



Mulching Tips

Why You Should Mulch

Mulching is an excellent way to increase the vitality and beauty of your garden. Mulch acts as a defense for your plants and protects them from the harsh conditions of the environment.

In summer months, mulch retains moisture and provides a cool environment for plants. It reduces evaporation from soil and decreases the amount of watering needed. In winter months, mulch insulates the top layer of soil, retaining moisture and protecting plants from harsh temperatures.

Shredded mulch also has a variety of extra benefits including increasing soil health by improving soil structure and allowing for better irrigation and air movement. Mulch also supports an environment for beneficial organisms like earthworms.

How to Mulch

- Before you mulch, prep your garden! Remove any weeds and water the area. Partially composted mulches can produce heat upwards of 150°F because of the decomposition process, so it is important to inspect the temperature of the mulch before applying. Once cool, mulch will remain cool when spread over an area.
- Replace grass under trees to minimize competition for water and nutrients, which mimics the way they grow in nature.
- Keep mulch 6-12 inches away from the base of trees and shrubs and 1-2 inches away from small plants. Mulch placed too close to the base of plants could cause plant rot.
- If you are mulching to protect plants in the winter, such as roses, it is temporarily okay to apply mulch at the crown; however, the mulch should be removed immediately when the temperatures begin to rise.
- When adding new mulch on a regular basis, make sure to remove the layer of old mulch so there is no excess build up.



Landscape Recycling Center

A not-for-profit facility serving Champaign County

Types of Mulch Sold at LRC	How to Apply
Premium Shredded Hardwood Mulch For trees, shrubs, perennials, annual flowers, and spring flowering bulbs	Apply mulch no more than 2 inches deep
Shredded Hardwood Mulch For trees, shrubs, perennials, annual flowers, and spring flowering bulbs	Apply mulch no more than 2 inches deep
Premium Chipped Hardwood Mulch For pathways, garden trails, trees, shrubs, perennials, annual flowers, and spring flowering bulbs	Apply mulch no more than 4 inches deep
Chipped Hardwood Mulch For mulching woody plant material	Apply mulch no more than 4 inches deep
Acidifier Softwood Mulch For acid loving plants: azaleas, rhododendrons, blueberries, pin oaks, various conifers	Apply mulch no more than 4 inches deep

Other Types of Mulch	How to Apply
Leaf Mulch For sandy soils, all types of landscape situations	Apply mulch 2-3 inches deep
Straw For roses and perennials in the winter months	Keep at a depth of 4 inches thick. This will settle to about 2 inches, which is still effective.
Grass Clippings For all types of landscape situations	Clippings are best sprinkled over turf areas, such as with mowing, and left on turf to decompose and provide nutrients. Grass clippings can also be used as a soil amendment when turning garden soils.

