

For additional information or new ideas visit [www.yardsmarts.com](http://www.yardsmarts.com)

## HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE BARK MULCH FOR YOUR GARDEN BEDS

### What you will need...

- Mulch
- Fertilizer
- Steel Rake
- Hand Rake
- Gloves

### Important information...

#### Always:

- When mulching around trees, pull the mulch away from the base of trees, creating a “donut” effect. Placing mulch up against the tree trunk can cause the bark to decay, inviting insects and disease to take hold, which may eventually kill the tree.
- Maintain a depth of no more than two to three inches.

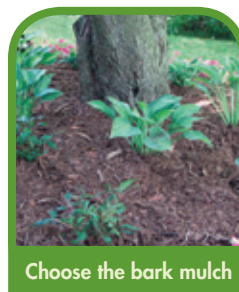
### Things to consider...

Keep a bag of mulch on hand so you will have it to freshen up flowerbeds before a weekend gathering or to cover up a muddy area or walkway in your yard until you have time to repair it.

### Steps...

#### 1 Choose the bark mulch

There are a variety of mulches to choose from. You will find a variety of choices made from different tree species. Choose the bark mulch that you think will look best where you are going to use it. Keep in mind that artificially colored mulches will likely fade within a season.



#### 2 Determine how much mulch you will need

As a guideline, a hundred square foot area will require just under one cubic yard or about twenty-five cubic feet of bark mulch to cover the area to a depth of three inches. To make precise calculations, follow this formula:

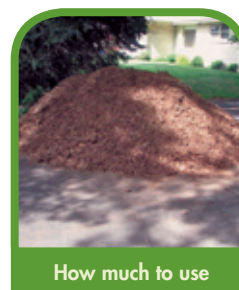
**Step 1:** Measure the square footage of the mulch area.

Example: 20 ft. x 5 ft. = 100 sq. ft. (ft<sup>2</sup>)

\_\_\_\_\_ ft. x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft. (ft<sup>2</sup>)

**Step 2:** Divide this number by 27. (Twenty-seven is the number of cubic feet in a cubic yard.) Example: 100 ÷ 27 = 3.70

\_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft. (ft<sup>2</sup>) ÷ 27 = \_\_\_\_\_



# Now you can *do-it-yourself...*

For additional information or new ideas visit [www.yardsmarts.com](http://www.yardsmarts.com)



## Steps (con't.)

**Step 3:** Divide the final number from step 2 by 12 (the number of inches in a foot)  
Example:  $3.70 \div 12 = 0.92$  cu. yds. (yrd<sup>3</sup>)

\_\_\_\_\_ (step 2)  $\div$  12 = \_\_\_\_\_ cu. yds. (yrd<sup>3</sup>)

The resulting number is the amount of mulch you will need in cubic yards.

### 3 Adding mulch to flower beds

Before you add mulch to flowerbeds, fertilize your plants with an appropriate fertilizer. This will allow the fertilizer to reach the plants' roots rather than be absorbed and held in the mulch.

### 4 Adding mulch to trees

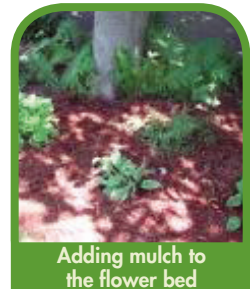
When mulching around trees, create a donut effect with the mulch, rather than a volcano. Place a ring of mulch two or three inches thick in a circle around the tree, preferably reaching out as far as the tree's drip line – where the sides of the tree ends.

### 5 Spread the mulch

Spread evenly with a rake in larger beds or with a hand rake in small beds or around delicate plants. Keep the mulch away from plant stems – don't bury the plants.

### 6 Adding more mulch

Bark mulch generally lasts a couple years before it breaks down. How long it will look good depends on the type of bark mulch you use and the weather in your area. To freshen up tired looking mulch, gently rake it. You can add a fresh, light top layer. Properly used, bark mulch provides a great finishing touch to your landscape.



Adding mulch to the flower bed



Adding mulch to trees



Spreading the mulch



Adding more mulch