



Tree Mulching and Watering

G U I D E L I N E S

Recommended by SOCWA, Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority
3910 W. Webster Road, Royal Oak, MI 48073-2761, 248-288-5150, www.socwa.org

WHY MULCH TREES?

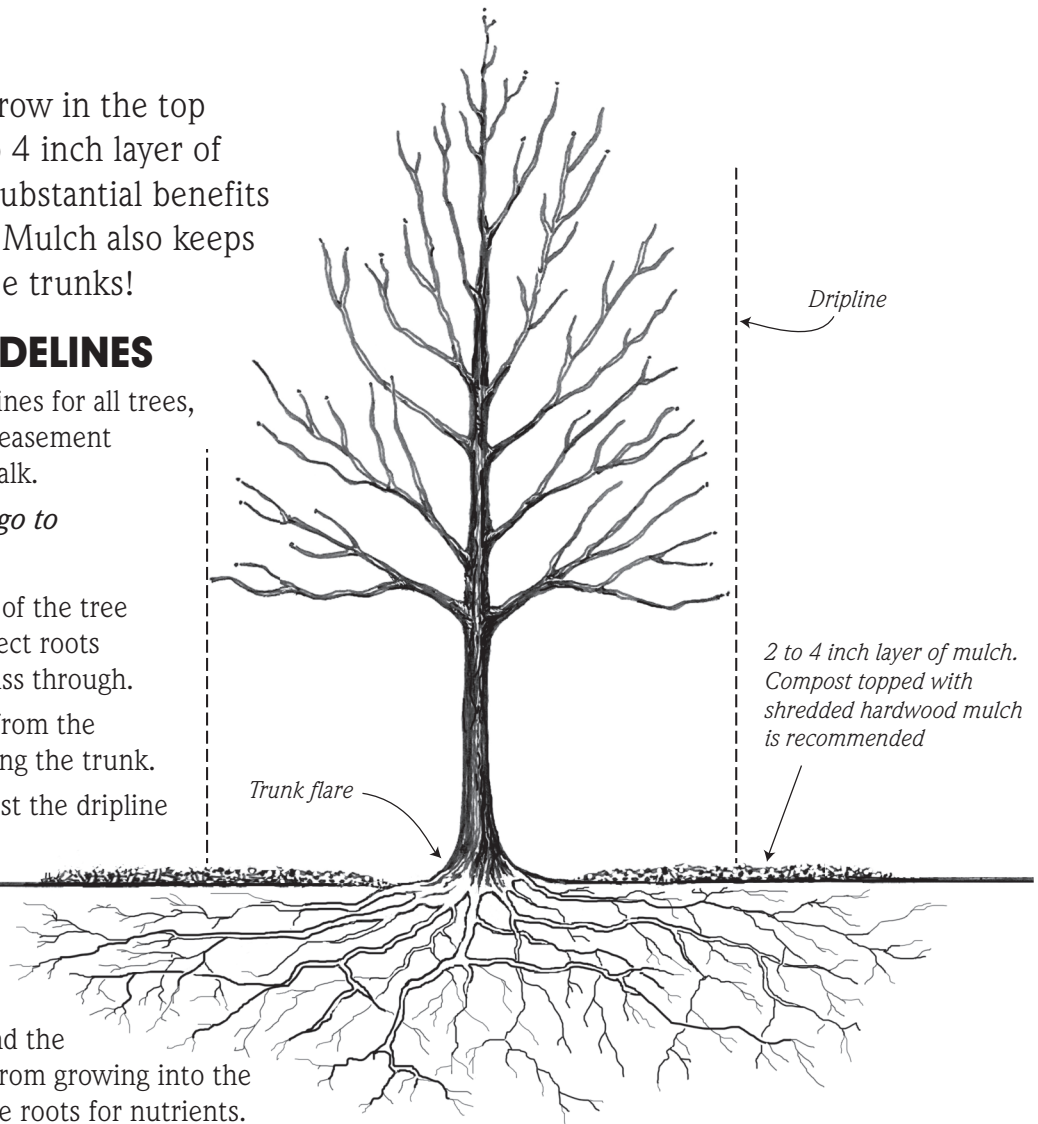
Over 85% of all tree roots grow in the top 18 inches of the soil. A 2 to 4 inch layer of mulch over roots provides substantial benefits for tree growth and health. Mulch also keeps lawn mowers away from tree trunks!

TREE MULCHING GUIDELINES

Please follow the following guidelines for all trees, including city-owned trees in the easement between the street and the sidewalk.

For a how-to-do-it on-line video, go to www.socwa.org/videos.htm.

1. Place mulch around the based of the tree in a 2 to 4 inch layer – to protect roots while still allowing water to pass through.
2. Keep mulch 2- 3 inches away from the trunk of the tree to avoid rotting the trunk.
3. Extend the mulch out to at least the dripline (edge of the branches).
4. For optimal benefits, use a 1 inch layer of compost, covered with a 2 to 3 inch layer of shredded bark mulch.
5. Maintain a V-notch edge around the mulched tree – to keep grass from growing into the mulch and competing with tree roots for nutrients.
6. Replenish mulch each year, or as needed.



TREE WATERING GUIDELINES

- Established trees – as well as newly planted trees – require watering. If there is no rain, watering 2 to 3 times a week may be necessary. The amount and frequency of water depends on local soil and drainage conditions.
- For newly-planted trees, keep the soil moist under the mulch layer - but not soaked. When soil is dry below the mulch, it is time to water.
- If you have heavy clay soils, be careful not to over-water young trees. Excessive watering can lead to rotting of root systems.
- Make sure that irrigation water reaches the soil under the mulch. Slow watering is better than quick splashes from a sprinkler. Tree leaves do not need to be watered!

