

actsmart[®] mulch

Mulch provides a protective covering and reduces soil moisture loss. It helps keep soil cool in summer, slows water run-off, inhibits weeds and can improve soil quality



Organic Mulches

Organic mulches can improve soil structure and add nutrients to the soil as they decompose. Depending on your visual preference and your ability to replenish mulches once they decompose, one or more of these materials can be used as effective mulches:

- Wood chips and tree bark
- Forest litter (chipped wood and leaves)
- Tea tree or sugar cane mulch
- Hay or straw (can contain weed seeds)

Materials such as shredded newspaper, lawn clippings and animal manures can be added to mulches to increase nutrient levels and water-holding capacity, but are not recommended for use exclusively.

Living Mulch

Groundcovers can be used to reduce overall water loss from the soil by reducing the impact of wind and sunlight as well as creating a useful root cooling environment for surrounding plants. Their ability to create a cooler, softer looking surface makes them a popular mulch option.

How to apply mulch

- Remove all weeds before applying
- Break up the soil surface and water well
- Spread the mulch evenly across the soil surface—up to 75 mm deep for most organic mulches
- Keep organic mulch away from trunks and stems to avoid collar rot.

Inorganic Mulches

Inorganic mulches are non-flammable, long-lasting and when used as part of a design can add interesting texture to your garden. Gravels of varying size and colour, pebbles, and coarse sands are all useful mulches. Dark coloured gravels will absorb more heat than light materials in summer, and very light shades can reflect the sun, creating a glare in some open situations. Gravels are particularly useful for reducing the risk of plant death due to collar rot, and are excellent for use around plants which prefer air circulation around stems and leaves, such as arid plants and succulents.

Woven plastic materials such as weedmat can be used to provide better weed control, but do require anchoring and covering with organic mulch. Water and air penetration can be heavily compromised, so plan carefully and check soil underneath regularly. Plastic sheeting is not suitable as water and air penetration is impossible.

Maintaining Mulch

- Check regularly under the mulch layer for effective water penetration
- Watch for mulch compaction, and loosen layers if required
- Remove weeds regularly to prevent weed seed colonisation
- Organic mulches need to be topped up as it breaks down, usually this needs to be done every two to three years, and more often if using sugar cane, pea straw etc. .