



**"Advocating for responsible stewardship
of land and natural resources in
landscaping and horticultural practices."**

April 2016

April showers bring not only May flowers, but the return of [ELA Eco-tours](#). If you've never attended an Eco-tour, take a minute to look over the tours scheduled from May through October. ELA Eco-tours provide an opportunity, often exclusive, for you to explore ecologically managed properties and to learn directly from the people involved in the projects. Don't miss this year's series!



Soil takes center stage in this issue of the newsletter. We look at assessing soil health, developing superior mulch, and utilizing biochar. We also have a review of Robert Kourik's latest book, *Understanding Roots*, and an excerpt from his webinar presentation on the same subject. As you dig into the landscape this season, take a few minutes to appreciate the soil as the foundation of all our landscapes. *MS*



Ground Rules: Soil Health in the Urban Landscape

by Chuck Sherzi

The topic of soil health has been gaining wider acceptance among farmers nationwide but what does it offer to those working with soil in the urban environment? Applying the Cornell Soil Health Assessment to the built landscape offers new insights. [Read the article.](#)

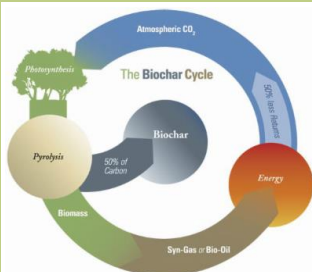
Mr. Sherzi presents an all-day soil workshop [Ground Rules: Measuring Soil Health and Managing Soil Challenges in the Urban Landscape](#) on April 24 in Framingham, MA. The full-day workshop includes a presentation followed by field activities.



Mulch Composition and Potential Benefits

by David Ropes

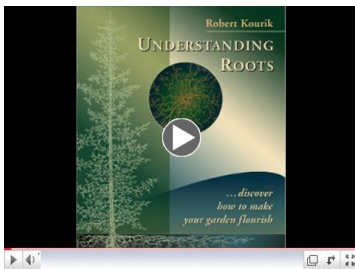
What are the components of organic mulch that can feed the soil rather than just cover it? A specific combination of materials blended over time produces mulch that supports soil structure and fertility. [Read the article.](#)



Practical Applications of Biochar in the Landscape

by Dr. McLaughlin and Keegan Pyle

There's a lot of buzz about biochar these days. Find out how incorporating quality biochar into soil increases the abundance of soil microorganisms, soil nutrient retention and water storage, and soil carbon content. [Read the article.](#)



Book Review: Understanding Roots

Written by Robert Kourik

Published by Metamorphic Press, August 2015

Reviewed by ML Altobelli

In his newest book Robert Kourik adds to and updates information found in *Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Garden Naturally* (2005) and *Roots Demystified* (2007). He provides a detailed look at what plants truly take to succeed in the landscape. [Read the review.](#)

Robert Kourik presented "Understanding Roots: Exploring Plants Underground" in November 2015. Click the image to view a portion of this archived presentation as Kourik uncovers one of the greatest mysteries below the soil surface - the secret lives and magical workings of the roots that move and grow invisibly beneath our feet.

The full webinar and all archived webinars are a free benefit to [ELA Members](#).

Eco-Answers from the Pros

ELA members have spent hundreds of hours learning the best ecological solutions to problems in the landscape. You can benefit from all that accumulated knowledge by posing a question to our experts. If you are stumped by a problem in your landscape or are looking for a second opinion on a potential solution, ask ELA's Eco-Pros. Send your question to ela_new@verizon.net. And if you need additional help, refer to the listing of [ELA Professionals](#).



Can Autumn Wood Chips Make a Spring Mulch?

I had a pile of wood chips delivered to me at the end of last summer and want to use it as mulch in my flower and shrub garden this spring. Problem is it's been sitting for only about five months and may have not decomposed enough to use as mulch. Can I put down a layer of some kind of fertilizer first, then put the wood chips over that? [Read the Pro's Answer.](#)



ELA Environmental Vision Award

ELA awarded its fifth Environmental Vision Award at the 2016 Boston Flower & Garden Show. The winning display "An Enchanted New England Woodland Walk" was created by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. [Read the article.](#)

ELA News

Save the Date: July 27th

ELA's Summer Workshop [What Role Do "Nativars" Play in an Ecological Landscape](#) takes place at Garden in the Woods in the afternoon on July 27th. This half-day exploration of Nativars features presentations by speakers from the scientific community and the nursery industry, plus a wide-ranging panel discussion. We look at the growing interest in and demand for native plants and the implications for landscapes as growers and nurseries consider native plant cultivars (Nativars) as alternatives for native plants. What does the ecological landscape lose and gain from the inclusion of Nativars?

ELA members are invited to bring a bag lunch and attend **ELA's Annual Meeting** (12:00-12:30pm). The Nativars workshop will begin after lunch at 1:00pm.



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 2016 SEASON

Plant Health Care/IPM Technician - Hartney Greymont

This position involves timely visits to client properties and caring for their landscape plants by monitoring, diagnosing, managing, and reporting insect, disease, and physiological issues. Pay range \$18.00 to \$22.00 per hour. Job Requirements: Mass driver's license, CDL preferred; Mass Pesticide License; MAA or ISA certified Arborist is preferred; Degree in Arboriculture, Horticulture, Plant Science or equivalent work experience; and Ability to work independently with a positive attitude.

To apply send a resume to Hartney Greymont attention Dave Anderson at DAnderson@Hartney.com or request an interview appointment by calling 781-444-1227.



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Gleanings

GBCI Develops SITES Professional Credential

The Green Building Certification Inc. (GBCI) is developing a new professional credential called the [SITES Accredited Professional \(SITES AP\)](#). Once available, the credential will be open to anyone interested in sitting for the exam: landscape architects and designers, ecologists, geologist, hydrologists, horticulturalists, contracts, land owners, maintenance staff, etc. You may participate by taking a 30-minute online [job analysis survey](#) before April 15, 8:00pm EDT, or by [volunteering to write or review exam questions](#).



Spotlight on Beech Tree Loss

Newport, RI is holding a special event, [Lighting of the Beeches](#), to raise awareness of the perils facing the city's aging urban forest. From April 14 to April 29, property owners across the city will light Newport's Signature Tree: the European Beech. Additional events will be held during Newport Arboretum Week, April 21-29. [Click for the schedule](#).



Arbor Day Tree Giveaway

New England Wild Flower Society hosts an [Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Giveaway](#) on April 30th. The event offers a fun-filled, family-friendly day to celebrate native trees. Along with games, activities, tours, and demonstrations, 500 trees will be given away, including one for every visitor who joins the celebration. Trees will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.



Collecting Fall Cankerworm and Bruce Spanworm

Need a place to dispose of your fall cankerworm and Bruce spanworm? The Elkinton lab at UMass Amherst is looking for fall cankerworm eggs and young caterpillars (from across MA) as well as Bruce spanworm (from areas west of the Connecticut River). **If you know you have populations of either of these insects and wish to have them collected for research**, please contact Dr. Joe Elkinton at: elkinton@ent.umass.edu.



Volunteers Develop Community Food Garden

Trevor Smith (ELA President) and Marie Macchiarolo have been volunteering with [COGdesign](#) on a two-phase plan for an accessible, environmentally responsive community food garden for [The Food Project](#). Click to [view the plans](#). The Food Project plans to build the first phase of the garden with teen volunteers during April School Vacation Week.



Events to Note (listings indicate local time unless otherwise noted)

April 14 - [Marketing for Renewable Landscapes with Beatrice Stonebanks](#); Oakland, CA; 6:30pm - 8:00pm

April 15 - [Sustainable Campuses and Communities](#); Amherst, MA.

April 16 - [Sustainable Campuses and Communities](#); Northampton, MA.

April 21 - [Bringing Back the Pollinators: An Integrated Approach to Pollinator Conservation](#); Corvallis, OR; 6:30pm.

April 23 - [Invasive Plants in Massachusetts](#); Amherst, MA; 10:00am-12:00pm.

April 24 **ELA Event**→[Soil Workshop - Ground Rules: Measuring Soil Health and Managing Site Challenges in the Urban Landscape](#); Framingham, MA; 9:00am-3:30pm.

April 25 - [Scouting for Early Landscape Pests and Problems](#); Amherst, MA; 4:30-6:30pm.

April 26 - [Landscape Renovation Sales - ROI Calculation with Aaron Majors](#); Oakland, CA; 4:00 - 6:00pm

April 28 - [Re-Envisioning Sustainability with Brad Lancaster](#); San Francisco, CA; 1:00pm - 4:00pm

April 29-30 - [SEED Summit: Growing Business with Impact](#); Providence, RI.

April 30 - [Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Giveaway](#); Framingham, MA; 10:00am-4:00pm.

May 4 - [Planting in a Post-Wild World](#); Cambridge, MA; 7:00-8:30 pm.

May 5 - [Conservation Biological Control Short Course](#); Dighton, MA; 9:00am-4:30pm.

May 10 - [Attract Pollinators, Plant Flowers](#); Providence, RI; 12:00-1:00pm.

May 14 - [Water Neutral Landscapes](#); Aptos, CA; 9:00am-3:00pm.

May 14 - [Grow Native Plant Sale](#); UMass Waltham Field Station, Waltham, MA; 9:00am - 4:00pm.
May 17 - [New England Natives](#); Providence, RI; 12:00-1:00pm.
May 21 - [Pine Fest: A Pine Barrens Multicultural Celebration](#); Myles Standish State Forest, Carver, MA; 10:00am-4:00pm.
May 22 **ELA Event**→[Eco-tour: Invasive Plants - What Are They? And What Can Be Done?](#); Walpole, MA; 1:00-3:00pm.
June 5&12 **ELA Event**→[Herbaceous Native Plants for Professionals](#); Framingham, MA; 10:00am-3:00pm.
June 9 **ELA Event**→[Eco-tour: Spring Splendor - The Native Plants at Connecticut College Arboretum](#); New London, CT; 10:00am-12:00pm.
June 15 - [Managing for Native Pollinators](#); Enfield, NH; 9:00am-3:00pm.
June 18**ELA Event**→[Eco-tour: Recreational Lake Shore Restoration at Lake Massapoag](#); Sharon, MA; 10:00am-12:00pm.
June 25 **ELA Event**→[Eco-tour: Edible Landscape Oasis - Permaculture in Practice](#); Holyoke, MA; 10:00am-12:00pm.
June 28&29 - [Reduce & Recover: Save Food for People](#); Cambridge, MA. Early Bird rates before April 17.
July 23 **ELA Event**→[Eco-Tour: Wildlife Haven at Turkey Hill Brook Farm](#); Spencer, MA; 10:00am-12:00pm.
July 27 **ELA Event**→[What Role Do "Nativars" Play in an Ecological Landscape?](#) Framingham, MA; 1:00pm-5:00pm.
August 3 **ELA Event**→[Eco-Tour: YardScaping Ecological Demonstration Gardens](#); Portland, ME; 4:00-6:00pm.
August 11 **ELA Event**→[Eco-Tour: Landscape Design with Maintenance in Mind](#); Boston, MA; 10:00am-12:00pm.
August 18 **ELA Event**→[Bird Park Ecological Management = Beautiful and Healthy Ecosystems](#); East Walpole, MA; 10:00am-12:00pm.
September 14 **ELA Event**→Eco-Tour: [Sustainable Eco-Systems for Wildlife](#); Cambridge, MA; 10:00am-12:00pm.
September 23 **ELA Event**→[Inspiration from a Prairie](#); Garden City, NY; 8:30am-3:30pm.
October 4 **ELA Event**→[Eco-Tour: Ecological Landscape Maintenance Techniques at Mass Audubon](#); Belmont, MA; 3:00-5:00pm.

Thank you for subscribing to ELA Newsletter! If you'd like to support our efforts to educate and promote sustainable and ecological landscape practices, please consider making a tax-deductible donation. We appreciate your support!



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Whether you are located in the area of our upcoming events or in some distant landscape, you are invited to participate in ELA collaborations and discussions by joining the Ecological Landscape Alliance discussion group on LinkedIn. The ELA discussion group is open to both ELA members and non-members from around the world and participation is growing each week. Through these discussions you can share information, get answers to landscape problems, and learn new perspectives on challenging ecological issues. Joining LinkedIn is free and it is easy to join. [Join the ELA LinkedIn Discussion](#). We look forward to hearing from you soon!

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the ELA newsletter and welcome your comments at ela.info@comcast.net. *Maureen Sundberg, ELA Newsletter Editor*

