



Top Gardening Tips For Everyday People

Mulching Cheat Sheet

Woodchips.

Chipped remains of trees, branches and leaves. Come in a variety of sizes and qualities, ranging from roughly chipped arborist leftovers, through to horticultural grade nursery products.

Benefits.

- As they break down they will add organic matter to your soil, and provide habitat and food for microorganisms.
- Easy and cheap to find and install.
- Suppress weeds and retain moisture.
- Products like 'Forest Fines' and 'Hortgrade' have amazing visual appeal.

Negatives.

- Larger chips can be hard to incorporate into soil during tilling.
- Need topping up every season to continue to work.
- Easily washed away in heavy rains.
- Can transport weed seeds and viable cuttings for vegetative growth into your garden.



Sugarcane/Hemp/Straw.

A light weight organic product cut up from the plant it has come from. It can quite often be organically produced, and can come in small to large bales.

Benefits.

- Quick break down which adds nutrients to the soil and food for microorganisms.
- Easily worked back into the soil when replaced.
- Suppresses weeds and retains moisture.

Negatives.

- Quick breakdown means regular replacing.
- Easily blow away in high winds.
- Can make an area look a little bit like a farm.

Grass clippings.

Your leftovers after you mow your lawn. High water content and super quick breaking down.

Benefits.

- About as cheap a mulch you can get.
- High organic matter and really quick breakdown.

Negatives.

- Can clump up over the top of your soil and stop moisture penetration.
- Gets pretty smelly as it decomposes.
- Can contain weed and grass seeds that will germinate in the garden.
- Has next to no visual appeal.
- Because it's so abundant, people over apply it and it's easy to get too much mixed through the soil.



Leaf Litter.

Fallen leaves from trees. Can be from normal year round leaf drop, but mostly from deciduous trees in Autumn.

Benefits.

- A great way to use up all those fallen leaves in Autumn.
- Using native leaf litter around native plants in a great way to mimic natural processes.
- Breaks down quick and is great for microorganisms.

Negatives.

- Clump together when wet and can get slippery and then dry solid.
- Not very long lasting, and isn't really available outside of Autumn.
- very little visual appeal.

Sand.

Can include a variety of different sized granules, colours and the way you present it.

Benefits.

- Will cover an area for a long time.
- Allows water to penetrate through to the soil easily.
- Can look amazing in the right context.

Negatives.

- Can mix with dirt and begin to look really shabby.
- Really hard to remove if you change your mind.
- Limits any planting changes you may want down the track.
- Plenty of area for weeds to grow in.



Gravel.

Covers a huge range of different colours, and granule size. Can include loose stones thrown into an area, or decomposed granite or rhyolite that contain a binding agent.

Benefits.

- Can look really good in a big open area.
- Almost guarantees no weed growth.
- A long term option.

Negatives.

- Once it is in, it's there for good.
- Not much hope for surrounding shrubs or food crops.
- Not a great option for in and around gardens.

Treated Wood Chips.

Treated pine or hardwood timber chips that provide the same visuals as mulch, but take much longer to break down. Often also treated with a coloured dye.

Benefits.

- Offers a range of colours to compliment or contrast within the landscape.
- Extremely long lasting, meaning top ups are less often.
- Easily available from nearly every nursery supply store, and often in small easy to transport quantities.

Negatives.

- Full of chemicals that will leach into your soil.
- Dyes aren't as long lasting as wood chips, so they become faded and dull before they breakdown.
- Because they don't break down easily, they are tough to get out of an area if you change your mind.