

BENEFITS OF MULCH

The natural way for feeding the garden

Mulch is the natural way for feeding the garden in nature so duplication of its processes is a sure way to obtain proper plant growth. The natural organic breakdown increases the population of soil life. There are many different types of mulch which can be used and all have varying degrees of breakdown and nutrient addition to the soil; some none at all; others very high. Mulches used which are similar to what plants have been used to in nature will stimulate the best results in plant growth.

All mulches should be applied between **100mm - 150mm deep** which will prevent weed seed germination both from within the mulch and the soil. The soil will not need digging after regular mulch because of the encouragement of soil organisms which improve the soil structure, aeration and drainage. Mulch is used in the garden for weed control where weed seeds are prevented from germinating and thus growing and competing with plants for water and nutrients, which plants need in the correct proportions to sustain growth.

Soils in hot, but drier conditions will tend to be black coloured because organic matter accumulates more easily and it imparts a dark colour to the soil, hiding the red of the iron.

Improvements from garden mulching

Mulch improves the structure of the soil through macro and micro organism activity. Mulch improves the fertility of the soil by providing a continual supply of nutrients during the process of breakdown to a rich friable soil. Temperature control is provided by mulch in that it provides insulation from the heat or the cold and doesn't allow the extremes of temperatures to affect plant growth, as well as having great water retaining properties which save on the use of water.

Mulch also reduces erosion and runoff which stops depletion of soil, topsoil and nutrients which are found in the top layer of soil. Aesthetic and economic value of mulch is well known and another factor of mulching, although these are not as important as the other factors mentioned in creating a relationship between soil and plant growth.