

7 Places Where You Can Get Free Mulch



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Mulch is one of the most useful tools for gardeners. It's especially helpful at a time when the weather is unpredictable. We've begun to see the drastic effects of

climate change in earnest, namely hotter summers. And while many garden plants love warm weather, there's a point where the heat becomes unbearable—even for heat-loving plants like tomatoes and peppers. Mulch is a multi-purpose substance that can help gardeners conserve moisture, control soil temperatures, and improve soil consistency.

But where do you actually get mulch? Sure, you can buy bags of mulch from a garden center, but are there ways to get mulch for free?

The answer: Absolutely!

How to get free mulch

The first strategy is to make your own mulch. Free sources of mulch around the home include:

- Leaves
- Grass clippings
- Pine needles
- [Compost](#)
- Straw

Other sources for free mulch

Other places where you can get free mulch include:

- **Arborists:** These are the people who provide tree care services around town. When they cut down trees or branches, they'll usually turn pieces into mulch and take that to a landfill for disposal. There's no guarantee that they'll share the stuff with you for free, but you can ask politely! Just don't expect it to arrive neatly bagged. Make sure you have a spot on your property to accommodate a truckload of dumped wood mulch.
- **Local municipalities:** Many cities have yearly environment days to spread awareness about earth-

friendly activities. Some cities, for instance, offer free compost to interested citizens. Other towns may have garden products like [compost](#) or other types of mulch available upon request. Not sure if your city offers any garden supplies for free? Just ask!

- **Neighbors:** Not everyone is a gardener, but your neighbors may have many useful garden amendments lying around their yard. If your property is devoid of [leaves](#), but they have a pile of leaves to rake every fall, consider offering your raking services in exchange for taking that free mulch home.

Tips for mulching

Get your free mulch and take it home. Now it's time to apply it around your plants. The key to applying mulch is not to lay it down too thick. Too thick a layer can prevent plant roots from breathing and eventually suffocate them. Yikes!

Aim for about 1 to 2 inches of mulch around the base of a plant. After mulching, water deeply. You may have to reapply mulch throughout the season, but one application is usually enough to last a whole gardening season.