safety conditions of travel during snow and ice storms. Unfortunately, this can induce unfavorable horticultural conditions once winter has ended.

Salt damage conditions can easily be confused with drought and scorch stress. The reason being: salt attracts moisture, keeping the live plants and grass from getting the nourishment they need. These effects are visible in early spring, before drought conditions are even an issue.

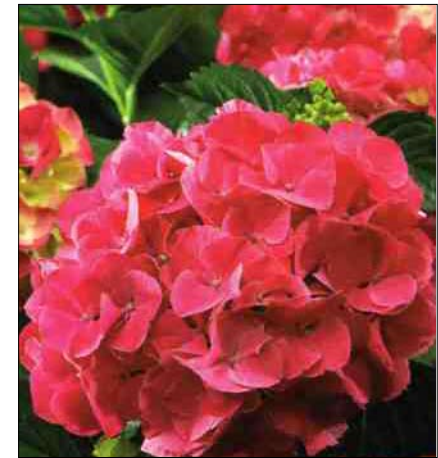
There are, however, plants that are able to more easily withstand salt damage and can be more safely planted near roadways. They are:

- Birches
- Honeysuckle
- Spruces
- White and Red Oak
- Poplars and Aspens
- Spirea

NEW Plants for 2006

"Red Sensation" - Hydrangea Macrophylla

The "Red Sensation" blooms on new wood. It has large, brilliant red, mophead-shaped flowers on burgundy stems, and the flowers change from red to purple as they mature. The "Red Sensation" grows 3 feet tall and wide, and does best in full sun. Soil moisture needs to be kept sufficient in dry conditions. This Hydrangea is virtually pest free.



"Red Sensation" Hydrangea

"This Hydrangea is virtually pest free."

"Big Daddy" - Hydrangea Macrophylla

The "Big Daddy" produces 12 to 14 inch flower heads with strong, waxy stems. It grows approximately 5 feet tall and wide. This Hydrangea does best in full sun but can handle some shade. The "Big Daddy" is great for foundation planting.



Firewitch

PLANT OF THE YEAR 2006

- Firewitch (*Dianthus gratianopolitanu*) -

The perennial plant of the year is chosen from a list of nominations by the Perennial Plant Association. Each year, members choose a perennial plant based on the following criteria: (1) suitable for a wide range of climates; (2) low maintenance; (3) easily propagated; (4) multiple seasonal flowerings.

This year, the Perennial Plant Association has named *Dianthus gratianopolitanu* - also known as the "Firewitch" plant - the Perennial Plant of the Year. Firewitch has a purplish-magenta-pink flower and a delightful, spicy, aroma. The first peak bloom for these perennials is the middle of spring, and a simple plucking of the old buds will bring about repeat blooms.

Firewitch is low growing, with an average height of 3 to 4 inches (and stems reaching 8 inches). It is a hardy plant, and should perform exceptionally well in our Illinois climate (granted our possible drought situation is well planned for!). Firewitch requires well drained soil, and full sunlight (or very light shade). This is a great perennial to use as a border edger or ground cover.



"Big Daddy" Hydrangea

