

HILDEBRANT NURSERIES

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QUALITY NURSERY SUPPLIES AND PRODUCTS SINCE 1923

MULCHING DO'S AND DON'TS

Over recent years serious problems have been caused when poor quality mulches have been used around plants. We are proud that Hildebrant Nurseries produces the finest plants available, but we are seeing many instances of problems being caused to plants by bad mulches that produce both environmental and pathological problems.

Mulching is vitally important for the health of your plants. It insulates against summer heat and winter cold, conserves moisture, helps control weeds, and makes a major difference in the health of your plant. As good mulch can do all these good things, bad mulch will actually seriously harm your plants

Bad mulches waste your money and will cause harm to your plants. They must be renewed frequently, they steal the nitrogen away from your plants, cause an oxygen crisis in the plant root system, and can actually rot the root system of the plant and kill it. Bad mulches can do more than harm your plants, they can harm your house. The bad mulches act as a host for Artillery Fungus. This is a fungus that thrives in poor quality mulches, and throws black globs of a tar like substance up to a distance of 20 feet onto houses, cars, patios, and furniture. It is extremely difficult to remove these tar spots. Examples of bad mulches that can actually harm plants are:

Shredded mulches	Cedar mulch	Hemlock mulch
Double or triple ground mulches	Oak or Hickory mulch	Composted mulch
Root mulch	Cocoa shell mulch	Licorice root mulch
Black and Red dyed mulch	Wood chips	Hardwood bark mulch
Hardwood mulch	Dyed mulch	Grass clippings

A good mulch lasts for many years, making it cost much less compared to the bad mulches. The good mulch not only lasts a long time, but it actually makes your plants healthier. It insulates well, controls moisture and weeds, it will not support Artillery Fungus, and most importantly creates soil conditions that make plants thrive. There is only one mulch that we recommend that will do all these things, it is Commercial Bulk Southern Pine Bark Mulch. This mulch comes mostly from Virginia. It is the only mulch that truly meets all the guidelines for a good mulch.

It is the primary mulch recommended by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in their Green Scene article on Artillery Fungus. It is harder to find than the bad mulches listed above, but it is worth every ounce of effort to get it.

Special mulch note for BOXWOOD: It is very critical to understand that boxwood are NOT acid loving plants! All of the bad mulches listed above create strong acid conditions in the soil, DO NOT use them near boxwood, as they can have a horrible effect on boxwood. It is critical that you use only Bulk Commercial Pine Bark mulch near boxwood.

Pine bark is hard to find up here in the north. Try to find it locally, but be very skeptical of the claims of mulch dealers. Demand that it only be pure Southern Pine Bark with no other products mixed in it. Demand that it be in bulk only, to avoid the problems of the bagged pine bark.

The proper depth of mulch around plants should be no more, or no less, than four inches deep.

In the event that you can not find it locally to you, we do keep lists of suppliers of Bulk Commercial Pine Bark, here at Hildebrant Nurseries. Please call us we will try to help you. We want your plants to remain healthy, and live for many years. Using a good mulch will save you a great deal of money, and will keep your plants going strong.