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Shelton's Pallet Company Produces Mulch With Mold Resistant Colorant

by Jon M. Casey

OXFORD, PA - Shelton's Pallet Company, a southeastern Pennsylvania pallet manufacturer, has been serving businesses in their marketing area for more than thirty years. Charles (Dave) and Helen Shelton began their family-owned business as a full time operation in 1974. Over the years, their business has grown from one truck, to four trucks, two lease truck drivers, and one hundred and fifty trailers. The operation today consists of his son Charles Jr. (Chuck) whom runs the mulch end of the business, other family members Linda and Albert Weaver, and several workers, who together send out more than one hundred trailer loads of pallets each month.

Chuck says that as the company continued to grow, their need to dispose of waste wood, broken, and defective pallets began to increase. At that time, the company had a ground pit where they would discard waste pallet material until they had enough to burn it. "Back then, burning was a common way of disposing our waste wood, and there were no regulations prohibiting open burning," says Chuck.



Shelton's new Hitachi Zaxis 200LC is outfitted with a Geith grapple that Chuck uses to crush and stack the pallets before loading them into the tub grinder.



Chuck Shelton is an innovative entrepreneur who has turned his family-owned pallet company's wood waste into a profitable, mulch manufacturing business.

"As time passed, federal, state, and local regulations have prohibited open burning in our community. That change in 1996 regulations helped us make the decision to begin grinding our waste pallets.

Chuck says that their mulch business has evolved over the years as he has learned to improve his techniques and become more efficient in the mulching process. "When we purchased a new radial stacker a little over three years ago, it really changed the way that we could grind our mulch," he says. "Before, I would move our TORO 5000 Tub Grinder in front of each color bin and grind and color the mulch at each location. When I finished one color, I would shut things down, move the grinder, and start back up grinding another color. Now, I set the grinder to discharge onto the stacker, and move the stacker to whichever color bin I want to fill. That makes everything much easier." "I pretty much take care of the mulch operation by myself," says Chuck. "Sometimes I need a second operator to help with the loader duties, but for the most part, I have set everything up so that I can take care of the coloring tasks by myself. Most of the time, I'm working on the pallet building side of the business, doing whatever needs to be done. Sometimes, like later today, once we finish here, I will travel to a customer's location to custom-build whatever it is that they might need to palletize their products for shipment.

The mulch operation is just one of the things that I do. "It wasn't too long after we started coloring our mulch that we started having problems with fungus and mold," recalls Chuck. "The white mold would create chunks of product that were extremely undesirable. It would be matted and we would have either to break up the chunks or discard the moldy product, depending on how bad it was. It was at that time that I contacted Brian Shea at T.H. Glennon Co., Inc. I was told that they had a product that could help me with this problem." "When Brian fist explained to us how



Waste pallets like those seen on the left, are initially ground into basic mulch like that on the right. From there, it is re-ground and colored before shipment.

their colorants contain a mold and fungus inhibitor that helps protect the colors from deteriorating, it seem like it might be a way to help solve my problem, I decided to try it. I figured I would do things 'by the book,' so that if it didn't work, at least I had done what I was instructed to do to try to eliminate my mold problem." "Well, it wasn't long

Shelton's Pallet Company Produces Mulch With Mold Resistant Colorant



Shelton says that he blends the colorant into the mulch by "rolling it and pushing it" onto the stockpile with a small dozer. He orders colorant from Glennon in handy totes like those in the foreground.

before I could see that everything that Brian told me was 'right on the money,'" says Chuck. "We have been using Colorfast for over six years. The color stays brighter much longer. I can grind in November and early December until I run out of pallets, or until the weather stops me, to prepare for next year's business. Our stockpiles don't become riddled with white mold and fungus like it did in the past." "We have been very happy with the Mulch Color Jet™ system," says Chuck. "Our rain water supply is buried and set away from the work area. We pump the water up through buried water lines, to a hydrant, and the Mulch Color Jet does the rest. We apply the colorant to the mulch right at the grinder." "Once the mulch is colored, I use the dozer to roll it and push it, as the way of blending the colorant into the mulch," he says. "It seems to work quite well for our operation. I have found that we get better results with our products if we use a little more water than what Brian recommends, but oth-



Shelton captures runoff rainwater in this lagoon. From there, he pumps it to underground tanks that supply his coloring and misting needs.

er than that, the colorants work just the way he said that they would." Shelton says that he grinds when he has an ample supply of pallets to grind. "We aren't on any particular time table," he says. "We only sell in bulk on a wholesale basis, so we work to keep our customers regularly supplied. We try to keep about 1500 yards of Red and Black mulch on hand, and another 1000 yards of Brown. We use Glennon's Colorfast #1042 Dark Red, #2902 Dark Brown, and the #2602 Black as our colorants."

Today, Shelton Pallet Co. has become a regular supplier of colored mulch to wholesale customers who have come to rely on Shelton and T.H. Glennon for high-quality, colored mulch. "We have had many compliments from our customers over the years," says Chuck. "They find that our mulch stays brighter longer, and this keeps their customers keep coming back. For more information, contact Shelton Pallet Company at 610-932-3182.

Glennon's Colorfast Colorant Give Mulch Producers a Head Start

by Jon M. Casey

Mulch producers know that there is never enough time to grind enough fresh product in the spring to meet customer demand, so they look for ways to get a head start on the season by grinding in the fall and into the early winter as the weather allows. By stockpiling large amounts of mulch products too far ahead of time however, companies find that their colored mulch products soon begin to fade and lose the quality that customers come to expect from freshly ground mulch. Mulch producers find themselves in a difficult place. They either grind mulch far in advance of the new season and risk the fading and deterioration from fungus and mold that comes with product that has begun to age. Or, they grind day and night during the delivery season, fall further behind with each order, and lose business to competitors who have found a way to keep up with demand. Now there is a way to grind and stockpile colored mulch in the fall and have the quality that customers are seeking in the spring.

T.H. Glennon Co., Inc., known for their water-based adhesive coatings and colorants, offers a line of mulch colorants in their "Colorfast" line of products that will help mulch producers get that head start that they are looking for in their colored mulch line. "We have formulated a line of colorants that improve color longevity and durability," says T. H. Glennon Co., Inc.'s Brian Shea. "Our Colorfast line contains a proprietary additive that protects the dried colorant film against discoloration caused by microbial attack. So when a producer grinds a stockpile of mulch, and applies our Colorfast #260 Black, for example, he can look forward to a product that will not lose its color due to fungus and mold while it is stored on site, over the winter." Chuck Shelton, owner of Shelton Pallet Co. agrees. "I started to use Glennon's Colorfast line because the mulch would get matted and show white mold in the mulched areas," says Shelton. "I haven't had any problems since. This

"Our Colorfast line contains a proprietary additive that protects the dried colorant film against discoloration caused by microbial attack."

product allows me to make piles of mulch ahead of the season and store it over the winter. That way I can have mulch for my customers at the beginning of the season." Shea says that one of the primary reasons that mulch producers have come to rely on T.H. Glennon Co., Inc. for their colorant needs, is because Glennon specializes in adapting the application of their colorants to the current equipment that the producer is using. "That way, they can simply install our Mulch Color Jet™ onto their grinder or trommel, and have consistent, high-quality colored mulch without a lot of extra equipment and labor. Our products are very easy to use. And they offer the brilliant, long-lasting color that customers have come to expect."

"Our mold and fungus resistance research began in 1999," says Shea. "We had been marketing colorant to the mulch industry since 1997, but in the summer of 1999, one of our Florida customers came to us with a request for a product that would resist the molds and funguses that thrive in that southern, humid climate. They had been mulching wood waste from the orange grove producers, who were no longer being permitted to burn their wood waste. The grove owners had turned to this mulch producer as a destination for their orange tree wood waste." "Our customer found that their bagged, colored mulch products were being affected by an anaerobic, photo-activated mold," says Shea. "We initiated research to defeat this mold, and that was the start of our EPA approved Colorfast line of products. Today, we offer more than a dozen different colors for mulch." Shea says that their product is available in either dry or liquid form. "The liquid is available in drums or totes," he says. "Dry colorant is available in 50-pound bags up to 2000-pound super sacks. Customers can order anything from a drum to a full truckload." For more information on T.H. Glennon Co., Inc. and their Mulch Color Jet™ system, contact them at 978-465-7222 or online at www.glennoncompany.com