

THE USE OF WOOD MULCHES IN A FIREWISE LANDSCAPE

The ecological benefits of using 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. Wood-mulched areas should be separated from each other by hardscape elements, such as concrete, rock or other noncombustible materials.

Do not place **any type** of wood mulch immediately adjacent to a home, deck, fence or other structures made from combustible materials. Composted wood mulches tend to burn at the lowest speed and lowest flame length but can still ignite siding, plant debris, and other combustible materials. They tend to smolder which can go undetected by firefighters during a wildfire.

*Note: Actions that are **Required** by the Oakmont Village Associations' Firewise Landscape Policy are identified as such. All other actions mentioned are recommended by experts in order to enhance a community's resiliency to wildfires.*

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

- No wood or rubber mulches are allowed. **(OVA Required.)**
- Remove accumulated dead plant leaves and debris on the ground.
- Rock or gravel mulches are acceptable.

In the 5-30 foot zone and further zones:

- No shredded redwood or cedar gorilla hair mulches or rubber mulches are allowed. **(OVA Required.)**
- It is highly recommended that dyed wood mulches not be used.
- The use of composted wood chips or screened composted organic mulches are highly recommended.
- Leaves are a natural 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.

Note: A landscape plan, along with wood mulch and rock samples, must be submitted to the Architectural Committee before work can begin. Approval for both wood-mulched areas and rock-mulched areas will depend on site-specific conditions. **(OVA Required.)**

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