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Land use project continues in 2001

The Saturn/UT Land Use Project has been renewed for its fifth year. Along with our focus of landscape guidance and ecology, we are adding the expertise of more university professors to enhance the partnership approach. *Ground Facts*, now delivered every other month, will give updates on these projects and other activities of the Land Use Team.

Integrated Pest Management

Integrated pest management (IPM) is a widely used process which manages pest populations in the most economically feasible and socially acceptable manner. Pest populations may include termites, starlings, exotic pest plants, mosquitoes, chiggers, ticks-- to name a few. The IPM plan will study current practices at Saturn while monitoring different pest populations through the growing season. A final report will establish new guidelines for dealing with pest issues.

Land Disposal of Waste

To reduce the number of waste streams that end in landfills, the Land Use Team will work on a 6 month project that examines cafeteria wastes. The composting of food residuals combined with wood wastes

(such as pallets) could be used as a mulch in connection with ongoing grounds maintenance, resulting in a lower cost for mulch and landfill costs. This and other options will be investigated.

Planting for Conservation

Strategic placement of trees can reduce the cost of summer air conditioning in many residential areas. Based on this fact, the Land Use Team is evaluating the southerly and westerly facing walls. These walls receive the greatest amount of heat load, second to the roof of the buildings. Shade trees planted would include red maple, hackberry, and elms. These deciduous trees enable summer shading of walls while permitting winter solar heating.



The web site is now available on UT's web site!!!

There are still a few minor changes

that need to be made, but please visit our site <http://eercut.utk.edu/slup>. This site should also be available soon on the Saturn Intranet. A similar web site will also be available in the next week to Saturn retailers at www.saturnteam.com. We feel that Saturn can benefit greatly by making the public aware of their commitment to the environment.

Spring cleaning begins

Premier Grounds has dedicated a great deal of time preparing the mulch beds at the team member entrances for the next growing season. In the past summers, the UT Land Use Team and Premier have unsuccessfully battled the weed problems in these areas. This year, however, Premier is taking extra precautions to hinder as many weeds as possible from taking root in the mulch beds. Herbicide and a pre-emergent are being used in



necessary quantities. Mulch in Motion is spreading a thin layer of mulch this week. By getting a head start on the weed problem, we hope that we will finally win this long-fought battle. Thank you Premier Grounds for all of your hard work!

As part of our native landscaping process, the Land Use Team is allowing native seedlings (those planted, as well as those seeds that have germinated on their own) to flourish. We tagged these to identify them as small seedlings and not weeds.



Focus on wildflowers...

As March quickly approaches, many of us are preparing our homes and gardens for the spring. Over the years, it seems that more and more people are becoming interested in a more natural approach to their gardens – wildflowers. And as the summers become drier and hotter, this lower maintenance (when established) landscape is more appealing as well. However, starting wildflowers from seed is not an easy job. It requires certain site conditions and lots of patience. Use the steps below as a guide to planting your wildflowers. For a spring planting, March 15-May 15 is the suggested sowing time.

Species Spotlight:

Butterfly Weed

Asclepias tuberosa

Butterfly weed is a beautiful, long-lived perennial native to the central and eastern United States. Blooming from June to September, the flowers are a brilliant orange, yellow, or orange red. The flowers are clustered at the top of branching stems that can reach a height of about two feet. The flowers are filled with nectar attracting many types of butterflies. Butterfly weed and other members of the milkweed family are host plants for Monarch caterpillars

Butterfly weed requires full sun and a sandy, well-drained soil. They are extremely hardy and adaptable. In the wild, butterfly weed is seen growing along roadsides and in dry, open fields. For home uses, nice sites for this plant would be rock gardens, mass plantings, or as borders. Growing butterfly weed from seed is fairly easy but often slow as it takes the first year or two developing the very long tap root. This long tap root makes transplanting a more difficult task. However, once the butterfly weed is established, it is a very dependable plant.



Butterfly weed

Native Americans used the root of butterfly weed as a medicine, especially for conditions of the lung. They also used the seed pod silk from this (and other milkweeds) to make strong, soft, silky fabrics, threads, and bedding.

Southeastern Wildflowers

Indian Blanket
Purple Coneflower
Scarlet Flax
Lemon Mint
Cosmos
Five Spot
Drummond Phlox
Tickseed
Rocket Larkspur
Dame's Rocket
African Daisy
Plains Coreopsis
Moss Verbena
Black-eyed Susan
Clasping Coneflower
Dwarf Red Coreopsis
Corn Poppy
Sweet Alyssum
Evening Primrose
Showy Primrose
Mexican Hat
Toadflax
Butterfly Weed
Yarrow

How to plant wildflowers:

1. Select a well-drained site. Very moist soils often contain a lot of weed seeds which will choke out the wildflowers.
2. Use an herbicide like Round-up to rid the area of any weeds or grasses that may out-compete the wildflowers.
3. Mow the existing or dead vegetation as low as possible.
4. To prepare the seed bed, rake or lightly till the surface of the soil to a maximum depth of one inch. This shallow surface will reduce the number of weed seeds disturbed.
5. Since wildflower seed is very light, it is recommended to mix a material such as sand or potting soil in with the seed (1 part seed to 4 parts material).
6. Broadcast one half of the seed as evenly as possible. Sow the remaining seed perpendicular to the initial sowing to ensure full coverage.
7. Press the seed into the soil (no deeper than 1/16 of an inch) by walking or rolling over the seed.



For an excellent reference guide and seed catalog, contact Wildseed Farms. 1-800-848-0078.