

Landscaping Your Yard

Mulch vs Rock

At Lakeshore Garden Centre, we want your yard to be a successful accomplishment. We want your plants to grow and flourish in the environment that you have created for them for many years to come.

Once all your plants are in, many people like to dress up the area with mulch or rock to add that finishing touch. At Lakeshore Garden Centre, we highly recommend mulching new plants. Our choice is a natural (non-dyed) wood mulch such as cedar, or a fur/larch blend, etc. Please stay away from rubber mulch.

Mulching provides:

- **Better Growth** – mulch can increase how fast trees and plants grow. Grass around trees and shrubs causes problems and will outcompete the tree/shrub for nutrients and water.
- **Less watering** – mulch reduces water evaporation, so you spend less time and money watering!
- **More nutrients** – as mulch breaks down, it adds nutrients that plants need to thrive.
- **Fewer weeds** – mulch stops weed seeds from sprouting so you may see as much as 50% less weeds.
- **Just the right temperature** – mulch keeps plants warm in the winter and cool in the summer.
- **Reduced compaction and erosion** – mulch reduces soil erosion by up to 85%! Plus, people are less likely to walk on mulch so there's less soil compaction.
- **It's in-expensive!**
- **Caution** – be careful when you mulch around new plants. You should only mulch about ½" deep, not too thick as you run the risk of smothering the root system as it struggles to find air. You can also build up excessive moisture causing fungus if the mulch is too high. Create a water well around the plant to allow the water to 'pool' around the base while it slowly seeps into the roots. You can certainly mulch heavier around the rest of the flower bed away from the immediate plant.

We strongly discourage you from using rock and here is why:

- **It's too hot** – rocks raise the soil temperature leading to stressed, thirsty plants. This is also the same for rubber mulch – think of hot pavement on a summer day.
- **No benefit to the plants** – rocks don't aid plant growth or soil health.
- **Messy pH** – most trees prefer acidic soil, but rocks create alkaline soil which can hurt trees.
- **Return of the weeds** – wind will eventually blow soil between the rocks, creating a spot for weeds to grow.
- **No good for pruning** – rocks can prohibit rejuvenation pruning, creating unwieldy shrubs.
- **Remove by hand** – if you want to remove stones, you must do it manually, which can be very tedious!