

## WHAT TYPE OF LANDSCAPE MULCH IS BETTER?

QUESTIONS	BARK MULCH	STONE MULCH
<b><i>What Looks Better?</i></b>	Personal preference	Personal preference
<b><i>Moisture Retention?</i></b>	Very good	No
<b><i>Insulates Soil From Heat and Cold?</i></b>	Yes	No
<b><i>Which Ones Cost Less?</i></b>	Bark is less expensive in most cases and is less labor intensive to install.	There is a wide range of stone and prices. Stone almost always costs more.
<b><i>Is Landscape Fabric Recommended?</i></b>	No. Fabric is not recommended under shredded bark mulches. Bark decomposes and improves soil.	Yes. The fabric is needed to keep the stone from mixing into the ground and becoming dirty.
<b><i>Do They Need to be Top Dressed (added to)?</i></b>	Yes. As mulch decomposes, it is necessary to add some to maintain a 3" thickness. Some mulches last longer.	No. Usually no need to top dress (unless there is settling around a home's foundation for example)
<b><i>Do They Suppress Weed Growth?</i></b>	Yes. Weed seeds in the soil are not able to germinate with a good layer of mulch cover. Perennial roots will grow up through mulch, but once eliminated, will not return. However, weed seeds can blow in and grow on top of mulch.	Yes. The fabric under the stone holds back weed roots and seeds in your soil. However, weed seeds can blow in and grow on top of the stone if there is any fine dust or stone that will hold moisture for seed germination.
<b><i>What Is Easier To Install?</i></b>	Bark is light in weight and easier to install.	Stone is heavier and takes more time and effort to install.
<b><i>What is Better for my Plants?</i></b>	In most cases, bark mulch has what your plants like. It helps conserve moisture in the soil and adds organic matter.	Stone mulch does not improve the soil or improve the growing conditions for plants. However, if you have a wet planting site, the stone mulch will allow the soil to dry out more quickly, which is beneficial.
<b><i>Can I use These With My Perennial Plantings?</i></b>	Yes, bark mulch is highly recommended. Cocoa bean mulch works great as well.	Yes. Though it is not practical if your bed is densely planted, you can use stone if the perennials are spaced far apart.
<b><i>Any Other Advantages?</i></b>	Cheaper to use. Also, each spring after pruning, you can mulch over your clippings rather than picking them up.	Stone is a little lower in maintenance as far as weed control for the first few years. However, over time, debris builds up in the stone, and weed seed will grow very easily.
<b><i>Is Edging Necessary?</i></b>	No. Bark mulch will stay in the bed just as well with or without edging.	Yes. Edging is recommended to keep the stone in the planting bed.
<b><i>Which Mulch is Better For A Slope?</i></b>	Shredded Bark mulch is the best mulch for a slope.	Stone on landscape fabric can slide down a sloped area. Fieldstone the size of a melon laid on a slope works well to prevent erosion, but costs are about 8 times more installed than bark mulch.
<b><i>Other Comments</i></b>	When using bark, you can easily switch to another type of mulch in the future if you choose.	When debris blows into a bed with stone mulch, it seems more noticeable than in a bed with bark mulch. Stone can also be harder to clean.