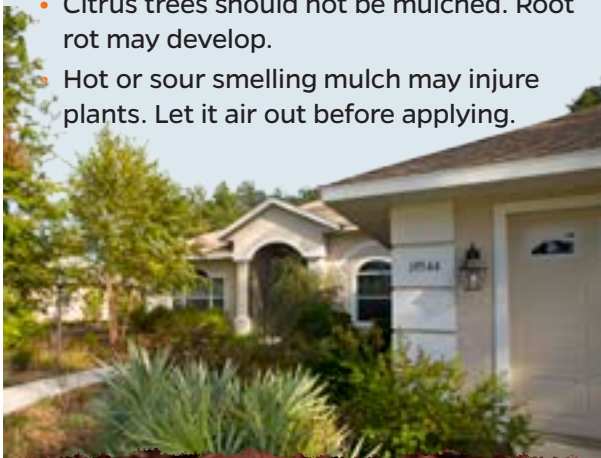


TIPS:

- Remove weeds before mulching.
- Add additional mulch any time of year as needed to maintain a depth of 2 to 3 inches.
- Avoid mulch depths over 4 inches which decreases water and air supply to roots.
- Avoid piling mulch against the base of a tree in a mound, or “volcano mulching,” because it holds in moisture and reduces air flow to the roots, encouraging trunk rot.
- Keep mulch pulled away 1 to 2 inches from plant stems. Under trees, mulch should be 12 to 18 inches from the trunk, and then out to the drip line or beyond.
- Rake/break up any hard layer that forms on mulch, which prevents water and air from seeping through.
- Fertilizer can be applied over or under mulch. Fertilizer washed into our water supply is slowed with use of mulch.
- Keep organic mulch 2 to 3 feet from the side of the house to decrease the chances of fire and termites. Coarse stones or gravel can be used in this space.
- Citrus trees should not be mulched. Root rot may develop.
- Hot or sour smelling mulch may injure plants. Let it air out before applying.



Contact information for mulch from Gainesville Regional Utilities:

301 SE 4th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32601
Phone: (352) 334-3434

An application is needed before delivery and will arrive in bulk. The application can be found on their website: www.gru.com

If you have any questions or require more information, contact the UF/IFAS Extension Florida Master Gardeners in Alachua County at mag@alachuacounty.us. You can also reach them by calling (352) 955-2402.

More helpful information can also be found at www.solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu.

UF | IFAS Extension
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UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County

22712 W. Newberry Rd.
Newberry, FL 32669
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E-mail: alachua@ifas.ufl.edu
Website: <http://alachua.ifas.ufl.edu>

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Mulch!

LEAVE NO GROUND UNCOVERED



UF/IFAS Extension
Alachua County

<http://alachua.ifas.ufl.edu>

BENEFITS

Mulch is a wonderful addition to any landscape, because it:



Saves water

- + Slows evaporation and increases absorption
- + Slows runoff and erosion



Regulates soil temperatures

- + Keeps soil and plant roots cooler in summer
- + Insulates roots in winter



Can protect plants

- + Decreases accidental damage from mowers or trimmers
- + Inhibits weed germination and growth
- + Can help prevent some plant diseases



Improves soil

- + Increases fertility over time
- + Improves soil aeration, structure, and drainage
- + Increases microorganisms necessary for soil health
- + Decreases soil compaction. Roots grow faster in soft soil



Adds beauty

- + Gives planting beds a neat and uniform appearance
- + Color and texture can complement plants

CHOOSING A MULCH

Pine Bark Nuggets \$\$

- By-product of the timber industry; harvested locally
- Readily available in bag or bulk
- Retains color
- Decomposes slowly
- Lowers soil pH (excellent for acid-loving plants such as azaleas)

Pine Straw (pine needles) \$\$\$

- By-product of the timber industry; harvested locally
- Readily available
- Poor color retention
- Rapid decomposition
- High in nutrients
- Lowers soil pH (excellent for azaleas, camellias, etc.)
- Not likely to wash away because they knit together

Dyed Mulches \$\$

- Produced from scrap lumber, recycled pallets, and cypress
- Good color retention
- Low in nutrients

Eucalyptus Mulch \$\$

- Harvested from plantations in Central and South Florida
- Good color retention
- Low durability
- Settles, decreasing in volume
- Low in nutrients



Yard Waste

- The simplest mulch is to rake fallen leaves directly into a garden
- Larger materials can be composted or chipped to produce mulch
- Very beneficial as it contains nutrients and organic material produced by your yard

Utility Mulch

- Pruned tree and shrub limbs and leaves which are chipped into mulch
- May contain some rather large pieces
- May contain seeds
- Some may not be landscape quality


Melaleuca Mulch \$

- Harvested from invasive, exotic trees in South Florida
- Retains color
- Slow decomposition
- Not attractive to termites
- Low in nutrients

Cypress Mulch (Not Recommended) \$\$

- May be made from waste wood, but often whole trees are harvested from natural wetlands, unsustainably
- Its origins may be difficult to determine
- Repels water when dry making it difficult to rewet



 = Free

\$ = 1.00 to 2.50 per 2-cu ft.

\$\$ = 2.50 to 3.50 • \$\$\$ = 3.50 and up