

An Excursion to Nature's way Resources

On Tuesday, April 4th 2023, a few members of the LF garden club boarded a bus to take us to **Nature's Way Resources** in Conroe, Tx. It was a pleasant but windy day when we arrived at the 42-acre organic soil yard.



Mr. Ferguson and his son, Ian welcomed us on a tour of the operation and explained the purpose of this vast enterprise. An organic gardener himself, and a licensed soils scientist, he explored gardening the natural way and started composting for his own and his neighbor's needs. Over time the demand for organic materials grew into the operation we saw today. Mr. Ferguson believes in using products that work with the laws of nature, and to help restore our

earth to the way GOD loaned it to us.

Our first stop was at the gigantic shredding machine. Instead of hauling it to a landfill, commercial tree trimmers bring limbs and branches to the yard where the shredder cuts it into small pieces that are dumped on a huge composting pile.

In addition, every day 200-300 landscapers and lawn crews bring plant materials and grass clippings to be added to the mountains of compost. Restaurants in the area deliver food scraps and even dead animals are buried among the plant material.



Our tour continued, walking along mountains of compost heaps as tall as a 2-3 story house, and almost as long as a football field, in various stages of decomposition. It takes 3 months to make mulch and 1-2 years for a good quality compost to develop.



During composting the internal temperature of the heaps reach 130F; decomposing any protein, killing seeds, bacteria, and other unwanted agents but promoting the growth of beneficial fungi, microbes and earth worms.

To compost properly, oxygen and water is need. Therefore, the compost is turned every few weeks to aerate and water is added, if not provided by Mother Nature. A pond at the low end of the property collects rain water that is then used to water the piles.

Heavy equipment moves the mulches to further decompose and over time achieve a rich, dark, nutrient rich texture.

In the final step, the mulch is sifted through a mesh screen for an even, finer consistency and loaded into a hopper which feeds the automatic bagging operation.



The final product.



What started out as coarse mulch (L) decomposed to a fine, soil like texture and we gardeners could not resist getting our hands into it.



The tour continued to the sand mountains. Sand is mixed into the different soils combined with compost and mulch to create specific garden soils. Beach sand, which is relatively cheap and available at most gardening centers, is full of weed seeds, salts and other impurities.



Mr. Ferguson explained that sand he uses contains different mineral depending on the area the sand came from. His combination of sands provides all elements needed to re-mineralizer the soil.

About 20 different bagged soil/mulch/sand products are available at the location and in many local nurseries and garden stores. They will also deliver truckloads of soil/mulch all the way to Houston and beyond.





Next, we visited the nursery where mostly native plants, shrubs and trees are grown and sold. Mr. Ferguson told us about the benefits of keeping natives in the gardens as they are generally drought and pest resistant.

We had less than an hour to

explore the nursery and make our purchases but we took full advantage of the time. Plants purchased were loaded onto the bus and we continued our trip.



<https://www.natureswayresources.com/>

The journey took us to Old Town Spring, where we had reservations for lunch at 'Lynn's Table'. First stop was to the restroom where we washed the dust and soils of our hands and faces. There were many delicious items on the menu and we had difficult choices to make between homemade soups and salads, quiches, hot dogs and Hamburgers. But for sure everyone saved room for peach or cherry cobbler with a big scoop of ice cream.





Tired and hungry, we enjoyed the cool relaxing atmosphere of the restaurant.

After an enjoyable lunch and a short shopping expedition around Old Town Spring, it was time to get back on the bus for our return trip.

