

For more information about mulching, composting or other Florida-friendly landscaping practices, contact:

Hillsborough County Extension Service
5339 County Road 579
Seffner, FL 33584
(813) 744-5519
<http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu>

Hillsborough County Extension is a cooperative service of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida, IFAS.

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Solid Waste Management Department
PO Box 1110, 24th Floor
Tampa, FL 33601
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Mulches for the Landscape



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA
IFAS EXTENSION



HOW TO USE COMPOST

- ⇒ **Mulch** - Use unfinished compost. Apply 3”-4” thick.
- ⇒ **Soil Amendments** - Use finished compost. Work 1”-3” into soil.
- ⇒ **Potting Mix** - Use only finished compost.
- ⇒ **Compost Tea** - Use finished or unfinished compost and place in barrel of water. Use “tea” to water plants.

MULCHING TECHNIQUES

- ⇒ Mulch entire landscape beds.
- ⇒ Wood and bark mulches should be 2”-3” deep after settling.
- ⇒ Mulch newly-set plants after they are planted and watered.
- ⇒ Re-apply mulch around established plants as needed to maintain proper depth.
- ⇒ When mulching a tree, create a circle of mulch about 2’ in diameter for every inch of trunk diameter.
- ⇒ Pull mulch 1”-2” away from stems and trunks to prevent rotting.
- ⇒ Pull mulch 1’ from exterior walls to discourage termites.

 **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!** 

WHERE CAN I BUY RECYCLED MULCH IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY?

Falkenburg Facility
350 Falkenburg Rd
Tampa, FL 33619

Northwest County Facility
8001 W Linebaugh Ave
Tampa, FL 33615

South County Transfer Station
13000 US Hwy 41
Gibsonton, FL 33534

Types Available:

Aged Fines
Log/Pallet Wood Mulch
Yard Trim Mulch (unscreened)
Bagged, shredded, dyed hardwood mulch (\$2/bag)

Call first to check for mulch availability and prices. Sandy Kelly, (941) 756-0977 (specify site)

Pine Bark

- ⇒ By-product of the pine timber industry
- ⇒ Good retention of reddish-brown color
- ⇒ Minimal settling over time

Pine Straw

- ⇒ Pine needles collected from floor of pine plantations
- ⇒ Light brown color
- ⇒ Settles quickly compared to other mulches

Eucalyptus

- ⇒ Produced from trees grown for mulch in Florida plantations
- ⇒ Light, reddish-brown color
- ⇒ Minimal settling over time

Melaleuca (Punk Tree)

- ⇒ Produced from an invasive exotic tree
- ⇒ Good retention of color
- ⇒ Almost no settling over time
- ⇒ Most termite resistant

Utility/Recycled Mulch

- ⇒ Tree and shrub limbs pruned and shredded by utility and landscape maintenance companies
- ⇒ Fallen leaves and grass clippings
- ⇒ Mixed species mulch
- ⇒ Minimal settling over time

Oak Leaves

- ⇒ Create “self-mulching” areas under existing trees
- ⇒ Natural recycling
- ⇒ Minimal settling over time



BENEFITS OF MULCH

- ✓ Retains soil moisture
- ✓ Moderates soil temperature
- ✓ Reduces runoff from yards and minimizes soil erosion
- ✓ Improves soil structure and tilth
- ✓ Suppresses weeds
- ✓ Increases the beauty of the landscape
- ✓ Provides increased area for root growth



Cypress

- ⇒ Harvested from natural cypress wetlands
- ⇒ Produced from whole trees (bark and wood)
- ⇒ Does not have increased decay or insect resistance (as once believed)

Recycled Tires

- ⇒ No research to indicate benefits or disadvantages to plants
- ⇒ Typically used in playgrounds
- ⇒ Very expensive, but lasts for many years

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MULCH COVERAGE GUIDE

<u>Depth of Mulch</u>	<u>Coverage per cu. yd.</u>	<u>25 lbs will cover</u>	<u>30 lbs will cover</u>
2" (4/25 ft)	162 square feet	7.5 square feet	9 square feet
2.5" (1/5 ft)	129 square feet	6 square feet	7.2 square feet
3" (1/4 ft)	108 square feet	5 square feet	6 square feet
4" (1/3 ft)	81 square feet	3.75 square feet	4.5 square feet

1) Determine the square foot measurement of the area to be mulched.

EXAMPLE: 4 feet x 25 feet = 100 square feet

2) Determine the desired depth of the mulch, then convert from inches to a fraction of a foot.

EXAMPLE: 3 inches/12 inches = 1/4 foot

3) Multiply fraction from Step 2 by the square foot measurement of area to be covered (Step 1).

EXAMPLE: 1/4 foot x 100 square feet = 25 cubic feet

4) One cubic yard equals 27 cubic feet (3 ft. x 3 ft. x 3 ft.). Bagged mulch is available in volumes such as 2 cubic feet. Using the above example, you can determine how many bags to buy.

EXAMPLE: 25 cubic feet/2 cubic feet = 12.5 bags.

Therefore, you would buy 13 bags of mulch.

WHAT ABOUT TERMITES?

Many people wonder if mulch in the landscape will attract termites. University of Florida research indicates that termites tend to be present in mulched areas more frequently than in areas where mulch is non-existent. However, there are certain practices you can adopt to help deter these critters.

- ⇒ **Do not place landscape plantings too close to exterior walls.**
- ⇒ **Pull mulch at least 1 foot away from walls.**
- ⇒ **Lessen the thickness of mulch near buildings to 1"-2" to reduce moisture near foundations.**
- ⇒ **Do not over-irrigate landscape beds.**