

Hundreds of millions of holiday packages expected between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day

USPS
The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is ready to deliver more than 28 million packages per day between Dec. 16-21, and will average 20.5 million packages per day through the remainder of the year.

With a projected 800 million package deliveries between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, the Postal Service delivers more packages to homes than any other shipper.

The Postal Service will expand Sunday delivery beginning Nov. 24 to locations with high package volumes. USPS already delivers packages on Sundays in most major cities, and anticipates delivering more than 8 million packages on Sundays in December. Mail carriers will also deliver packages for an additional fee on Christmas Day in select locations.

The Postal Service plans for peak holiday season all year. This includes making sure the right equipment is available to sort, process and deliver the expected mail and package volumes. Seasonal workers are hired when and where needed, and technology has been expanded to enhance package tracking throughout the USPS processing and transportation networks.

Busiest Mailing and Delivery Days

The Postal Service's busiest time of the season peaks two weeks before Christmas, when much last-minute shopping starts. Customer traffic is expected to increase beginning Dec. 9, while the week of Dec. 16 is expected to be the busiest time for mailing, shipping and delivery. Additionally, the Postal Service predicts that nearly 2.5 billion pieces of First-

Class Mail, including greeting cards, will be processed and delivered the week of Dec. 16.

Skip the Trip and Ship Online

Consumers can use usps.com to ship their packages and save trips to the Post Office. The Postal Service anticipates Dec. 16 will be the busiest day online with more than 8.5 million consumers predicted to visit usps.com for help shipping holiday gifts. Nearly 105 million consumers are predicted to visit usps.com between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

The Postal Service estimates nearly 400,000 consumers will use the Click-N-Ship feature and other online services Dec. 16 to order free Priority Mail boxes, print shipping labels, purchase postage and request free next-day Package Pickup.

2019 Holiday

Shipping Deadlines

The Postal Service recommends the following mailing and shipping deadlines for expected delivery by Dec. 25 to Air/Army Post Office/Fleet Post Office/Diplomatic Post Office and domestic addresses*:

Dec. 9 — APO/FPO/DPO (ZIP Code 093 only) Priority Mail and First-Class Mail

Dec. 11 — APO/FPO/DPO (all other ZIP Codes) Priority Mail and First-Class Mail

Dec. 14 — USPS Retail Ground

Dec. 18 — APO/FPO/DPO (except ZIP Code 093) USPS Priority Mail Express

Dec. 20 — First-Class Mail (including greeting cards)

Dec. 20 — First-Class Mail (up to 15.99 ounces)

Dec. 21 — Priority Mail

Dec. 23 — Priority Mail Express*

Alaska

Dec. 18 — Alaska to mainland First-Class Mail

Dec. 19 — Alaska to mainland Priority Mail

Dec. 21 — Alaska to mainland Priority Mail Express

Hawaii

Dec. 19 — Hawaii to mainland Priority Mail and First-Class Mail

Dec. 21 — Hawaii to mainland Priority Mail Express

*Not a guarantee, unless otherwise noted. Dates are for estimated delivery before Dec. 25. Actual delivery date may vary depending on origin, destination, Post Office acceptance date and time and other conditions. Some restrictions apply. For Priority Mail Express shipments mailed Dec. 21-25, the money-back guarantee applies only if the shipment was not delivered, or delivery was not attempted, within two (2) business days.

Delivering for the Military and Overseas

The Postal Service also processes mail for overseas Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of State (DoS) recipients. The DoD measures mail volumes in pounds not pieces, and USPS expects to process more than 15 million pounds of mail for DoD and DoS recipients between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve.

More tips for a successful holiday mailing and shipping season:

Use free Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes. They are available at local Post Offices

or online at usps.com/free-boxes

Make it easy with Click-N-Ship. You can create shipping labels and pay for postage online at usps.com/ship

Schedule a free Package Pickup when the carrier delivers your mail. It's free regardless of the number of packages. Or, pickups can be scheduled at usps.com/pickup

New this year, mail and packages weighing more than 10 ounces and/or are more than a half-inch thick using stamps as postage cannot be dropped into a collection box or left for a carrier to pick up. Instead, take them to a window clerk at a Post Office. Click-N-Ship customers are unaffected by this change.

Additional news and information, including all domestic, international and military mailing and shipping deadlines, can be found on the Postal Service Holiday Newsroom at usps.com/holidaynews.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

I saw Nisha Lacy at the TRIAD meeting. She told me she had been in an accident. She's been going to a chiropractor.

Mrs. Ethel Cobbins is at home mending from her trip to a hospital in Jackson.

Mrs. Nellie Mae Williams of Tchula is also still at home mending from surgery.

Mr. Samuel (Sam) Anderson passed.

Mrs. Mary Hodges, mother of Elder Willie Hodges and his sisters and brothers, passed Thursday morning. Her funeral will be Saturday, November 16, at 11 a.m. at St. Paul C.O.G.I.C.

Joe Morgan, Jr. might still be in the hospital in Lexington. Mrs. Leola Montgomery is still in the hospital in Lexington. Pray for these people and any others that have sickness or death in their family.

The Rose Hill District Association will meet for its annual one day session on November 18 at 6 p.m. at West Grove M.B. Church in Lexington. Disregard that date being changed to the 25th. Enrollment is one half of the annual session that was held in June. For additional information contact Moderator Dan March by phone at 662-834-4888 or the secretary, Mrs. Leona Fields at 662-834-1489.

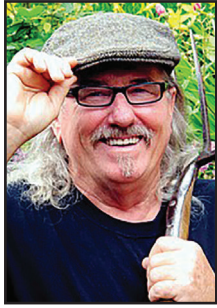
TRIAD met at the Multi-Purpose Complex in Lexington on Wednesday, November 6. The people that gave The Right In-

formation And Direction were Mr. Luckett, Sandra Green, Shamika McKinsey and Kyra Roby. Mr. Luckett and Sandra Green discussed property taxes and homestead expemption. Paying other people's property taxes does not assure you will get their property. Owners of property can transfer property to someone else by quick claim or warranty deeds. According to Mr. Luckett's report, warranty deed is the best method to use. He stated people should be careful about the wording of the paperwork when you get rid of or acquire property. Sandra Green spoke on homestead exemption. When you file for homestead exemption you must be 65 or older. You will need your deeds, vehicle tag number, proof of age (birth certificate), and driver's license number. Homestead only covers the house you live in. If your property value is over \$15,000 you will have to pay taxes on the amount over \$75,000. It's best to go talk to them rather than think you know and mess your property up.

Shamika McKinsey talked about United Healthcare, Medicare and Medicaid. Kyra Roby talked about the 2020 census. The census helps to determine how much federal money is given to the state by the government. They are also hiring people to work. Try www.2020census.gov

The reign of ancient lichens continues

Some of the most unusual, ancient creatures on earth are living in your garden, happily weathering the worst weather thrown their way. Some gardeners see them as monsters, which is sorta the truth.



FELDER RUSHING

The plant-like organisms are called lichens, and each is actually a unique Frankenstein-like mashup of algae and fungi. In this strange symbiotic relationship, the fungi protect and anchor the algae, which in turn convert sunlight and atmospheric nitrogen into carbohydrate food for the fungi.

These rootless composites, which have been proven to be able to survive being exposed unprotected for weeks in outer space, thrive nearly everywhere on Earth, from tropical rainforests to above the tree line in alpine mountains, across arctic tundra, and on volcanic rock and even slag heaps outside metal processing plants. Some are among the oldest living organisms on earth, with one colony estimated to be over 8,000 years old.

Lichens (pronounced "LIKE-ns") grow in a wide range of sizes and forms, from powdery to flat crusty mats that look like peeling paint, to curly gills and tiny frilly growths that are sometimes used in model railroad scenes as miniature trees and shrubs. Their colors range from dull gray, blue, green, red, orange, or yellow, with their brilliance perking up

after a rain. They're what lend spectacular displays to rocky faces of mountains and desert trees. Some of my favorite aesthetic photos are of lichens I've found crusted on centuries-old tombstones.

They've been used in medicine and art, and as strong indicators of heavy metal pollutants. Best of all, they are sustenance for wildlife - they are the main winter forage of caribou. Reindeer

food. Here's the rub: I get lots of emails and calls from gardeners who find lichens on old tree trunks and limbs of usually ailing old shrubs and think they're a plant-killing disease. They're not.

What they are, is a symptom of a plant not growing very well. As it grows, a healthy plant shucks the lichens off before they get too established; however, when a plant is weak or unthrifty from diseases, damage caused by bad weather, root or trunk wounds, or just old and in decline, lichens can completely envelope branches.

But the self-contained ecosystems adhere only lightly to bark, without causing harm; even on rocks they only cause a gradual weathering of surfaces. You can actually peel lichens off and see there is no damage whatsoever underneath. Other words, they are not parasites like shrub-like mistletoe with roots growing into tree



Lichens and Spanish Moss in Felder's Garden.

limbs, or the very odd masses of orange spaghetti-like dodder vine that clammers over and sucks its nutrients from the host plants; lichens are more like epiphytes such as hanging Spanish moss and those small fern colonies that grow atop but not into old tree limbs.

By the way, I converted a shade-cooled area of my back garden with a splashy water into a "stumpery" - a jumble of old mushroom-encrusted tree stumps, dwarf palmetto, and mosses and other shade perennials. To create a memorable Old South pastiche, I propped up the branchy trunk of a dead cypress tree and draped it with Spanish moss; it took a

while but now I have some very interesting patches of lichens forming on the twigs.

Look around at your older shrubs and trees. If you find lots of lichens, the thing to do is prune hard or at least thin out some of the cluttered growth this winter or next spring to stimulate strong new shoots, and fertilize in late spring to support that growth.

And ignore - or better yet, admire and celebrate - the ancient lichens.

Felder Rushing is a Mississippi author, columnist, and host of the "Gestalt Gardener" on MPB Think Radio. Email gardening questions to rushingfelder@yahoo.com.