

Mulch Out - Not Up

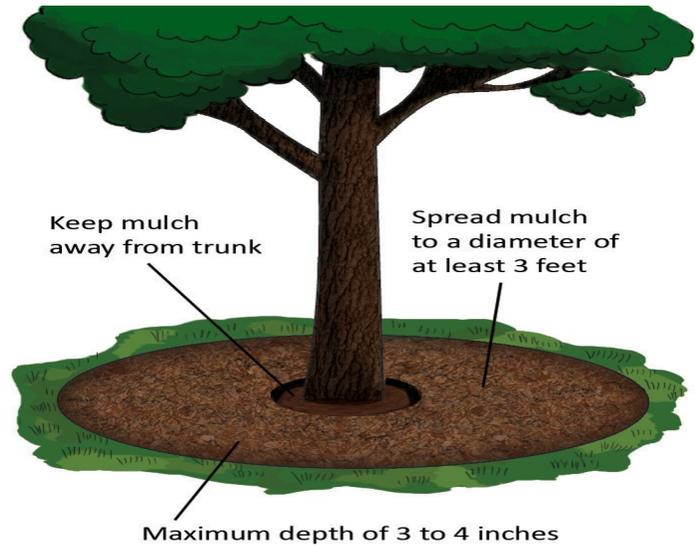
Mulch in the shape of a doughnut - Not a volcano



“Volcano”



“Doughnut”



How to Mulch Properly

- **No-higher** than the heel of your hand, generally 2-4 inches.
- **Not against the trunk** - keep all mulch 3-inches away from the trunk of the tree allowing the root flare zone (where the trunk meets the roots) to show just above ground level.
- **Mulch out - Not up** - Spread mulch out at least 3-feet in diameter from the trunk and wider, if possible, as the tree grows larger.

Problems Associated with Over-Mulching

When mulch is applied improperly by over-mulching or piling mulch against the trunk of the tree the following problems occur:

- **Root Migration** - when mulch is placed more than about 4 inches deep or up against the trunk, roots tend to "migrate" up into the mulch layer and eventually wrap themselves around the tree trunk and killing the tree.
- **Root Suffocation/Root Rot** - tree roots must be able to take in oxygen. When mulch becomes waterlogged, root growth declines and the tree dies.
- **Inner bark death** – Mulch piles high on-to the trunk decreases gas exchange killing the inner bark.
- **Fungal & bacterial diseases** – these organisms grow and reproduce in the moist, dark environment that over-mulching provides.



City of Lakewood - www.onelakewood.com - Forestry Division (216) 529-6810

Remember: Keep the bark dry and the roots moist.

Visit: <http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/resources/propermulching.pdf>