

Mulching – teacher information sheet

Soils need to be managed properly to maintain their capacity to support plant growth and high crop yields. One way of managing soil is through mulching.

What is mulching?

Mulching is covering the surface of a bed prepared for planting vegetables with dry grass, leaves, sawdust or food peelings.



Mulching materials (L to R)—sawdust, food peelings, leaves and a grass mulched crop

Example of mulching materials. (Seta-Waken, Malie, Utama & Palaniappan, 2016, p. 13).

Why is mulching good?

Mulching helps to:

- hold back water and keep crops cool during the dry season
- minimise weed growth
- prevent soil erosion by reducing the impact of both raindrops on the soil surface and run-off
- improve soil fertility and structure.

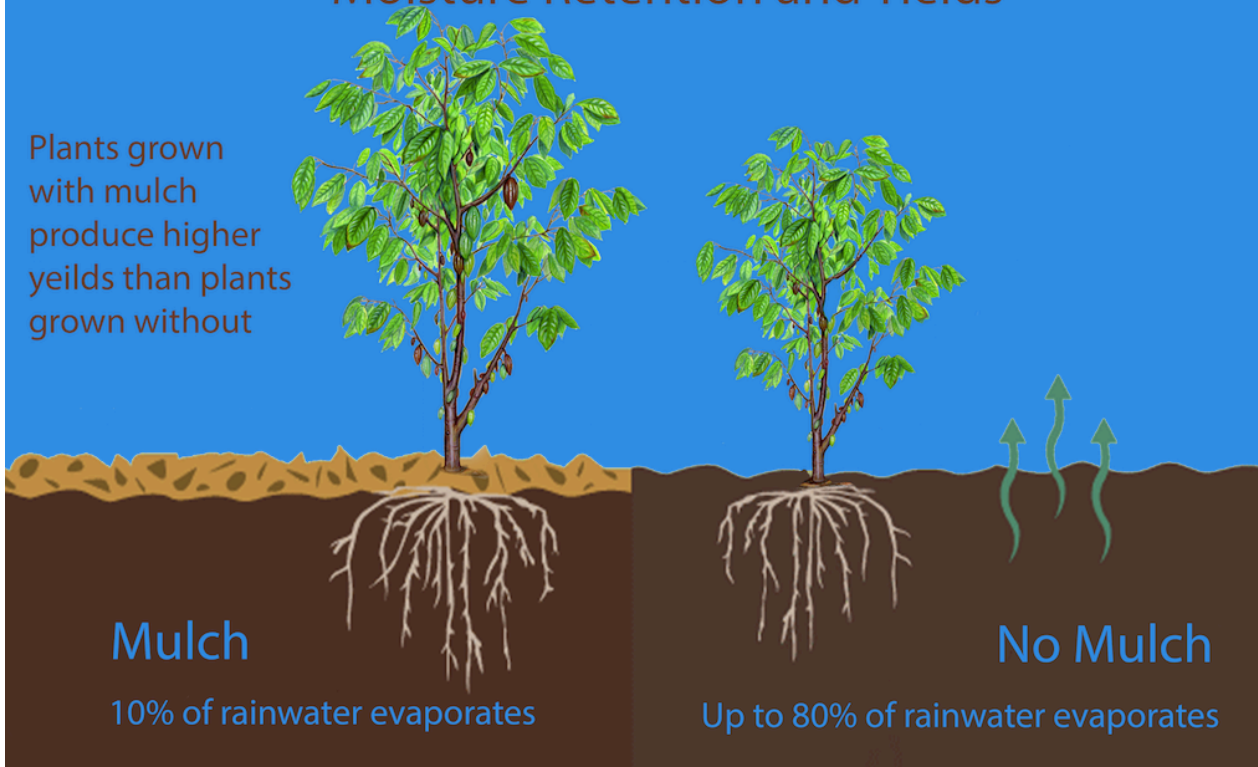


Mulching (L to R) holds back water and controls weeds and soil erosion

Example of why mulching is good. (Seta-Waken, Malie, Utama & Palaniappan, 2016, p. 13).

Mulching vs. No Mulching

Moisture Retention and Yields



Adapted from <https://www.fix.com/blog/gardening-with-mulch/>

Types of mulches

Mulches can be divided into two types (1) Organic mulches: the most common ingredients are dry grass, leaves, sawdust and crop by-products such as peanut shells, coffee hulls, banana leaves and coconut husks. (2) Artificial mulches: include plastics, sand, stones and gravel.

Information taken from

Seta-Waken P., Malie R., Utama P. and Palaniappan G. 2016. Introduction to basic crop production, post-harvest and financial management practices: a training manual for smallholder vegetable farmers in western Pacific island nations (ed. by C.J. Birch and B.E. Chambers). Monograph Number 176 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research: Canberra, ACT. <http://aciarc.gov.au/node/25047>

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