

The Shores Common Area

Mulch Application Standards

Important Facts:

1. A layer of mulch on a planting bed helps suppress weeds, retain moisture, and moderate soil temperature. The biggest problem we see today is too much mulch. When added year after year, mulch can actually harm plants by creating a layer that doesn't decompose and doesn't allow root growth. Plant roots will also grow up into the mulch instead of deep into the soil. Mulch becomes so matted that nutrients and water can't penetrate to the roots, and the plants will suffer.
2. Piling mulch up around trees, known as Volcano Mulching, is also a bad idea. Excessive mulch causes rot in the trunk, creates a home for insects that attack the tree, and encourages the development of a secondary root system. A tree with a secondary root system in the mulch zone starts to depend on it, causing the primary, deeper root system to wither. This makes the tree vulnerable in a drought. When the soil is dry near the surface and the primary roots are no longer able to draw deep water, the tree loses its anchor and is at risk of toppling over in heavy wind.

Standard Practice:

As it is our obligation to practice that which is best for the plant life in The Shores, the Landscape Committee will follow these practices:

1. Strip off the old mulch now, removing as much as possible, and top dress with an inch of new mulch.
2. Add one inch of mulch in the Spring of each year. This is an important time to mulch as plants are sprouting new growth.
3. Strip the beds every three years. The goal is to keep the mulch layer less than three inches deep.
4. Rake mulch beds in the Fall to benefit plantings and refresh the mulch's appearance. Lightly top dress where necessary.
5. **Dark hardwood chips or dark color shredded mulch** are appropriate for landscape beds. Samples of these chips/mulch follows:

Shredded Hardwood Bark Mulch

Shredded hardwood bark mulch is made from 100% tree bark, and not ground up wood. This mulch contains a great deal more nutrition for your plants and as it decomposes it greatly improves the soil in your gardens.



Pine Bark

Pine bark is a byproduct of the forest industry. It comes in ground up, shredded and nugget forms. Pine bark makes a very attractive, rich brown colored landscape mulch. It can be purchased in various particle sizes, but the large-size particles 1.5 to 3 inches (3.81 cm to 7.6 cm) in diameter (called "nuggets" or "chunks") are more attractive, last longer and are more effective for weed control than finely ground pine bark.



