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Happy New Year! May 2003 be your best year every! Are you tired of that decorated tree yet? Want to know where to recycle it?

The Kitsap County Treecycle program for this year began December 26 and runs through January 13. Treecycling has become a tradition for Kitsap County residents. Last year over 3,000 holiday trees were brought in by residents and chipped for use as mulch in landscape projects.

When treecycling remember to remove all nails, tinsel, lights and ornaments before bringing in trees for chipping. Flocked trees can be potentially harmful to the environment and cannot be accepted. If you have a flocked tree cut it into two-foot lengths, place in a garbage bag and put it in the trash can.

County chipping crews will drop off chips at accessible residences (for mulch) near the chipping locations as long as quantities last. To get on the “free chips” list, call the Kitsap County Public Works Open Line at 360-337-5777 or toll free at 800-825-4940. You can also email vbushnell@co.kitsap.wa.us for more details.

Drop off sites are: Hansville Drop-Box Facility (off Hansville Road) Wednesdays through Mondays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Olalla Drop-Box Facility (on Olalla-Burley Road) Fridays through Tuesdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Olympic View Transfer Station (in the recycle area at Olympic View Industrial Park on State Route 3) Mondays through Saturdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; City of Bremerton Public Works (100 Oyster Bay Avenue, West Bremerton) open daily (anytime); City of Bremerton Water Utility Building (3027 Olympus Drive, East Bremerton) open daily (anytime); City of Poulsbo Public Works (710 Iverson) open daily (anytime); Silverdale Drop-Box Facility (8843 NW Dickey Road) open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Vincent Road Drop-Box Facility (Bainbridge Island) Wednesdays through Sundays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There is no curbside pickup this year in the City of Poulsbo for holiday tree recycling and chipping. However, on January 4 and 5 (Saturday and Sunday) the FFA (Future Farmers of America) Chapter for North Kitsap is recycling holiday trees near the Youth Garden at Raab Park in Poulsbo (entrance is at the South end of Caldart Street). The teens will be at the Park from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The recycling is free but monetary donations will be accepted and contributed to Fishline and the March of Dimes Foundation.

I usually write about nurseries in Kitsap County (except for information about the Northwest Flower and Garden Show) but this year Molbak’s Nursery in Woodenville has a contest called the “First Annual Winter Garden Contest” and Kitsap County Gardeners can enter. One grand prizewinner will be awarded a \$500 Molbak’s gift certificate and two finalists will each receive \$100 gift certificates.

Gardeners are eligible to enter the contest with the submission of an entry form, an essay and photos of their garden. Contest entry forms can be picked up at Molbak's Nursery or on-line at www.molbaks.com. Interested contestants can also call the nursery at 425-483-5000 to request an entry form. The deadline for submission is Sunday, February 16, 2003. Molbak's staff will critique the gardens based on style, inspirations, goals and obstacles overcome in the garden. The contest is Molbak's way of celebrating the "joys of winter color."

This is an amateur gardening competition. Contestants must personally design and maintain their gardens. Gardens that have been professionally designed or are maintained by professionals are not eligible. Molbak's says to tell them about your garden, how you've planned it and what you've achieved. Show as many areas of your garden as you can, and include a picture of yourself in your garden. Molbak's recommends using 200ASA or slower film. Photos may be submitted as 35 mm slides or digital images in jpg format. Winners will be announced on March 3, 2003 on Molbak's website.

Someone in Kitsap County can win this contest. I know there are many of you with stellar gardens. Get out there with your cameras, pick up your pens and/or computer mouse and enter this contest. Maybe on March 3 I'll be writing about you in my column.