

Mulch: A Tree's Best Friend

Mulch is a protective covering, usually of organic matter such as leaves, straw or bark, placed around plants to prevent the evaporation of moisture, the freezing of roots, and the growth of weeds. Mulching a newly planted tree is one of the best things you can do to help ensure the tree lives a happy and healthy life. In the forest, trees grow in a soil full of nutrients and emerge up through a thick blanket of leaves (natural mulch). However, when we plant trees in our yard or on our school grounds, the environment is often harsher. Newly planted trees need mulch to mimic a more natural environment and give the tree's roots the nutrients and moisture they need to grow a healthy tree. However, sometimes when we mulch trees in our community, we place too much mulch around the base of the tree. Over time, this can be harmful to trees and even cause them to die.

The best way to mulch a tree is to apply a layer of mulch 1.5 inches deep one foot around the tree. Make sure it is not touching the tree's trunk.

Look at the newly planted trees below. Which one do you think is properly mulched?

