

The Basics of Mulching: Outline & Resources

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Introduction

What is Mulch?

Mulch is any natural or synthetic material used to cover topsoil in the garden, fields or home landscape

Benefits of Mulching

- ✓ Reduces or prevents weeds
- ✓ Conserves moisture
- ✓ Regulates soil temperatures
- ✓ Increases soil fertility
- ✓ Reduces topsoil loss by wind and rain erosion.
- ✓ Reduces soil compaction.
- ✓ Help to reduce some diseases
- ✓ Enhances appearance
- ✓ Recycles waste materials
- ✓ Increases biological activity

Choosing a Mulch

Consider:

- ✓ Use
- ✓ Availability
- ✓ Cost
- ✓ Permeability
- ✓ Curb Appeal
- ✓ Biodegradability

Types of Mulch

Organic Mulches

- ✓ Bark/Wood Chips
- ✓ Compost
- ✓ Ground Covers
- ✓ Corn Cobs/Stalks
- ✓ Grass Clippings
- ✓ Hay/Straw
- ✓ Hulls/Shells:
 - Cocoa Bean
 - Peanut
 - Pecan
- ✓ Newspaper
- ✓ Leafmold
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Manure
- ✓ Peat or Sphagnum Moss
- ✓ Pine Needles



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Synthetic Mulches

- ✓ Carpet
- ✓ Cloth
- ✓ Landscape Fabric
- ✓ Plastic
 - Biodegradable
- ✓ Rubber

Inert or Inorganic

- ✓ Crushed Glass
- ✓ Gravel
- ✓ Marble Chips
- ✓ Slate Chips
- ✓ Stone
- ✓ Rocks

Application

General Mulching Guidelines

When and How

Applying Mulch Around Trees

- ✓ Donuts Not Volcanoes

Visitors:

- ✓ Insects
- ✓ Fungi

Handouts: Follow links to print handouts.

- <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/Portals/0/Gardening/Gardening%20Help/Factsheets/Mulches32.pdf> **Recommended for Comparison Chart**
- <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/mulches-home-gardens-and-plantings/>
Recommended for Application Times

Resources:

- <http://chemung.cce.cornell.edu/resources/mulch-in-the-landscape>
- http://www.eagleheightsgardens.org/tips/plastic_mulch_handout.pdf
- <https://www.treesaregood.org/portals/0/docs/treecare/ProperMulching.pdf>
- <https://permaculturenews.org/2016/03/14/is-newspaper-safe-for-your-garden/>
- www.eagleheightsgardens.org/tips/gardentips.shtml University of Wisconsin "From the Ground Up" by Robin Mittenhal
- <https://ag.tennessee.edu/biodegradablemulch/Pages/Frequently-Asked-Questions-about-Biodegradable-Mulch.aspx>
- <http://pubs.cahnrs.wsu.edu/publications/pubs/fs103e/> Biodegradable Plastic Mulch and Suitability for Sustainable and Organic Agriculture