

CHOOSING AND USING MULCH

Mulch can help conserve water and enhance plant growth. It evens out soil moisture and temperature and prevents new weeds.

Place mulch on top of soil’s surface between plants. Don’t mix it into the soil. It’s not necessary to mulch lawns or areas of solid vegetation.

Choose the mulch that matches your desired maintenance level and will benefit your plants. Create interest by using more than one type in your landscape.



WOOD PRODUCTS

- Includes wood chips, bark chips and shredded wood.
- **POSITIVES:** prevents new weeds, improves soil quality, keeps soil cooler and moister than rock mulches.
- **CONSIDERATIONS:** must be replenished once per year as lightweight materials may blow away.



ROCK PRODUCTS

- Includes rock gravel, pea gravel, decorative rock and crushed gravel.
- **POSITIVES:** Doesn’t blow away in windy areas or require replenishment over time. Retains heat well. Preferred by some water-wise plants.
- **CONSIDERATIONS:** Requires regular weed control and cleaning of leaves and debris. Keeps soil warmer and drier than wood mulch.

HOW DEEP SHOULD YOU MULCH?		
Mulch type	Trees and shrubs	Flowers and groundcovers

Wood or bark	4 inches	3 inches
Rock or gravel	3 inches	2 inches

MULCHES FOR CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

- **Windy areas:** rock, gravel or shredded wood
- **Slopes:** angular rock, shredded wood or pine needles that won't roll downhill.
- **Under trees:** wood or bark mulch or pine needles, not rock products.
- **Groundcovers:** smaller particle sizes like fine wood chips, pea gravel or crushed gravel.

AVOID THESE PRODUCTS

Despite being commercially available, there are several products that cause problems:

1. Rubber mulch leaches chemicals into soils and can be extremely flammable.
2. Mulches that create a thick mat and won't let water into the soil, causing plants to dry out.
3. Landscape fabric can cause wood and bark mulch to blow away easily. Dust and debris collect over time, worsening weed problems.

WILDFIRE RISK

If you live in an at-risk area, use wood, bark or pine needle mulches away from your house. Limit them to "island" areas separated by at least 10 feet of mowed grass or rock rather than large, continuous swaths. Remove lower limbs of trees and shrubs to prevent burning mulches from climbing.

FREE MULCH SOURCES

City of Colorado Springs Forestry
1601 Recreation Way
coloradosprings.gov/forestry

Black Forest Slash and Mulch
12375 Herring Road, one mile south of Shoup Rd.
bfslash.org

