

Mulch matters

BY JENEEN WICHE
IN MY GARDEN

Mulch is a landscape staple, almost to a fault when it is over applied, smothering roots and girdling trunks. When done properly it can help to suppress weeds, retain moisture, and moderate soil temperature. These things can be achieved using a variety of materials, but which type of mulch suits your needs best?

Predominately we use organic materials for mulching. Organic mulches include plant or animal derived materials like wood chips, pine needles, tree bark, grass clippings, composted manure, and worm castings.

Organic materials have the benefit of looking natural while adding varying amounts of nutrients to the soil. I personally prefer a mulching material that is nutrient rich, so it improves

the soil and provides food for the plant while serving other practical applications.

Inorganic mulching materials include stones, gravel, landscape fabrics, plastics and even recycled tires. While these may last longer, they do not always provide the look that a homeowner wants for their landscape. Because they take less maintenance, they are more often seen in high traffic or municipal areas than around our homes. Most things serve a purpose if used properly, but there are some concerns with certain inorganic mulching materials and their ability to allow a more natural seasonal warm up and cool down of a plant's root system.

When we mulch to moderate soil temperature, we are usually mindful of keeping the roots cool in the summer. In the winter months, however, I think

there is a mixed message about what mulch will achieve.

Organic mulches used properly, 2 to 2 1/2" deep, typically allow for the proper warming and cooling of the soil as winter turns to spring and fall turns to winter.

Inorganic mulches, however, may cause some delay in the process resulting in winter damage.

In the article Using Mulches in Managed Landscapes (a cooperative effort by Iowa State University, Ohio State University and University of Kentucky) the authors state "Mulch effects on root zone temperature, as well as any potential benefits or consequences for plants, will vary considerably depending on factors such as properties of mulch, soil type, soil moisture, plant species or cultivar, and weather patterns."

I bet you never realized that the type of mulch you choose could have such an effect on the plant you are trying to care for.

I mention all this because we need to understand that mulch can create an environment that may make it difficult for the plant to acclimate accordingly from season to season.

Too much mulch before the ground freezes is like having a bikini on underneath your full-length fur. Take the coat off and you're in for a shock once winter hits.

A plant's root system needs to cool down and slowdown to sufficiently go dormant before you mulch the area to prevent heaving and thawing. Always wait for several hard freezes before you apply mulch for moderating winter soil temperatures.

The same thing can hap-

pen in the summer if certain types of materials are used as mulch. Wait until the soil has a chance to warm up a bit before you apply mulch otherwise you may insulate the cool soil and delay the warm-up, thus delaying plant growth.

The use of various inorganic mulches can really fool plants, too. Using black plastic, for instance, is like keeping the fur coat on all summer, not to mention that it doesn't allow healthy amounts of oxygen to reach the root system.

This can cause double trouble once winter rolls around again, too. The plant will be slow to go dormant because the root system is still warm and therefore it will be more susceptible to winter damage.

Even using crushed brick, rock or pea gravel may speed up the warming process in the spring. The University Extension article

on mulches cited an example where a red maple broke dormancy early in the spring (around here that means it would likely suffer from late frost damage) likely due to the brick and pea gravel's capacity to conduct heat to the underlying soil.

Gradual warming and cooling of the soil is best, and mulch should be used to moderate the soil temperature seasonally.

None of this is to say that you should not use certain materials as mulch, however, match them up accordingly with what you want to achieve and what the cultural realities are for your plants.

Use black plastic around your tomato plants, these annuals love warm soil, and they only live a short time. I would avoid using it with anything that lives longer than a couple of months, though.

Put some spring in your cleaning step

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Spring is the season of nature's rebirth. Trees and flowers begin to bloom anew each spring, and young animals can be seen frolicking with their parents. During a time when it seems like the entire planet gets a refresh, many homeowners turn their thoughts to refreshing their homes as well.

As the days lengthen and the weather warms, spring cleaning takes center stage. Spring cleaning is more extensive than simply washing

away grime, as cleaning a home often offers a psychological reset for the coming months. A clear strategy can make the task of spring cleaning feel less daunting, and these tips can help cut down on clutter and other interior annoyances that have arisen after months spent indoors.

Declutter before cleaning. The rule of thumb when starting on spring cleaning is to combat clutter before cleaning. Trying to clean around clutter is inefficient and may result in throwing in the towel prematurely. It

is important to remove as much as possible from each room before you begin cleaning. As homeowners move through each room, they can assess whether they've used items in the last year or whether they serve any functional or aesthetic purposes. If not, they can be trashed or donated.

Move top to bottom. It's important to follow the rules of science when spring cleaning. That means that dust and debris will be affected by gravity. Engaging in a top-down approach will help make cleaning more efficient.

Beginning at the ceiling and working down towards the floors will help people avoid having to clean the same surface twice.

Using a duster or a microfiber cloth, individuals can clear cobwebs from corners and dust from crown molding. Fingerprints will accumulate near light switches and door handles, so those areas should be wiped down, too.

Homeowners can conduct a thorough cleaning of heating and cooling output and intake vents as they likely have gathered dust over the winter.

A down of floor moldings can get to any area near the floor or under furniture that doesn't get frequent cleaning.

Do a kitchen reset. Focusing attention on the kitchen, which tends to be the busiest room in the house, is a wise idea for spring cleaning plans. This is the time for individuals to pull everything out of the refrigerator and pantry and check for expiration dates. Wiping down the shelves means cleaning away any accumulated food drips or spills. Additional areas to consider include behind the

refrigerator, inside the dishwasher filter and inside the microwave.

Focus on air quality. It's key to replace the HVAC system filters come springtime, as well as any air purifiers in the home. This will help reduce allergens and ensure that the cooling system will run efficiently when it's time to turn it on.

Spring cleaning takes place each year. Prioritizing decluttering and following a systematic path through the home helps people eliminate stress and mess at the same time.

Managing small animals in gardens and orchards

BY JESSICA HOPKINS,
HARRISON COUNTY
EXTENSION AGENT FOR
HORTICULTURE

Small rodents and burrowing mammals may be tiny, but their impact on lawns, gardens, orchards and crop areas can be substantial. Understanding which animal is causing damage — and how to respond — is the first step toward effective management.

Rabbits, voles, moles and shrews each leave distinct calling cards.

Rabbits clip young plant stems with clean, straight-across cuts, thanks to their sharp incisors.

Voies leave small, rounded

burrow openings near vegetables and gnaw at the plants themselves, their roots or tubers underground.

Moles, by contrast, are insectivores that feed on grubs and worms; their signature is raised soil ridges and dirt mounds, not plant damage.

Shrews are rarely a garden problem at all, despite their fearsome reputation as the only venomous mammals in the region.

One practical rule of thumb: where there is one small rodent, there are likely many more. These species reproduce rapidly, adapt to a wide range of conditions and fill ecological niches quickly, meaning that eliminating one

population often invites another to move in.

Before reaching for traps or chemicals, simple habitat modifications can go a long way. Maintaining a three-foot vegetation-free zone around the base of young trees protects against girdling by voles and rabbits.

Keeping grass mowed short beneath trees removes the cover that small mammals rely on. Wrapping tree bases with metal hardware cloth provides an additional physical barrier that is both affordable and effective.

One of the most cost-effective management strategies is encouraging natural predators. Installing

raptor perches or nesting boxes — such as barn owl or kestrel boxes — attracts birds of prey that can dra-

matically reduce local rodent populations. A single barn owl feeding chicks may deliver more than four dozen rodents

to its nest in a single night.

An important caution: Do

SEE MANAGING/PAGE B4

NOTICE TO BID

The Grant County Fiscal Court will be accepting sealed bids in the Office of Chuck Dills, County Judge/Executive, Grant County Courthouse, 101 North Main Street, Williamstown, Kentucky 41097, until 4:00 P.M. on Friday, April 17, 2026. Said bids will be opened in a Grant County Fiscal Court Bid Committee meeting prior to the Fiscal Court meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 6:00 P.M. and the committee will make their recommendation during the meeting. The following items are for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, which begins on July 1, 2026 and ends on June 30, 2027.

- I. Stone to be used on County Roads as follows:

#11 Stone-Clean	#4 Stone	#610 Stone
# 9 Stone-Clean	#2 Stone	#304 Stone
# 8 Stone-Clean	#57 Stone	Ch. Ln. 2
# 6 Stone	D.G. Stone	Ch. Ln. 3

 Bidders shall state price of stone when picked up at the quarry.
- II. Hauling Stone listed above to be delivered to the Grant County Road Department barn located at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky 41035. Bidder shall state price per stone from each surrounding quarry. Quotation will be for hauling of stone only.
- III. Diesel Fuel # 2 for Grant County Road Department to be delivered to the County Barn located at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky 41035, when ordered. Specifications for Bulk Delivered Fuels are available and may be picked up in the Office of the County Judge/Executive.
- IV. Hot Mix for use on County Roads as follows:
Hot Mix Base-Picked up at plant per ton.
Hot Mix Surface – Picked up at plant per ton.
- V. Natural Sand per ton to be delivered to the Grant County Road Department barn located at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky 41035.
- VI. Salt per ton to be place on the county roads during snow emergency to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- VII. Corrugated Metal Pipe to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- VIII. Culverts to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- IX. Precast Concrete Arch Structures and Boxes to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- X. All Steel Bridge Packages, Including Beam Span and Truss Structures to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- XI. Bridge Decking Products to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- XII. Galvanized Steel Guardrails to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- XIII. High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) Culvert Pipe to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- XIV. Culvert Liner Products to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.
- XV. Slope Stabilization and Erosion Control and Stormwater Products to be delivered to the Grant County Road Barn, at 505 Hopperton Lane, Dry Ridge, Kentucky.

All sealed bids are to be placed in an envelope and specifically marked on the front what the bid is for and are to be delivered to the office of the County Judge/Executive by no later than 4:00 P.M. Friday, April 17, 2026. No bids will be accepted after this date. The Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the best evaluated bid for the County of Grant.

Bids must certify that they do not, and will not, maintain or provide for their employees any facilities that are segregated on the basis of race, color, creed or national origin. Federal law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap, and sex in this project. The Grant County Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any and all bids. All bids are subject to contractual availability date of delivery.

/s/ CHUCK DILLS
Chuck Dills
Grant County Judge/Executive

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
UNIFIED COURT OF JUSTICE
GRANT CIRCUIT COURT
CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-CI-00103

JETSTREAM HOLDINGS, LLC

CROSS-PLAINTIFF

VS.

NOTICE OF COMMISSIONER'S SALE

CYRUS N. DASTOOR, ET AL

DEFENDANTS

By virtue of a Judgment and Order of Sale entered in the Grant Circuit Court on March 12, 2026, I will sell at public auction at the **Judicial Center Lobby**, 224 South Main Street, Williamstown, Kentucky, the property described herein located in Grant County, Kentucky, on **Wednesday, April 22, 2026**, at the hour of **1:30 p.m.**, prevailing time, and more particularly described as follows:

Being the same property conveyed to Cyrus N. Dastoor the 9th day of May, 2014 and recorded in Deed Book 370, Page 272 in the Office of the County Clerk of Grant County, Kentucky.

Property Address: 29 Lakeview Dr, Williamstown, KY 41097
PIDN: 058-10-00-041.00

There is NOT a mobile home, doublewide and/or manufactured home included in the sale. Announcements made on the day of sale take precedence over printed material.

The amount of money to be raised by this sale is the principal sum of \$2,620.72, plus 12% per annum simple interest thereon from August 5, 2024, until date of judgment then 6% per annum thereafter from date of judgment until paid; plus other costs and attorney fees.

The real estate shall be sold on the terms of 10% cash at the time of the sale, except that said deposit shall be waived if the Plaintiff is the successful bidder at the sale, and the balance on a credit of thirty (30) days bearing interest at the rate of 6% per annum for the date of sale. When the purchase price is paid in full, the deed will be delivered to the purchaser. It is further provided that the property sold includes insurable improvements and the successful bidder at said sale shall, at bidder's own expense, carry fire and extended insurance coverage on said improvements from the date of sale until the purchase price is fully paid in the amount of the Court appraised value of said improvements or the amount of the unpaid balance of the purchase price, whichever is less, at minimum, with a loss payable clause to the Commissioner of the Grant Circuit Court and the Plaintiff herein. Failure of the purchasers to obtain such insurance shall not affect the validity of the sale or the purchaser's liability thereunder, but shall entitle, but not require, the Plaintiff to obtain said insurance and furnish the policy or premium thereon or the proper portion thereof shall be charged to the purchaser as purchaser's costs.

The aforesaid property shall be sold free and clear of all liens and encumbrances, except the following:

- a. All unpaid state, county and city real estate taxes for the year 2026;
- b. Easements, restrictions, and stipulations of record;
- c. Assessments for public improvements levied against the property;
- d. Any facts which an inspection and/or accurate survey of the property may disclose.

For further information, see the Final Judgment and Order of Sale and pleadings of record in the Office of the Circuit Court of Grant County.

/s/ Edward M. Bourne
MASTER COMMISSIONER
GRANT CIRCUIT COURT