

Mulching

Why Mulch?

- Using organic waste as mulch will reduce the amount of yard waste that would be thrown away. You are “recycling” this material at your home.
- Mulch works as a valuable soil conditioner. While it lays on top of the soil it will decompose and add nutrients to your soil.
- One of the best reasons to mulch is to conserve moisture in the soil. Keeping moisture in the soil means you don’t have to water as much - saving money, time and precious water resources. Plants will also remain healthy and don’t become diseased, requiring pesticides.

A Variety of Materials Can be Used as Mulch

Wood Chips • Shredded Bark • Shredded Leaves • Pine Needles
Compost • Redwood Needles • Grass Clippings • Paper • Cardboard



Mulch Thickness: An important consideration when mulching is mulch thickness. “Settled” mulch that is 4” or thicker is unhealthy because it restricts the access of oxygen to the soil. The ability for a mulch material to settle determines how thick the mulch layer should be. For example, a 6” to 8” layer of leaves or pine needles will settle to 2” or 4”, while a 3” to 4” layer of wood chips won’t settle at all.

Mulch Timing: The timing of mulching is also important. Although mulch can be applied any time during the year, it is best applied in late spring. It is during this time that your mulch can most protect your soil and your plants against late freezes, erosion and weed growth.

Pests: One concern associated with mulching is its ability to hide pests. Snails, earwigs and mice can move through the mulch, unseen, and nibble on plants. The solution to this is to never mulch all the way up to stems or trunks of flowers or shrubbery. Leave at least a 6-12” gap between the edge of the mulch and the stem or trunk, and under drip lines, to avoid problems. When using wood chips for mulch leave at least a 12” gap between the mulch and any fence line or home to avoid any possible termite problems.

Questions? Call (925) 906-1801 x306 or visit www.wastediversion.org



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