

Brush Clearance Deadline: June 1st – Chip to Make Mulch

By David Goldstein, VCPWA, IWMD

Frank Smith planned to comply with the County's June 1 brush clearance deadline by doing a week of yardwork and bringing his discards to the Ventura County Public Works Agency's Integrated Waste Management Division free community clean-up event at Santa Rosa Technology Magnet School last weekend. Unfortunately, during the week, a rare and painful reaction to a routine medical procedure left him unable to lift a chainsaw or load a trailer.

Neighbors pitched in, cleared his property, and loaded his pickup truck and long trailer. He managed to drive to the event, where a work-release crew supervised by the Ventura County Probation Department unloaded the vehicle for him, as they did for over a hundred other participants in the event.

Throughout the county, property owners are participating in the annual cycle of transforming a fire hazard into useful mulch, helping the Ventura County Fire Department prepare for a dry summer and high wildfire season. Also last weekend, the Central Ventura County Firesafe Council coordinated events in Ventura and Piru. The event in partnership with the city of Ventura at the Ventura Community Park collected about 40 loads, and crews will chip the material this week for park use. In Piru, with funding from a U.S. Forest Service grant, members of the Ventura County Fire Department's Wildland Fire Division Crew brought their chipper and joined Firesafe Council staff to turn residents' brush into mulch, which they spread on an adjacent, County-owned empty lot. One Piru resident brought in the remains of 10 dead trees, including stumps removed from his property.

At www.cvcfiresafe.org, you can see upcoming drop off events, options for curbside chipping, rules for preparation of materials, and a list of companies helping to sponsor the brush debris recycling programs.

For all of these programs, you must keep stumps, ivy, palm, yucca, and succulents separate from other brush. These items are unsuitable for chipping.

Visit www.vcfhrp.org for information regarding fire hazard reduction, including the Fire Department's standard guidelines for "application of mulch and chips in defensible space." Property owners with questions about the Fire Hazard Reduction program can call (805) 389-9759 or send an email to fhrrp@ventura.org

For a fee, you can drop-off yard clippings to turn into mulch, and you can buy mulch, at Agromin's site at Ormond Beach (805/485-9200); Peach Hill near Moorpark (805/529-6164); Agromin's site at the Simi Valley Landfill (805/485-9200); and the Ojai Valley Organics Recycling Center (805/640-9194).