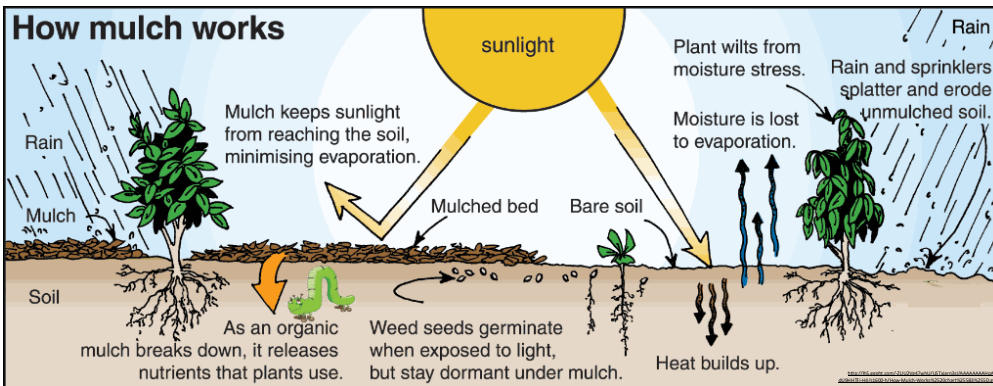


Water Savings: Got Mulch!



It's that time of year when we start to focus on our landscapes in preparing and renewing garden beds. As a water saving technique, mulch should be considered. Placing mulch around shrubs and garden plants can help reduce evaporation, inhibit weed growth, moderate soil temperature and prevent erosion. Organic mulches can include wood chips, bark, pine needles and straw. Inorganic mulches can include stones, pebbles or brick chips. Mulch can be used in raised beds, annual and perennial planting beds, paths, around trees, and rock gardens.

When using organic mulch, don't exceed 3 inches and avoid applying it too early in the spring or in the fall. Thick mulching can cause diseases as well as compacting, which can prevent water from penetrating the soil. Applying it too early in the spring can create water logged soils that drought tolerant plants may not like. Avoid creating a mulch "volcano" around tree trunks and shrubs, which can suffocate roots and provide homes to pests. Leave a few inches around trees and shrubs to prevent this.



Inorganic mulches are low maintenance and do not need to be replaced as often as organic ones. They may not be appropriate for all types of plants since they can create hot spots that some cannot tolerate. They also do not provide nutrients for plants and may require the use of chemical sprays to reduce weed growth over time.

When used properly, mulches are part of a water efficient landscape by reducing soil moisture loss as well as creating attractive areas within your landscape. Get mulch to save water around your home!

For more information about mulch, please visit [Jersey-Friendly Yards](http://www.JerseyYards.org) (www.JerseyYards.org), [USEPA WaterSense](https://www.epa.gov/watersense) (<https://www.epa.gov/watersense>), [Water Conservation for Lawn and Landscape Extension](https://landscape-water-conservation.extension.org/) (<https://landscape-water-conservation.extension.org/>), [Principles of Low Watering Landscaping IV: Apply Mulches](https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.php?pid=FS599) (<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.php?pid=FS599>) and [Problems with Over-Mulching Trees and Shrubs](https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs099/) (<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs099/>).

While Sprucing up the Yard don't forget the Sprinklers

<p>Connect hoses and pipes to reduce leaks.</p>	<p>Direct sprinklers to spray on landscapes.</p>	<p>Inspect for broken or damaged sprinkler heads.</p>	<p>Select a WaterSense labeled controller and water smarter.</p>	<p>Need help? Go with a pro— a certified irrigation professional.</p>
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Check out USEPA's [WaterSense Outdoors](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors) (<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors>) to learn more about landscaping and water saving techniques as well as a [Find It, Flag It, Fix It; A Checklist for Your Landscape](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/documents/ws-outdoor-landscaping-find-it-flag-it-audit-checklist.pdf) (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/documents/ws-outdoor-landscaping-find-it-flag-it-audit-checklist.pdf>).

