Using Shredded Paper As Garden Mulch



Should you use shredded paper as garden mulch? Normally, I spend my time telling you that the advice you've heard countless times is bogus. But using shredded paper in your

garden is actually a great idea.

What is mulch?

Mulch is a substance added to the garden that helps soil retain moisture and stay cool. It also keeps weeds away and can prevent frost damage in the winter. Organic mulches break down and can eventually improve the condition and nutrient composition of the soil. Non-organic mulches, like plastic mulch, can't break down but can often be reused year after year.

Other things you can use for mulch include:

- wood chips
- leaves
- straw
- coco coir
- compost
- plastic

And yes, you can use shredded paper as mulch! One huge benefit of paper mulch is that it's FREE and super easy to make. If you regularly use a paper shredder, emptying the canister and using the remnants in your garden is a good way to recycle them since most recycling plants don't accept shredded paper.

How to use shredded paper as mulch

The main task you need to complete before using paper as mulch is shredding. You can use a paper shredder to rip the paper into pieces or do it by hand.

If you need to make a lot of paper mulch and don't have a shredder, try getting the family involved in shredding paper.

Be careful when selecting the paper you'll be shredding. Anything thick and glossy—like pages in a color magazine—contains heavy metals that can leach out into the

soil. But newsprint and regular printer paper are generally safe to use as mulch.

As with any kind of mulch, cutting it into small pieces is key. Plus, if you tried to stick sheets of paper over the soil, they'd quickly end up blown elsewhere.

After applying shredded paper to your garden, dampen it with water to keep it from flying all over the place.

Did you know that you can also add shredded paper to your compost bin? If you have plenty of mulch and not enough room in your recycling bin, shredded paper can go into the compost and takes about 2 to 6 weeks to break down. It's considered a "brown" ingredient, so if you drop a lot of shredded paper into your bin, make sure to balance it out with "green" ingredients like grass clippings.