

Some tips for making mulch

Collar your mulch

When using woody mulch around trees and plants, leave some space (a 'collar') between the bark or stem and the mulch. This will prevent making an environment that may encourage disease.



Weed free mulch

Avoid using weeds, seeding plants and certain leaves in your mulch mix. Eucalyptus and Camphor Laurel leaves contain substances that inhibit plant growth for 3-4 weeks when fresh. These can be composted.



Killer mulch

Avoid making mulch with organic materials that have been exposed to weed killer or pesticides as the mulch may harm your plants or soil.



Mature mulch

Mulching with fresh woody material such as wood chips and bark can rob the soil of nitrogen. Let mulches mature for a few weeks before applying to plants. Try mixing one part of nitrogen-rich material like compost, worm castings or animal manures (eg cows or chickens) to ten parts mulch.



Go grassrecycling!

The cheapest and easiest way to recycle your lawn clippings is to leave them on the lawn after mowing. Here are a few tips for successful grasscycling:

- ✓ Mow your lawn when it's dry to prevent clumping.
 - ✓ Make sure the lawnmower blades are sharp.
 - ✓ Set the mower height to 5-6 cm.
 - ✓ Try to remove only the top third of the grass blades each time you mow.
- ✓ Hire or borrow a mulch mower. A mulch mower does a better job because the grass is cut finer. A regular mower can also work well, just remove the catcher while mowing.



For more information visit

environment.nsw.gov.au
livingthing.net.au

Contact

Environment Line 131 555

Published by
Office of Environment and Heritage
Department of Premier and Cabinet
59-61 Goulburn Street, Sydney
Phone: (02) 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Fax: (02) 9995 5999
TTY: (02) 9211 4723
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au

OEH 2011/0740 ISBN 978 1 74232 227 8 September 2011



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

our environment *it's a living thing*



The marvel of mulch

Create your own Eden

What is mulch?

Mulch is organic material that covers the soil to stop weed growth and promote healthy gardens.

It retains nutrients and moisture in the soil and increases biological activity in the soil – especially worms and good microbes.



Many benefits of mulch

- ✓ Helps keep the weeds down.
- ✓ Reduces soil erosion and soil compacting around plants.
- ✓ Keeps roots cool in summer and warm in winter and helps maintain moisture.
- ✓ Reduces the need for chemical sprays and fertilisers.
- ✓ Less water for your garden.
- ✓ It provides nutrients.

You can use mulch around plants, as an additive to the compost or around paths and children's play area.



4 easy ways to make mulch

Making mulch is really simple.

1 Using clippings

Lawn clippings are a natural garden wonder, so make the most of your clippings by:

- Leaving them on the lawn when you mow, feeding the lawn and making it healthier.
- Mulching around annual flower and vegetable plants. Note: don't leave clippings around the base of trees.



2 Using garden prunings

It's easy to turn garden prunings into mulch, and here's how:

- Arrange twigs, thin branches and leafy material in a long row and use the lawn mower to shred them.
- For larger branches, borrow or hire a small shredder.



3 Using compost

Composting your food scraps and garden vegetation can create a free source of nutrients for seedlings, plants, shrubs and trees. The nutrients in compost are readily available to your plants and soil. Call 131 555 to get your Easy Composting guide or visit www.livingthing.net.au



4 Using bought mulches

Many different types of mulches can be bought either in bags or in bulk. Straw, hay, wood and bark chips can be easily purchased.

Wood chip mulches are often used as an attractive feature for garden paths and to soften falls under children's play equipment.



Mulch can be made from common organic items from your garden and kitchen.

Leaves are a decorative free mulch which provide fibrous organic material to the soil.



Grass clippings contain nitrogen and potash and rot down quickly. Great for seedlings!

Seaweed is seed free, doesn't transfer plant diseases, looks good and is high in minerals and potash.

Shredded garden prunings look great around larger plants and shrubs.

Straw can be used as mulch around vegetable plants and seedlings.

Newspaper that can't go in the recycling bin can be used as mulch.



Compost is an all-round wonder for the garden. It decays quickly as a mulch and provides nutrients and trace elements to plants and soil.

Wood chips are often used as mulch in landscaping.

Try ground cover plants as a **living mulch**. Herbs such as Corsican Mint (*Mentha requenii*), Wild Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) or Kidney Weed (*Dichondra repens*) make great ground covers.



Hint Try to increase the types of mulches you use on your gardens.

Turn over for some great mulch-making tips >>