

Drought and Your Garden – Mulch

Mulching is an easy and effective way to conserve water in the garden by minimizing evaporation from the soil. Good mulching can reduce irrigation by 50%.

Use an organic mulch (natural materials) to a depth of 1 to 3 inches, depending upon the particle size of the mulch. The larger the particle, the thicker the depth of mulch should be applied. The smaller the material the faster it will decay.

You can mulch anytime but spring is best.

Do not use wood or bark chips in a garden setting that requires annual soil preparation such as your vegetable garden. The chips will interfere with future seedbed preparation.

Grass clippings (except Bermuda) make excellent mulch for the vegetable garden. Apply fresh clippings in thin layers (up to ¼ inch thick) and allow each layer to dry before adding more. The clippings quickly dry down and additional layers can be added weekly. A couple of sheets of cardboard or newspaper may be used under the clippings to help control weeds.

Wood chips make great mulch for trees and shrubs. Chips need to be refreshed every few years.