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Mulch Madness... The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly

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Mulch Volcano - BAD



Proper Mulching



Columbus, OH – April 9, 2018 – It is finally Spring! Time to get outside and enjoy the warm weather. And time to care for your trees and other plants. One of the most important things to consider is the question of mulch. Do I mulch this year or not? How much, what kind, where and when?

Here is the scoop on the **“Best Practices”** of how to apply and use mulch from the Ohio Chapter International Society of Arboriculture:

Benefits of organic mulch

- Using biodegradable materials leads to better plant health
- Adds essential organic nutrients back into the soil around your plants
- Protects the tree root area from temperature extremes
- Helps retain needed moisture in the soil
- Builds healthy soil structure and better oxygen supply for roots over time
- Reduces weed pressure that competes for the needed nutrients
- Protects plants from mower and string trimmer damage



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Warnings and Guidelines to Mulch By

- Hook and stir existing mulch prior to adding a layer of new organic mulch
- DO maintain 2-4" of mulch over as much of the root area as practical (ideally at least as far as the reach of the branches above). Re-apply to maintain this coverage as needed.
- Spring and/or Fall are best times to apply mulch
- DO NOT pile mulch up around the trunk or base of the plant; pull it back away from the base of the stem and "root flare"
- NEVER, NEVER place mulch against the trunk of the tree or a plant stem. Trees should have mulch no closer than 12-18" from the trunk. Mulch can KILL your tree if it is too close
- AVOID mulching areas that are overly wet; this can lead to root rot and other problems
- DO NOT use cloth or plastic weed barriers; these can impede the flow of water and nutrients into the soil
- Rocks and stones are NOT recommended as "mulch" since they do not add needed nutrients, they may also compact the soil and impede root growth
- Dark colored mulch in direct sun areas will increase soil temperature and may damage roots in the hot summer
- Be sure to water new mulch after installation to increase the frequency of beneficial organisms and reduce the chances of nuisance fungi
- Keep in mind that insects will use the mulched debris for their own purposes as well. Mostly this is a good thing as their activity helps the decomposition process which enriches the soil. However, certain types of bees and wood boring insects' may also be attracted. You may want to minimize the amount of mulch you apply near the foundations of your house if these insects are a problem in your area.

For more information visit www.treesaregood.org. Make sure you view the Proper Mulching brochure.

– END –



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ABOUT US: The mission of the Ohio Chapter International Society of Arboriculture is to advance responsible tree care practices through research, technology, and education while promoting the benefits of trees. Visit us at: www.ohiochapterisa.org

Over 1,000 Ohio Professionals Ready to Help!

There are over 1,000 qualified tree experts in the state of Ohio that have been designated by the International Society of Arboriculture as Certified Arborists. These tree care professionals have experienced rapid growth over the past decade and there is a significant amount of knowledge required to perform at the highest level. To find one in your area, visit www.treesaregood.org.

INTERVIEW AN ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST: Please contact the Ohio Chapter ISA if you are interested in interviewing a local certified arborist.