



MULCH IS MAGIC!

How does mulch help our trees, shrubs and plants?

- keeps roots cool
- retains moisture
- protects roots from foot traffic
- protects trunk from lawn care equipment
- reduces erosion and soil compaction
- prevents water runoff
- improves the organic content of the soil
- absorbs excess moisture in spring and fall and extends the mud-free pavement zone, giving students more room to play
- keeps weeds down

How much mulch do I need?

Use the table below to calculate how much mulch you need.

Mulch is ordered in **cubic yards**. (Note: the landscape and construction industry does not use metric).

The **formula for volume** is: $V = \text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Depth}$.

If you measure and calculate volume in **feet**, divide your result by 27 to determine the number of cubic yards, since there are 27 cubic feet in one cubic yard ($27 \text{ ft}^3 = 1 \text{ yd}^3$).

If you measure and calculate volume in **metres**, multiply your result by 1.3 to determine the number of cubic yards, since there are 1.3 cubic yards in 1 cubic metre ($1 \text{ m}^3 = 1.3 \text{ yd}^3$).

Trees and shrubs: Recommended depth (spread mulch 6" (15 cm) deep).

Why do we mulch?

Spreading mulch around the base of trees and in gardens offers students a hands-on opportunity to learn about, and participate in, caring for trees, shrubs and other plants.

Students and stewardship

For many years, students have been planting gardens on their school grounds and in local parks. While new projects are exciting, students can learn a lot about environmental stewardship by caring for existing trees and gardens.

Allergy Alert!

Make sure that parents of students allergic to dust and mould are aware of the activity and take the precautions they recommend.



Mulch moves...have students help tidy mulch regularly



	Volume of mulch	Notes
Newly planted trees	½ cubic yard (about 13 milk crates)	Spread approximately 1 m out from the base
Existing trees	1–4 cubic yards (depending on size and # of trees)	Spread to the drip line to ensure you are protecting the tree's root system (see diagram on reverse)
Trees in planter boxes	½–1 cubic yard	Depending on depth of box (mulch to the top edge of box)
Shrubs	¼ cubic yard each (about 6.5 milk crates)	Spread approximately 1 m out from the base
Pathways, outdoor classrooms, muddy areas	1 cubic yard	This will cover about 54 square feet of area (3 ft x 18 ft, or 2 ft x 27 ft)

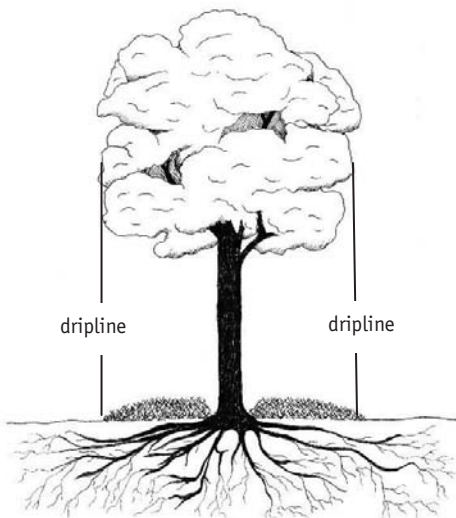
For **Garden beds**, spread mulch to a depth of 4", or 10 cm.

Example: For a 4m by 4m garden, calculate $V = 4\text{m} \times 4\text{m} \times 0.10\text{m} = 2 \text{ m}^3$. Convert to cubic yards by multiplying 1.3. This gives 2.6 cubic yards. Round this up to 3 cubic yards for your order.



Not all mulch is created equal
Wood chips (e.g., pine bark), often given out free from tree care companies, will migrate away from the base of trees and often end up covering storm sewers on school grounds — something your maintenance staff will not appreciate!

Tub ground mulch: the mulch better way to go...
Tub ground mulch is a wood mulch product that has been ground down into a fine fibrous material that binds together, and is recommended for school greening projects. And don't forget to leave your leaves! They are the best natural fertilizer.



Quantity Guidelines

1 milk crate	1 cubic foot
1 bushel basket	1.5 cubic feet
1 wheel barrow heaped	3 cubic feet

How do you order mulch?

Specify:

- **How much** mulch you will want delivered (in cubic yards).
- The **location** (approved by principal) for the mulch to be unloaded at your school (as close as possible to the site where it will be used).
- The **name** of your school's contact person — ensure that person is notified when the mulch arrives to specify the desired drop location.

When can mulch be delivered?

- During periods when the ground is dry, even in the winter!
- Mulch delivered in the fall can be left as small mounds for sliding in winter and then spread in the spring.
- But... if the ground is too soft for the trucks the mulch can be dumped in the parking lot.

Spreading mulch means spreading fun

Here are some tips to help you organize:

- Provide access to snacks and drink
- Work in pairs or buddies
- Sing a song while you work

Depending on the size of the task, involve:

- The whole school
- A class, EcoTeam, Green Team or Environment club
- Parents and the community in an after school or weekend work party
- Consider mulching during recess or Phys. Ed.

Moving mulch

- Square plastic milk crates work (hold approximately 1 cubic foot or 1/4 cubic yard)
- Recycling boxes (hold approximately 1.5 cubic feet)
- Bushel baskets or boxes on dollies
- Wagons, sleds and tarps to drag loads
- Wheel barrows (hold 3 cubic feet when heaped)

Connect your mulching activity to an event such as:

- Earth Day – April 22nd
- Arbor Day – (late April to early May)
- National Forest Week (last week of September)

Tools that will help:

- Round-mouth shovels
- Gloves
- Rakes

Mulching is an annual activity!

Mulch will break down over time, adding organic matter to the soil. Top up mulch every year on trees, shrub beds, tree boxes, gardens, pathways and mulched play spaces.