



# Mulching Top Tips

Many Head Gardeners will swear by the benefits of mulching their borders every Autumn; they say that with a good organic mulch you don't need to add expensive fertilisers in the Spring and Summer for your plants to thrive.

But what is a 'mulch'? It's simply anything that covers the soil (including landscape membrane, cardboard, gravel) and at its most basic level it just stops annual weeds from growing, which is always a good thing. But if you cover the soil (or mulch it) with a thick layer (at least 2 inches or 5cm) of organic matter like manure, garden compost, leaf mould or bark chippings you'll get other benefits such as retaining moisture, adding slow release nutrients, increasing air pockets to warm the soil, encouraging beneficial organisms (such as worms) and suppressing annual weeds. The best part is that you do not need to dig in your mulch – just fork it on top your borders (leaving some space around stems for air to circulate) and let the worms and beetles do their job over the winter by incorporating it into the soil.

It sounds simple and it is, just make sure you put your mulch on to moist soil that isn't frozen and check that your manure is well rotted before you use it (it shouldn't smell if it is). By mulching every year you'll be feeding your soil AND improving your plants.

