

Sheet Mulching Instructions

What is Sheet Mulching?

Sheet mulching is a simple technique for easily planting a low water use garden and nurturing the soil. It is a way to remove your lawn without having to dig it out or use chemicals to kill it.

Sheet mulching can:

- Suppress weed growth
- Reduce labor and maintenance costs since grass is composted in place
- Improve nutrient and water retention in the soil
- Encourage favorable soil microbial activity and increase the number of worms in the soil
- Enhance soil structure
- Improve plant vigor and health, often leading to improved resistance to pests and diseases

How-To Steps

1. Cut the grass as low as you can. At this point, you can add compost directly on top of the lawn if you feel like your garden would benefit from this.
2. Cut directly into the grass and plant larger plants (5 gallons and up) into the ground.
3. Add a layer of cardboard or newspaper on top of the lawn. No plastic. It is important that the layers overlap because the lawn will keep growing if light reaches it.
4. Wet the cardboard or newspaper layer with water. This will aid decomposition and hold the layer in place.
5. Layer soil and/or compost on top of the wet layer. At this point, the layers will be several inches thick, however over time, as the cardboard and grass decomposes, the layers will settle and become flatter.
6. Plant smaller plants directly into the soil and/or compost layer.
7. Mulch around the plants. This will deter any weeds from sprouting, decrease soil temperature and increase moisture holding capacity in the soil.



Need help? Qualified Water Efficient Landscapers (QWEL) are local professionals that are trained in water efficient landscape design and maintenance. A list of QWEL certified professionals can be found at www.qwell.net

Materials

You can find free cardboard for sheet mulching at bike stores, appliance stores and the landfill (be sure to remove tape and staples).

Assembly Subcontracting will put cardboard aside for you if you call at 894-5992. They are located at 27705 Dutcher Creek Rd.



Compost, soil products (bulk or bags), drip irrigation supplies & drought tolerant plants

10% off

Soil King

320 Santana Drive
Tel: 707 894 3500

Grass Removal Rebate Program Participants only

Present this when purchasing materials

Garden Compost

5% off

I-ROC Landscaping Materials

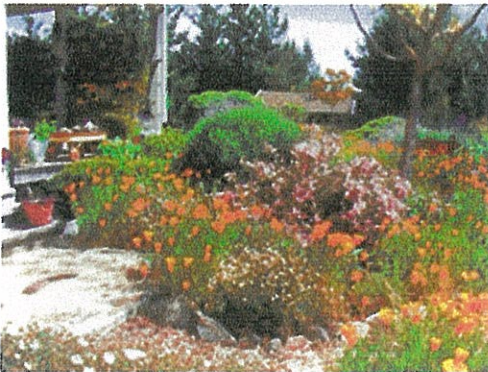
1148 S. Cloverdale Blvd
Tel: 707 894 2879

Grass Removal Rebate Program Participants only

Present this when purchasing materials

This is not a comprehensive list of locations. Check your local listings for other locations.

Resources



Water-wise Gardening for Sonoma

www.sonoma.watersavingplants.com A website with design tips for creating your new garden, irrigation and maintenance tips as well as selecting your plants.

WUCOLS

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS/> or Google search WUCOLS. Plant species classified into very low, low, moderate, and high water use.

Helpful Tips

- Bevel the edges of the grass to eliminate the spread of mulch beyond the edges of your new garden. This is especially important because sheetmulching increases the height of the garden by several inches (although this decompresses over time).
- Large slopes are not ideal locations to sheetmulch since the mulch will tend to drift down the slope.
- The depth of mulch depends on the size of the chip. Smaller sized chips should not exceed one or two inches deep. Larger chips are best applied up to three or four inches. Shredded mulch varieties are not recommended.
- It is essential that if using newspaper no glossy sections are used for the layer. If using cardboard, make sure to remove all staples and tape.
- Some people prefer to wait to plant into the sheetmulching layers until the layers have decomposed after several months, however this is not necessary. It is allowable to plant immediately.