# **FFL Principle 4- Mulch Matters** UF CPETUF CPET

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## **Student Handout: What Is Mulch and Why Is It Important?**

**Florida Friendly Landscaping Principle #3**

**What is Mulch?** Mulch is a protective layer of material placed on top of the soil. It can be made of organic materials like wood chips, leaves, straw, or grass clippings, or inorganic materials like rocks or plastic sheeting.

**Why Do We Use Mulch?** Mulching helps improve the health of plants and the environment. Here’s how:

1. **Retains Moisture** Mulch covers the soil and reduces water evaporation, helping plants stay hydrated longer.
2. **Regulates Soil Temperature** It keeps the soil cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
3. **Prevents Weed Growth** Mulch blocks sunlight from reaching weed seeds, stopping them from growing.
4. **Reduces Erosion** It protects soil from being washed away by rain or blown by wind.
5. **Adds Nutrients** Organic mulch breaks down over time and returns nutrients to the soil.