

# Backyard Composting

## Composting Mulch



*Mulch material does not have to be finished compost. But you can also mulch with compost. Mulch is placed on top of the soil in gardens or around trees to suppress weeds, keep soil moist, keep plant roots cool in summer and warm in winter, and prevent soil from washing away or becoming hard. Yard wastes can be used as mulch and placed around plants in the garden or along paths and in play areas. The only cost for mulching is your time and effort.*

### What You Need

#### Materials

- **For annual flower beds and vegetable gardens:**

lawn clippings or leaves from deciduous trees and shrubs

- **For trees and shrubs:**

wood chips, lawn clippings, sawdust, leaves from deciduous trees and shrubs, pine needles, manure

- **For pathways and play areas:**

wood chips or sawdust

#### Tools

- shovel
- wheel barrow
- rake
- work gloves

### What to Do

1. Spread mulch in the garden, around the base of a tree, or in a path or play area. Rake it smooth.



2. Place mulch around the trees as illustrated. Mulching trees helps keep moisture in the soil and protects plants during cold weather.



Adapted from Cornell Cooperative Extension GPAE90712

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## Wastes to Resources

