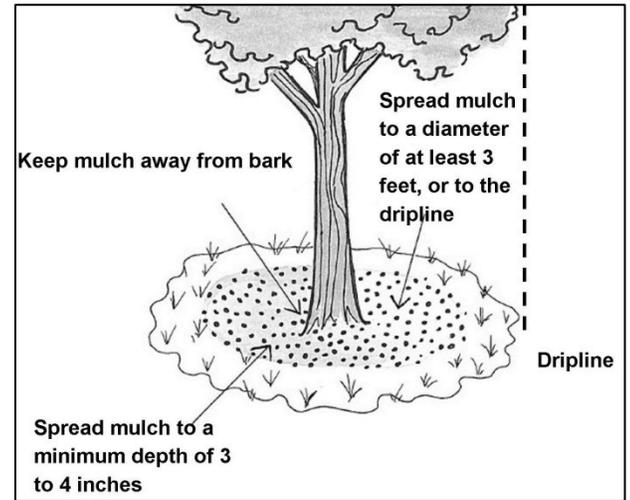


## SAVANNAH TREE FOUNDATION

*Preserve. Protect. Plant. Since 1982.*

# Mulch your Trees Please

Think of tree care as an investment. A healthy tree increases in value with age paying big dividends— increasing property values, beautifying our surroundings, purifying our air, and saving energy by providing cooling shade from summer's heat.



Mulching can reduce environmental stress by providing trees with a healthy root environment. Trees growing in a natural forest environment have their roots anchored in a rich, well-aerated soil full of essential nutrients. Soil blanketed by leaves and organic materials replenish nutrients and provide an optimal environment for root growth. Urban landscapes, however, are typically a much harsher environment with poor soils, little organic matter, and large fluctuations in temperature and moisture. Applying organic mulch can mimic a more natural environment and improve plant health. After watering, mulching is the 2nd best thing you can do for your trees!

### Mulch will:

- Provide a barrier to protect tree trunks against damage from lawn mowers and weed eaters
- Retain moisture and reduce competition for available moisture with weeds and turf
- Add nutrients to the soil
- Insulate roots from heat and cold
- Prevent soil compaction
- Improve soil structure
- Give your yard a neat, landscaped appearance

Studies have shown that young trees grown without turf beneath their canopies enjoy a more vigorous root system and grow larger and faster.

### Recommended are the following organic materials:

- Wood chips or bark chips
- Pine straw
- Aged compost
- Pine bark nuggets
- Shredded leaves

### Not Recommended:

- Cypress mulch, as it is not a sustainable product
- Inorganic materials like rubber, which can release toxic chemicals as it breaks down
- Grass clippings, as they can affect soil pH and lead to nutrient deficiencies or toxicities
- Stones, rocks or landscape fabric, which can limit proper root growth

### How to Mulch:

First, gently remove grass and weeds from within the drip line. Take care not to disturb the surface tree roots. Apply mulch material and spread 3 to 4 inches deep to the drip line or further. Keep the mulch 4 to 6 inches away from the trunk. **Beware of mulch volcanoes – mulch applied too thickly and piled up high on the trunk.** “Volcanoes” reduce the benefits of the mulch and causes the opposite effects, attracting bugs and harming the tree. Mulch will need to be renewed once or twice per year, depending upon the type used. Pay special attention to trees that have had recent construction in the root zone. **Don't forget your street trees, they need mulch too!**

Healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a property's value. —USDA Forest Service