



# mulching

Decorative mulches add the finishing touch to any landscape by providing a consistent and colorful covering over the soil. Mulching materials are available in a wide variety of colors and textures to compliment your plants and surroundings.

## WHY MULCHING IS IMPORTANT

Mulches provide a protective covering over the soil. This helps to moderate seasonal temperature extremes and reduce water loss due to evaporation. Other benefits include less soil compaction and erosion, reduced weed growth and the addition of valuable organic matter back to the soil as the mulch breaks down. All of these help to create a better environment for roots to grow which leads to healthier, more vigorous and beautiful plants in your landscape.

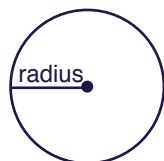
## HOW MUCH MULCH IS NEEDED?

First calculate the square footage of the individual areas to be covered, then add together for the total project.

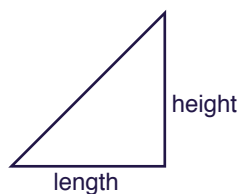
EXAMPLES:



RECTANGLES/SQUARES  
(length x width)



CIRCLES  
(radius x radius x 3.14)



TRIANGLES  
(1/2 x length x height)

For irregular shaped areas, break into smaller components and use the above formulas to best approximate the total square footage.

## COVERAGE

**Bagged mulches are available in 2 or 3 cubic foot bags depending on the type you select.**

BAGGED COVERAGE:

3 cubic foot bag covers 12 sq. ft. 3" deep

2 cubic foot bag covers 8 sq. ft. 3" deep

PINE STRAW COVERAGE:

Each bale loosely covers 50 sq. ft. 2" deep

## NATURAL (ORGANIC) MULCHES -

**Made from plant materials in different forms including barks (shredded or chunks) and pine straw.**

**PREFERRED USE** - Around all types of woody plants, roses and many perennials. Pine bark and pine straw are great to use around acid-loving plants because they help acidify the soil as well.

**HOW THICK TO APPLY** - 3" deep around trees, shrubs and evergreens; 1-2" around most perennials and roses. For optimal benefits, maintain these mulches at the listed depths by periodically adding fresh mulch as needed.

**WEED BARRIER** - None is required when using organic mulches since it prevents the mulch from decomposing and replenishing the soil with organic matter. A 2-3" layer of mulch will suppress most weed growth, while those few weeds which do sprout can be easy to pull out.

**KEEP A MULCH-FREE AREA** - Avoid placing mulch against tree trunks, plant stems or around the base of perennials. As a rule, keep mulches 3-6" away from the plants to prevent possible bark or stem damage from occurring.

**CHECK THE TEMPERATURE** - Occasionally, mulches can heat up due to the natural composting process. If your mulch is hot to the touch, allow it to cool before placing it around plants. This can be accomplished by using mulch from the edge of the pile as you pull it apart or by dumping small piles between plants and allowing it to cool before spreading.

**WATER IT DOWN** - Once your mulch has been spread, soak it down with a gentle rain from your garden hose. This will help to cool it down further, plus also act to settle the air pockets and lock the fibers together, giving it a nice smooth, finished look.

**GIVE A LITTLE EXTRA FERTILIZER** - Organic mulches consume small amounts of nitrogen from the soil as they decompose. A light application of **Better Blooms™ Fertilizer** will help balance soil nutrients.

**WHEN THE COLOR FADES** - Organic mulches will lose their color over time due to the ultraviolet rays of the sun, resulting in a grayish cast over the surface of the mulch. Fortunately, this can be remedied by lightly raking the area to bring up the fresh color from the underlying mulch. Color may also be refreshed by adding a thin layer of mulch over the surface; however, be careful not to exceed the recommended depth.

**Do not use mulches around annuals. Mulches deplete vital nutrients from the soil and can inhibit the performance of the annuals.**

