

step 6

H₂O[®]VERHAUL



Mulching

Why Mulch?

It's magical. Mulch insulates the soil, protects from erosion and conserves moisture. It can slow weed growth, reduce soil compaction from rain, add beauty to your garden and may even improve soil quality when used correctly.

You know what else is magical? Me, the molecule of life.

I love you so much!



Meet The Mulches

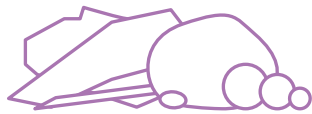


Organic mulch

The most water-wise option, organic mulches like garden bark chips or coarse compost retain moisture and add nutrients to the soil as they decompose.

Expert Tip:

Avoid using organic mulch on steep slopes or drainage paths. They can wash away in heavy rain.

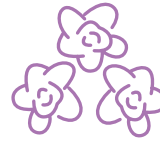


Inorganic mulch

Gravel, rocks, shale and ground rubber can add visual interest and texture to your landscape. It rarely needs to be replaced.

Expert Tip:

Inorganic mulch can soak up a lot of heat. Avoid using it near grass, plants and areas where dogs and children play.



Plant alternatives

Drought-tolerant ground cover, such as Turkish Veronica or Creeping Thyme help retain moisture while adding a nice green backdrop to surrounding plants.

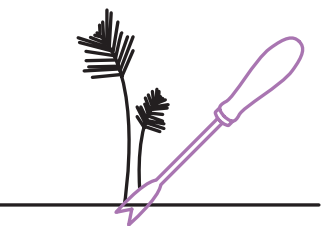
Expert Tip:

Drought-tolerant ground covers are great for suppressing pesky weeds. Not the best option for foot traffic.

Did you know?
You can have your mulch delivered from a local garden store. Because that's how you roll.



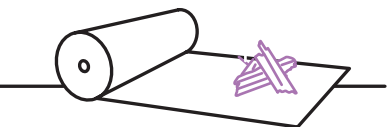
How To Do It:



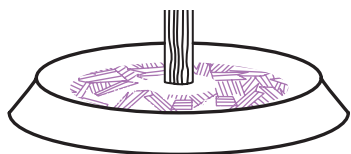
1 Remove weeds and water your soil before you add mulch.



2 Lay down your mulch about 3 inches deep and cover the entire area from the plant's root zone to the drip line.



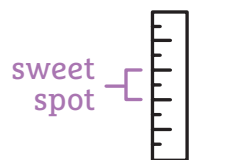
3 If you're using inorganic mulch in areas that are prone to weeds, apply a fabric barrier first.



4 Create an earth basin around shrubs and small trees by creating a higher rim of dirt around the tree, but leave a few inches of space between mulch and plant stems or trunks.



5 Be careful not to cover the crowns of your perennials (the area where the roots and tops come together).



6 Replace or add mulch periodically. In order to remain effective, mulch needs to stay 2-3 inches thick.

Common Myths About Mulch

Myth It's a fail-proof weed barrier.

Fact It reduces the number of weeds but won't completely prevent them.

Myth It attracts termites if placed close to your home.

Fact Moisture attracts termites, not mulch. Several things can lure them in (if placed close to your house) including shrubs, irrigation systems, gravel and rocks.

Myth Compost and mulch are the same.

Fact Compost is a soil amendment that gets mixed into soil. Mulch is placed on top of the soil after plants and irrigation have been installed.



Find Out How To Get More from Your Mulch

Bag please! Only buy mulch in bags if you are going to use it right away. This prevents it from getting moldy.

Get fluffy with it. Agitate or "fluff" organic mulch at least once each year to slow weed growth and prolong mulch life.

Protect your perennials. Lighter organic mulches like bark mulch are better for perennials, which are more likely to thrive when they don't have to compete for micronutrients in the soil.

No fungus among us. Mulch creates a warm and humid environment that is perfect for the establishment of various fungi that can injure or kill the plants. Avoid this by keeping bark or rock 1-2 inches away from plant stems.



Additional Resources

Visit **ThorntonWater.com/H2Overhaul** for additional ideas to help you plan.

You'll find links to resources such as photos of different mulch types, recommendations for selecting mulch and step-by-step instructions on how to mulch a new landscape.

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