

Seasonal Tips

Mulch

Ahhh, summertime. Are you watering and weeding again? Why not try mulching instead?

Most of us know mulching manages water and controls weeds, but there are other benefits. Mulch will fortify soil while improving its structure, encourage earthworms, moderate soil temperature year round, improve landscape appearance, discourage pests, and provide a barrier from lawn equipment.

Mulches can be organic such as pine needles, woodchips, grass clippings, straw, manure, peanut hulls, and coffee grounds. Conversely, they can be inorganic/synthetic, such as rocks, pebbles, landscape fabric, and newspaper.

Your needs determine mulch type. Seedlings are mulched differently than trees, for instance. Whatever your choice, please be responsible to our environment. A disturbing practice occurs in Louisiana where old growth cypress is destroyed to create mulch. Visit www.saveourcypress.org.

Application depends on your needs. Mulching for weed control differs from providing winter protection. Spread mulch to the drip line in a donut shape. Avoid “volcano mulching,” mounding mulch around a tree’s trunk, since that promotes disease and burrowing creatures.

The many rewards of mulching are easy to obtain. And the biggest benefit? Sitting back more often and enjoying the view.

— Virginia Black