

Mulch

Mulch is a top-dress for soil. There are two main types: organic or inorganic. Organic mulch includes woodchips, bark, and partially decomposed compost. Inorganic mulch can be rocks, pebbles, decomposed granite, or even shredded tires.

Benefits

- Moderates soil temperature
- Conserves water
- Controls weeds
- Reduces erosion
- Improves soil structure
- Looks good



Decomposed granite mulch visually complements residential, dry garden above, while organic woodchips are most appropriate for woodland bed in school garden.

Which to use

Follow mother-nature:

- Inorganic mulch is best for gardens that feature desert, chaparral, or scrub plants. Dry-adapted plants thrive in well-drained, nutrient-poor soil, best maintained with inorganic mulch.
- Organic mulch keeps soil moist, and in time, decomposes enriching soil. Woodland and riparian plants are better adapted to these conditions.



How to use it

- Use clean mulch. Avoid material that may contain weed seed, pesticides or other toxins. Use green waste from your own property to reduce the waste stream.
- Maintain a 4 – 6 inch thick layer of mulch - thick enough to suppress weeds, not so thick as to hinder air and water circulation. Replenish organic mulch as it decomposes.
- Keep mulch away from trunks or stems of plants.
 - Do not use rubber or shredded tire mulch. Although it does not decompose, it is not as effective in controlling weeds; it is highly flammable and difficult to extinguish once it begins burning; and it contains a number of metal and organic contaminants with known environmental and/or human health effects.
 - Leave some ground mulch-free since many native solitary bees nest in bare soil. Mulch-free, undisturbed soil provides habitat for these important pollinators.