

MULCHES



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Sources: <https://research.csiro.au/bushfire/landscaping/mulches/> + DFESs Firewise Gardening in Western Australia guide

Mulching is a great way to keep your garden healthy, especially in hot, dry weather. It helps retain soil moisture, keeps roots cool, suppresses weeds and can improve soil health. **But!** In bushfire-prone areas, it's important to choose the right type.

Within the Asset Protection Zone (APZ) around your home, stick to non-combustible mulches (ie pebbles, gravel, shells) — they won't burn or blow away easily in strong winds. If you're using organic mulch outside the APZ, avoid fine or dry materials, keep the mulched area relatively small and well-watered, and separate garden beds to reduce fire risk.

Healthy, green plants are less flammable than dead ones, so smart mulching can help protect your home and garden.

DO

- Where possible, use non-combustible materials.
- If you use combustible mulch keep the area/s small, and separate them using non-combustible elements (ie a pathway).
- If possible, try to keep mulched areas wet during a bushfire incident, until after the fire front has passed.
- Design your garden to be used all year-round. One that suits your needs / wants is more likely to be used and maintained.

DON'T

- Use very fine or light mulches (ie shredded bark, pine needles, small woodchips) as they can be highly flammable, providing a ready source of fuel for fire to travel along the ground. Large (6mm plus), preferably hardwood, woodchips and coarse mulches better hold moisture and are less likely to quickly ignite.
- Store, or use, combustible mulches against the house or near to other combustible structures (especially under or around windows, doors and subfloor structures).
- Use combustible timber edging around mulched garden beds, use non-combustible alternatives (ie stone or concrete).



LET'S GET READY TOGETHER!