

The Benefits of Mulch

The City of Cheyenne Urban Forestry Division wants property owners to be aware of the benefits of using mulch around your trees. In general, trees are particularly susceptible to changes in moisture levels, soil compaction, heat, cold, salt, etc. Using mulch around the base of your trees can help to alleviate some of these potentially harmful situations and ensure your trees grow successfully.

There are many mulch options available to homeowners. Organic mulches, such as wood chips, bark and shredded wood will decompose and increase the organic matter of the soil, however they also tend to be dispersed by the wind and require replacement more often. Rock mulches, such as gravel and river rock do not improve soil quality, however they do not need to be replaced.



Examples of wood chip, bark, and pebble/stone yard mulch.

Unwanted weeds will eventually seed into mulch beds regardless of the materials used. It is important to pull newly emerging weeds or use herbicide treatments to maintain your mulched areas. Using wet newspaper or cardboard under your mulch is an effective way to smother weeds in your mulched beds if you prefer not to use herbicides. Weed control is important to ensure your tree does not have to compete for nutrients.



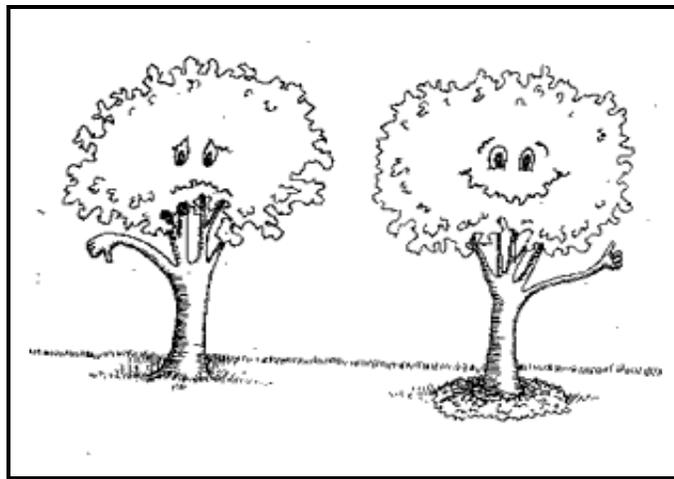
Weeds overgrowth in mulched area.



Using wet newspaper to suppress weed growth.

There are many benefits to using mulch in your yard, apart from aesthetic:

- Mulch helps to insulate the soil around your tree creating a barrier from extreme temperatures and inclement weather.
- Mulch improves soil moisture retention by 20-30%, helping to maintain moisture levels in the soil keeping the tree roots moist even on drier days.
- Mulch helps to reduce weeds around the base of your trees preventing root competition which helps your tree to obtain optimum nutrients for growth.
- Mulch helps to reduce soil compaction which can prevent tree roots from accessing the air and moisture that they need to survive. Soil compaction can also create shallow root systems making it hard for your tree to maintain its stability in the soil.
- Mulch helps to reduce trunk damage from lawn equipment by creating a barrier zone around the tree.



Mulch makes trees happy!

Do's and Don'ts:

- Do mulch wide not deep.
- Don't mound mulch around the trunk, creating a mulch volcano.
- Do allow the root flare to be visible.
- Don't let weeds overrun your mulched areas.
- Do enjoy the added beauty that mulch can bring to your yard!



Mulch Volcano



Proper mulch ring around young tree



Mulched landscape