



Edible Brattleboro Gardens Sheet Mulching Guide

Mulch Layer:
2-4" needed.
(Can put more than 4", but it may be cumbersome to deal with com planting time).
Leaf litter, straw, woodchips.

High-Nitrogen Layer:
4-8" needed.
Finished compost is best. Weed-free.

Green material layer:
8" minimum, 1' ideal
Lawn clippings, shredded leaves (especially maple), rice hulls, straw, wood shavings, coop or stable sweepings, chopped-up yard waste, etc.

Weed barrier:
~2 overlapping layers
Cardboard, layered newspaper, etc.
Can also use old denim or cotton clothes.

High-Nitrogen Layer:
~4" needed
Unfinished manure, kitchen food scraps, finished or unfinished compost, grass clippings



Sheet Mulching Directions

1. Mow weeds or grass on existing site, leaving the clippings in place.
2. If a soil amendment is necessary (refer to soil test), spread the advised amount on the area.
3. Wet the area, especially if biochar is used.
4. Spread half of the high-nitrogen material (about 4 inches).
5. Lay down the barrier material, which kills weeds and grass and prevents new weeds from growing. Cover the entire area with the barrier, overlapping at least 5 inches of the edges of the material.
6. Water the barrier material.
7. Pile one foot of the straw, leaf-litter, or other green materials on top of the cardboard.
8. Water the mulch until it's damp.
9. Spread the remaining high-nitrogen material (compost).
10. Spread the remaining mulch, which should be free of weed seeds.
11. Water regularly if able, or let sit over-winter without watering if enough snow falls. After several months, plant garden into the layers.



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Quantities and Sourcing

For every 100 square feet of garden to be created, gather:

- Roughly 150 square feet of weed barrier. The Agway in Brattleboro often has nice large corrugated cardboard sheets to grab from their dumpster. Otherwise, newspapers without glossy ads or old denim clothes would do.
- Roughly 5 yards total of green layers and mulch. These materials can be interchangeable as layers in the sheet mulching (i.e. straw as a mulch or beneath compost). So gather as much as you can, some of which may be gathered on-site (i.e. leaves)?
- 4 yards of compost for both high-nitrogen layers.
- Any soil amendments in their appropriate amounts.

This may seem like a lot of material, but remember that it will settle over time. Generally, the taller the sheet mulching, the more material is actively building soil, and the better it performs over time.