

GARDENS Four Seasons
GARDENDESIGN - NOVEMBER 2015

"Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads."

- Henry David Thoreau

(truer words never spoken!)



Picture Courtesy - <https://www.facebook.com/lifeofakidandme/>

THE GREAT LANDSCAPE FABRIC DEBATE

When mulch is used in a landscape, the most common question I get asked is - 'Should I place a layer of Landscape Fabric/Cloth beneath it or not?'



I speak from years of experience in answering this question. I've seen cloth laid under mulch properly but I have seen far more situations where it has not. Because it is a finishing touch to what is normally a good-sized project, it can be thrown together just to 'get 'er done!'. So at the risk of me going on a total rant - let's take a look at the Benefits & Drawbacks of both scenarios.

First off - start with a planted space that is weed free. Mulch &/or landscape fabric over a surface that has weeds or weed roots makes wa-a-a-a-a more work for yourself that if you never mulched at all - so avoid that! (Reasons to add mulch are many - if you want further info on types & recommended depths, drop me an email requesting the GARDENDESIGN I did on M.I.C.H. - May 2012.)



- a good example of soil that is NOT weed free & that thin layer of mulch? - Ha! Nowhere near enough!

Drawbacks of Using Landscape Fabric

- the extra cost of Landscape Cloth ranges from flimsy to heavy duty. (I would sooner see any fabric money - spent on the correct depth of mulch rather than just fabric & a thin mulch layer)
- the added time & frustration to install it appropriately. (& if you have ever laid landscape cloth you will nod your head in total agreement)
- more difficult to remove debris & leaves without catching a bit of fabric on your rake (resulting in you cursing under your breath.)
- tougher to remove weeds - both those that sprout on the mulch & those that grow from beneath the soil. (If a weed gets a foothold, you can end up ripping out the landscape cloth along with it!)
- mistaken idea that landscape cloth & mulch are a permanent solution to weeds. Weeds pop thru' fabric & mulch beds!
- tough to move plants or add new ones
- long term - generally doesn't stay looking good since often there is just cloth with an inadequate layer of mulch over it. Even the best quality fabric will start to break down in 4 - 5 years - faster if the mulch cover gets worn thin.





Benefits of Using Landscape Fabric

- the only time I would use Landscape Cloth is when you feel better having a barrier under a layer of mulch in an area where there are no plants whatsoever - such as beneath a high deck or along the side of a house where no one ever goes. Even then, I would suggest using the much cheaper 6 mil black poly sheeting instead. Just make sure the grade is sloped properly away from the house foundation. Better yet, if you use the correct layer of mulch - I strongly believe that alone will more than suffice.

Benefits of using Mulch Alone

- easier installation
- easier upkeep - whether you want to top dress with more mulch or occasionally rake.
- cleanup of leaves & debris made much more simple as you are not looking a loose edge of cloth
- easier to weed (whether you are pulling up weeds by hand or using a weed stick, you don't end up taking out the weed along with the cloth which often happens.)
- easy to move plants & add new ones
- long term looks better (you don't have to worry about a patch here or there of the fabric showing through & deteriorating due to the sun.

So - to sum it all up - I recommend NOT using Landscape Cloth or Fabric at all. Mulch used well will lessen your maintenance but you still need to keep any eye out for weeds. The trick is to not let them get away from you. Cover your weed free area with the proper depth of Mulch & you will have it made in the shade (& sun too!)



- a good, thick layer of wood chips (& no landscape cloth!) - attractive, durable mulched bed

Need some INSPIRATION?

You DON'T have to sign up for HOUZZ or PINTEREST to view my online pages?

Simply click one of the following links & browse to your heart's content:

<http://www.cindywinos.com/garden-four-seasons.html>

<http://www.houzz.com/pro/necesse2/garden-four-seasons>

PLANT OF THE MONTH

CORNUS alba 'Siberica' - SIBERIAN DOGWOOD

When considering plants we'd like to see in our own landscapes we think of the way it appears in Spring, Summer or Fall. What about Winter?



The bright red branches of the Siberian Dogwood (aka Red Twig Dogwood) you will have you exclaiming "what ABOUT Winter!"

Most dogwood bushes have red bark but the Siberian varieties are red. Red, RED - particularly the newer growth. Partnered with any conifer - foreground or background - they become dazzling in a snowy setting. You'll start noticing the branches everywhere this time of year after our fresh snow - Landscapes & Christmas Cottages both! A stroll along Meewasin Trail will allow you to experience this visual treat.



Completely hardy in Saskatchewan (in fact dogwoods grow wild here!) they reach a height & spread of 6' - 8'. While they love lots of moisture (read - perfect for a wet spot in your garden) they are quite drought tolerant too. Leaf colour can be yellowish, solid dark green or variegated green/yellow & green/white. Foliage as well as bark hue is best when given full sun (or as much sun as possible).

READER FEEDBACK:

"Hi there Denise!

I always enjoy your newsletters so much that I'd like to invite you to try something special from the crew here at cindy winos & associates. It's called 'a bicycle for the mind.' You can think of it as a digital postcard from a friend that's meant to help you recharge your greatness. You can check it out here <http://you.for.a.bicycle.for.the.mind/>.

If you enjoy 'a bicycle for the mind,' it will arrive in your inbox once a month. You can always unsubscribe with the click of a button if you don't enjoy it.

Here's a link to a page where people can learn a bit more about Bicycle, maybe even see a past issue and then subscribe to Bicycle" <http://you.for.a.bicycle.for.the.mind/>

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DESIGN BRILLIANCE!

I've always thought stacked firewood is a dazzling design feature but this takes it to an entirely different artistic level!



.....coming up in December's GARDENDESIGN we'll check out -

TOPIARY - plants shaped & sheared to within an inch of their lives!

Meantime - I did an interesting issue on -

THE SENSUOUS GARDENER - SOUND

- back in March of 2013. All YOU need to do to experience it - is request it!



DID YOU KNOW? -I never, Ever, EVER share my email list - EVER! :)

**CHARLES@GMAIL.COM from GARDENDESIGN@GMAIL.COM please reply to this email with NO THANKS!