

## What is “Volcano” Mulching?

Springtime is an excellent time to re-mulch your landscape plants including trees, shrubs, and other landscape plants. There are many types of organic mulches that can be used, including hardwood, cedar, pine straw, wood chips, leaves, compost mixes, etc. Organic mulches decompose at different rates depending on the type of mulch used. It is very important to mulch plants to the recommended proper depth which is no more than 2-4”. If you like to put down a fresh layer of new mulch every year, please be sure the total layer of both old and new mulch combined does not



Example of proper mulching

exceed this depth. **Too much mulch can be harmful to plant growth!**

Be careful not to pile excess mulch up against the bases of your trees and shrubs. The mulch should be applied in an even layer out to the edge of the mulched ring around a tree or landscape bed. When mulching trees, the mulch should be pulled away from the base of the tree trunk by an inch or two so that it does not touch the trunks.

You may have never heard the term “volcano mulching” before. However, it is a term used in the landscape industry when excess mulch is piled up high around the bases of trees which is very harmful to tree health. “Volcano mulching” can lead to excess moisture accumulations on the lower trunks and root zones of plants leading to disease and insect problems. Keep in mind that the function of the bark on trees is to protect the trunk. When excess mulch is piled high on the lower trunk area, it creates a dark, moist environment leading to bark and lower trunk decay. Excess mulch can also deprive the roots of oxygen and greatly reduce the ability of the soil to dry out as well as a host of other issues harmful to proper plant growth.



Example of “volcano mulching”

**Please remember that proper mulching is a recommend landscape practice.** Even if you decide to hire a landscaper to mulch your yard or property, don’t hesitate to mention to them that you do not want them to do any “volcano mulching”!