

Volcano Mulching: Is that a problem?

Trees are a very important addition to the local landscape, the environment, and the beautification of the Village. Throughout the year, many people are inspired to plant trees, but there is a common practice that is harmful to the newly planted trees. This danger is a widespread problem and it has to do with volcanoes. Yes, volcanoes are here in the Village, and they are harming our trees.



The volcanoes that we are referencing aren't the traditional lava volcanoes, rather volcanoes made of mulch. "Volcano Mulching" is the widespread practice of piling mulch, which looks like a volcano, up the trunk of a tree.

Mulching, when done correctly, can offer widespread benefits to trees. Mulch is beneficial because it mimics a natural process and creates a layer of organic material under the tree. The mulch helps insulate the ground around the tree, retains moisture, and enriches the soil.

The problem is that volcano mulching takes these benefits and reverses them, and causes damage to the tree. When piled up against the tree trunk, mulch helps keep moisture where it should not be. Moisture trapped on bark makes the tree susceptible to disease and early decay. The bark on the tree may experience cankers. Cankers are wounds on a tree that cause leaves, limbs, and other parts of the tree above the canker to die.

"Volcano Mulching" also causes problems with the root systems of the tree. The extra moisture from the mulch may cause the roots to grow into the mulch layer, rather than down into the soil below the tree. This can cause the roots to actually strangle the tree and kill the tree. Alternatively, mulch volcanoes may turn "sour." This creates conditions created by thick layers of mulch that becomes highly acidic, and smells sour. This acidic mulch burns the tree's bark and causes stress to the tree.

So what's the solution?

Trees are an investment in everyone's future because they provide shade, oxygen, are habitats to local wildlife, and enhance the quality of life in the Village. Eliminating unnecessary risks to our tree's survival benefits all the residents in Hawthorn Woods. Below is an example of the proper way to mulch newly planted trees. The Village of Hawthorn Woods encourages all residents to mulch their trees into a bowl shape, ensuring the mulch is away from the trunk. This best management practice will extend the life of your tree.

Volcano Mulching - NO!

Bowl Mulching - YES!



Image Source: www.yourgreenpal.com

If the Village can be of any assistance, please contact the Hawthorn Woods Public Works Department at 847-847-5227.



2 Lagoon Drive, Hawthorn Woods, IL 60047
(847) 438-5500 | www.vhw.org