

November can also bring storms with high winds. Young trees may need to be staked to prevent any damage. November is also “Clean-up month in the garden”. As the brilliance of the autumn leaves fade and start falling, your trees should be put to bed for the winter. It is a great time to mulch trees.

### Benefits of Proper Mulching

- Helps maintain soil moisture. Evaporation is reduced, and the need for watering can be minimized.
- Mulch serves as nature’s insulating blanket. Mulch keeps soils warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

### Not Too Much!

As beneficial as mulch is, too much can be harmful. The generally recommended mulching depth is 2 to 4 inches. Unfortunately, many landscapes are falling victim to a plague of over mulching. A new term, “mulch volcanoes,” has emerged to describe mulch that has been piled up around the base of trees. Deep mulch can be effective in suppressing weeds and reducing maintenance, but it often causes additional problems.



### Problems Associated with Improper Mulching

- Deep mulch can lead to excess moisture in the root zone, which can stress the plant and cause root rot.
- Piling mulch against the trunk or stems of plants can stress stem tissues and may lead to insect and disease problems.
- Mulch piled high against the trunks of young trees may create habitats for rodents that chew the bark and can girdle the trees.

### Proper Mulching

It is clear that the choice of mulch and the method of application can be important to the health of landscape plants. The following are some guidelines our company uses when applying mulch.



- We inspect plants and soil in the area to be mulched to determine whether drainage is adequate and whether there are plants that may be affected by the choice of mulch. Most commonly available mulches work well in most landscapes but some plants may benefit from the use of slightly acidifying mulch such as pine bark.
- If mulch is piled against the stems or tree trunks, we pull it back several inches so that the base of the trunk and the root crown are exposed.
- We prefer organic mulches due to their soil-enhancing properties and we avoid using non-composted wood chips that have been piled deeply without exposure to oxygen.

