

## ***Mulch vs. Rock***

**At Lakeshore Garden Centre we want you to be a successful gardener. We want your plants to grow and flourish in the environment that you have created for them, for many years to come.**

**Once all of the plants are in, we advise to mulch. We highly recommend mulching new plants-with natural wood mulch such as cedar or a fur/larch blend, etc. We do not recommend rubber mulch.**

### ***Mulching provides:***

- **Better Growth** – mulch can enhance how-trees and plants grow. Grass around trees and shrubs causes problems and will outcompete the tree/shrub for nutrients and water.
- **Less Watering** – mulch reduces water evaporation.
- **Fewer Weeds** – mulch stops weed seeds from sprouting so you may see as much as 50% less weeds.
- **Just the right temperature** – mulch keeps plants warm in the winter and cool in the summer.
- **Reduced compaction and erosion** – mulch reduces soil erosion by up to 85%! In addition people are less likely to walk on mulch, so there is less soil compaction.
- **Mulch is inexpensive!**
- **Mulch Tips** – be careful when you mulch around new plants. You should only mulch about ½” deep, not too thick as you run the risk of smothering the root system as it struggles to find air. Excessive moisture keeps the soil from breathing. Create a water well around the plant to hold the water around the base while it slowly seeps to the roots. You can certainly mulch heavier around the rest of the flower bed, but away from the immediate plant.

### ***We strongly discourage you from using rock. Here is why.***

- **It is “too hot”** – rocks and rubber mulch raise temperature reflecting heat to the plant accelerating transpiration of moisture, leading to stressed, thirsty plants. Think of hot pavement on a summer day.
- **No benefit to the plants** – rocks do not aid plant growth or soil health.
- **Return of the weeds** – wind will eventually blow soil between the rocks creating a spot for weeds to grow.
- **Pruning issues** – rocks can prohibit rejuvenation pruning creating unwieldy shrubs.
- **Time consuming cleanup**– if you want to remove stones you must do it manually which can tedious.

## **The Theory of Mulching**

There is confusion about mulching with bark, crushed rock, or wood mulch, drip irrigation, landscape fabric and this is compounded with unmanaged automatic irrigation systems.

Adding drip irrigation under mulch IS a good idea, but you must MANAGE the time that your drippers are running. Drippers normally put out 1 gallon an hour. Each dripper is stamped or color coded so you know what the drip capacity per hour is.

Judge the amount of water you're going to use by the size of the plant your planting. Remember a newly planted plant needs water MORE OFTEN not more water less often.

In some situations, (heavy soil , drip irrigation, any kind of mulch, landscape fabric and unmanaged irrigation usually means the soil cannot breath and the plant becomes waterlogged in an anaerobic (without oxygen) state and dies.

You would not force feed your new puppy with 10 liters of water every week but instead you would water it once a day a little bit each day. See our website under tips for water and planting instructions.