

Compost and Mulch

Compost and mulch are two products that are easily confused. Compost is decomposed material from your kitchen and yard waste. It is very rich and an easy source of carbon and nitrogen for your soil.

Mulch is an organic (undecomposed, shredded greenwaste) or inorganic (rock, pebbles, glass) “blanket” on soil that retains soil moisture, discourages weeds, evens-out soil temperature, improves soil structure, slowly adds nutrients to soil, and reduces greenwaste. Green-cycling refers to the practice of keeping leaves and small twigs, and reusing them on-site so fewer nutrients leave your site and less fuel/energy is needed to transport greenwaste elsewhere.

Both compost and mulch can be made in your own backyard.

Keep in mind:

Compost:

- If critters are a concern, consider using a compost tumbler (Costco) rather than a pile or barrel to discourage digging.
- Ensure shredded newspaper is decomposed before adding to soil or the paper will tie up available nitrogen and could make soil less able to support food plants in the short term.
- Do not place weeds with seed heads or disease in your compost or mulch. You will prolong the invasion on your property.

Mulch:

- Mulch should be three to four inches thick but kept several inches away from plant stem or tree trunk. Mulch touching a plant base creates opportunities for harmful pests.

Creating your own compost and mulch is an inexpensive, easy way to sustain healthy soil for healthy plants.

Links:

http://eartheasy.com/grow_compost.html

<http://www.planetnatural.com/composting-101/>

http://www.compost-info-guide.com/make_better_compost.htm