# Join us in the French Quarter for MSC's 55th Annual Meeting!

**Engaging topics and insights for every level of the industry—from owners and plant managers to sales and marketing professionals and industry suppliers.**

*This year's meeting topics will include:*

- The Crow Report - What's Going on in Washington D.C.
- EPR Education & Compliance
- Biochar in Practice: A Guide for Soil & Mulch Professionals
- Growing Media Industry Report: Status of Peat & Non-peat Substrates
- Consistency in Bulk Volume Measurements

## Keynote Speaker:
## Jim "The Rookie" Morris

***Dream Makers: Surround Yourself with the Best to Be Your Best, where Jim highlights the people who helped him along his journey—his Dream Makers.***

## We hope to see you there!

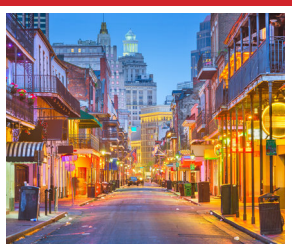
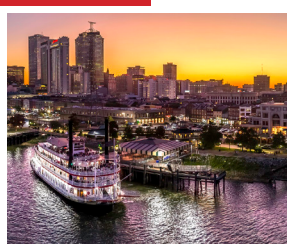
# Mulch & Soil Council 2026 Annual Meeting

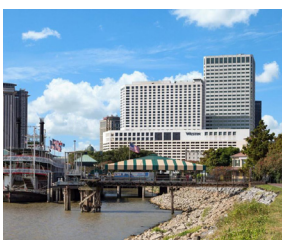
*Celebrating 55 Years!*

## September 29 - October 1
## The Westin New Orleans

**For more info, go to www.mulchandsoilcouncil.org**

MULCH & SOIL COUNCIL



# 2026 MSC Annual Meeting

**September 29 - October 1, 2026**

**The Westin New Orleans**

## Tuesday, September 29

**1:00p-5:00p** **MSC Committee Meetings**
Members in good standing are welcomed to participate in committee meetings as observers.

**5:00p-6:30p** **Meet the MSC Board of Directors**
Join the MSC Board of Directors for informal talks over cocktails as they share information on the programs and activities of the Council and the industry. ***Sponsored By nVenia***

## Wednesday, September 30

**8:00a-12:30p** **Board of Directors Meeting**
Members in good standing are welcomed to participate in the Board of Directors meeting as observers.

**12:30p-1:00p** **Break** ***Sponsored By Reliance Packaging***

**1:00p-1:30p** **Official Opening and Welcome**
Hear from MSC President Jim Weber, Program Chair Nick Castorano, Legal Counsel John Hazard and Executive Director Robert LaGasse as we invite you to join us for the start of the 55th MSC Annual Meeting.

**1:30p-2:30p** **Crow Political Report**
Join us as MSC Legislative Representative **David Crow** presents our annual update on the state of US politics and how what's going on in Washington impacts you.

**2:30p-3:00p** **Break** ***Sponsored By ProAmpac***

**3:00p-4:30p** **55th MSC Annual Membership Meeting**
Hear reports from MSC leadership and committees, elect Council directors and discuss MSC programs and activities as they may impact your business and the industry. **Moderator: Robert LaGasse, MSC Executive Director**

**4:30p - 7:00p** **Opening Reception & Affiliate Member Displays**
Join us to meet with old friends and new members over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres while visiting with the industry's leading suppliers and vendors. ***Sponsored By Vermeer Corporation***

## Thursday, October 1

**8:00a-9:00a** **Grab n ' Go Breakfast** ***Sponsored By TH Glennon***

**9:00a-10:00a** **Packaging EPR: Emerging Issues**
This talk will explore the current status of packaging EPR policies and issues commonly faced by producers. It will include discussion of challenges related to source reduction in California, common themes around gaps in how companies are equipped to handle compliance, and approaches to addressing those challenges.
**Speaker: Chloe Kapanen, Washburn Consulting**

**10:00a-10:30a** **Break** ***Sponsored By SPR***

**10:30a-11:30a** **Biochar in Practice:A Guide for Soil & Mulch Professionals**
Biochar is moving from niche additive to mainstream ingredient in soil, mulch, and compost products, but practical questions remain: how much to add, how it affects handling and performance, and how to talk about it with customers. Dr. Lewandowski will walk through what soil and mulch professionals need to know to evaluate, source, and incorporate biochar into their product lines. Drawing on a background in growing media R&D and compost science, she'll cover feedstock and quality considerations, blending ratios and process impacts, and where the science is solid versus still emerging. Attendees will leave with a practical framework for deciding if and how biochar fits their operations. **Speaker: Dr. Tera Lewandowski, American Biochar Institute**

**11:30a-2:00p**
**Keynote Luncheon: Jim "The Rookie" Morris**
Jim "The Rookie" Morris is a remarkable individual whose journey from high school science teacher and coach in West Texas to Major League Baseball pitcher is nothing short of inspiring. At the age of 35, Jim defied the odds and made it to the big leagues, a story that captured the world's attention and was immortalized in the Disney movie The Rookie.

Jim spent two seasons with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, reaching speeds up to 102 mph, but he chose to retire to focus on raising his children. Since then, Jim has been a motivational speaker, traveling around the globe to inspire audiences to follow their dreams and never give up. He shares his story and lessons learned in his book, Dream Makers: Surround Yourself with the Best to Be Your Best, where he highlights the people who helped him along his journey—his Dream Makers. ***Sponsored By Agricoatings***

**2:00p-3:00p** **Growing Media Industry Report: Status of Peat & Non-peat Substrates**
A summary of current events and product development in the North American growing media market will be discussed. Updates on the current and future use of peat as well as non-peat substrates will be highlighted, emphasizing current domestic R&D efforts to provide stable supplies of growing media in the future. Developments in wood fiber production as well as its forecasted outlook for the horticulture industry will be covered in detail. **Speaker: Dr. Brian Jackson, North Carolina State University**

**3:00p-3:30p** **Break** ***Sponsored By Chromascape***

**3:30p-4:30p** **Consistency in Bulk Volume Measurements**
The National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) has detailed instructions for measuring packaged mulch and soil products but NONE on how to meausre bulk loads. Come hear best methods for consistant bulk volume measurements from industry experts. **Speakers: Darren Talbert, Scotts Miracle-Gro & Carey West, Loadscan**

**4:30p-6:00p** **President's Happy Hour**
Join us for our closing event! Come ready to sip and celebrate with friends old and new before returning home reenergized with new ideas to impact your business! ***Sponsored By Viably***

## Hotel Information:

**The Westin New Orleans** is a well-located, upscale hotel that combines modern luxury with the character and rhythm of New Orleans. It's perched above The Shops at Canal Place, putting you steps away from the boutiques on Royal Street and the lively dining and entertainment of Bourbon Street in the French Quarter. With sweeping views of the river, it's a solid choice for those who want to be close to the action without giving up a peaceful, high-quality stay.

A special block of rooms has been set-aside for MSC meeting participants. The rate for MSC members is: $259 (+tax)/night. The deadline for discounted room rates and space availability is when the block is filled or ***SEPTEMBER 4, 2026 - WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.***

**A link to online hotel reservations will be provided in the registration confirmation e-mail.**

# Everyone is Welcomed to Participate!

Sharing experiences and learning from others who have gone through the same trials is one of the major reasons for industry meetings. There is no better proof of the value of getting together as an industry than MSC's last 5 years of RECORD BREAKING attendance. Building on that experience, we plan to set another record in New Orleans for 2026.

From owners to plant managers or marketing and sales executives to industry suppliers, the MSC invites all interested parties to NOLA for the 55th MSC Annual Meeting. Come in person to network with industry people and to hear what the Council is doing for your benefit.

### General Meeting Guidelines:

**Non-Members:** Participation from non-member companies is welcomed. Non-member participants may attend one association meeting as a first-time registrant and are entitled to the member registration rate. Participation at a second meeting as a non-member is permitted at non-member registration rates. Attendance at additional meetings is by special invitation only. Non-members of MSC may join the Council at any time prior to the Annual Meeting and receive an immediate discount on the registration fee. For information on becoming a member, contact the MSC office at (806) 832-1810.

## THANK YOU To Our 2026 Annual Meeting Sponsors

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**Meeting Registration:** Registration fees include participation at education sessions, handouts, coffee breaks, receptions and the Keynote lunch. Travel to the meeting and hotel accommodations are NOT included in the registration.

**Cancellations & Refunds:** Cancellations must be received in writing at the MSC office by September 10, 2026, and will be subject to a cancellation fee of 25%, which will be deducted from the refund. No refund will be made for cancellations received after September 10, 2026.

**Limits of Liability:** The planners, sponsors and host hotel owners, management and staff of the MSC Annual Meeting and its associated events claim no liability for the acts of any supplier to this meeting, nor for the safety of any attendee while in transit to, in residence at or in transit from this event. Attendees who purchase non-refundable airline tickets do so at their own risk. In the event of meeting cancellation, the total amount of liability of the planners and sponsors will be limited to a refund of the registration fee. Submission of the registration form acknowledges acceptance of these provisions.

**TO DOWNLOAD REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE MEETING: *CLICK HERE***