

## The Use of Wood Mulches in a Firewise Landscape

The ecological benefits of wood mulches are many such as soil enhancement, water conservation, weed control and aesthetics. Their use in landscapes should be encouraged but moderated because of firewise concerns.

Wood mulches should not be installed in a widespread or continuous manner. Islands of wood-mulched plantings should be separated from each other with hardscape elements such as concrete, rock or other noncombustible material. Avoid putting wood mulches immediately adjacent to a deck, fence or other structures made from combustible materials.

### 1) In the 0-5 foot zone from buildings and attached decks:

- No wood or rubber mulches are allowed. **REQ**
- No dead plant leaves or debris allowed on the ground.
- Rock or gravel mulches are acceptable.

### 2) In the 5-30 foot zone and further zones:

- No redwood or cedar gorilla hair mulches or rubber mulches are allowed. **REQ**
- It is highly recommended that dyed wood mulches not be used.
- All other wood mulches may be used.
- Larger size wood mulches over 1 inch in size and organic compost are safer mulches to use.
- Leaves are a naturally beneficial mulch for plants but limit their depth to 2 inches except during the declared fire season when no leaves should be kept in the 5-30 foot zone.
- Wood mulches should be less than 3 inches thick.
- For the health of plants and soil do not apply wood mulches over landscape fabrics adjacent to plants.

**Note:** Wood mulch and rock samples must be presented to the Architectural Committee along with a landscape plan, before their installation. The size of wood-mulched and noncombustible areas will depend on site specific conditions. **REQ**

**Note:** Actions which are **required** by the OVA's Firewise Landscape Policy are followed by a **REQ**. All other actions mentioned are **highly recommended** by expert authorities in order to enhance a community's fire resiliency .

(Revised 11/29/2021)

