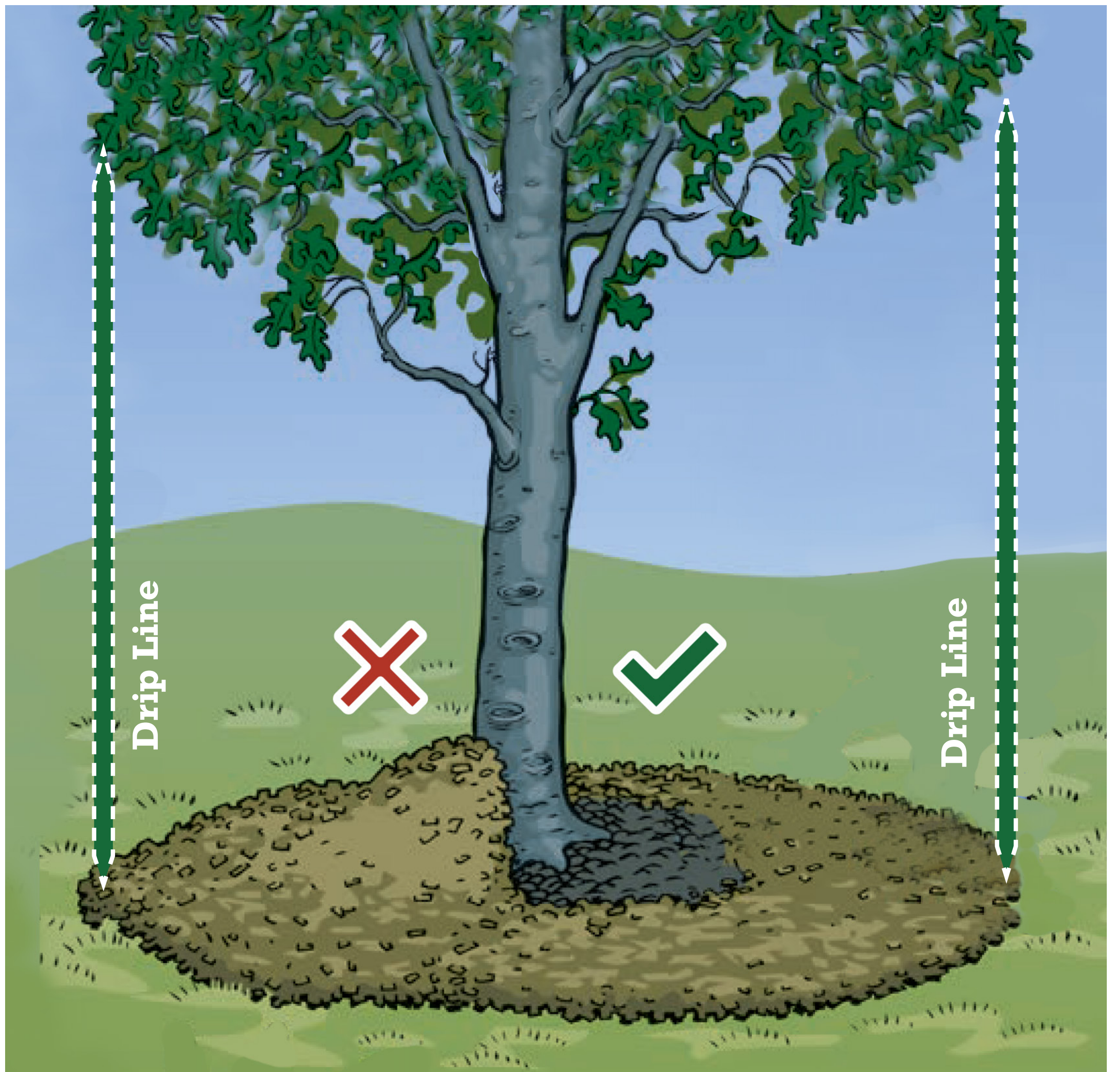


Mulch the Right Way!

There's more to mulch than you think.

Mulch is a staple tool in the garden, but it is often misapplied, causing tree and plant problems.

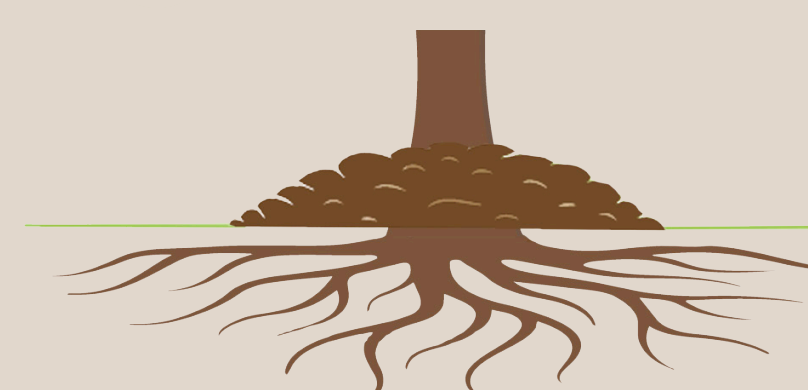


HOW TO MULCH:

- **Mulch out, not up.** Start mulching several inches from the trunk. Allow the root flare to show just above ground level. Spread mulch in a layer no more than 4 inches deep, going out to the drip line which is the edge of the tree canopy.
- **Back off from the trunk.** If mulch is piled up near the trunk, it can cause insect and disease problems. Keep the trunk dry.
- **Create a mulch “donut,” not a mulch “volcano.”**
- Use **organic, not dyed materials**, such as leaves, wood chips, or bark pieces. Organic mulch provides nutrients as it decomposes.
- **Mulch helps** control weeds, retain water and provides a buffer from heat and cold temperatures. Mulch also helps prevent lawn mower or weed-whacker damage.
- You can **mulch any time** of year. For maximum benefits, mulch in spring when the weather is favorable. Nurseries have March Mulch Madness sales and many types of mulch to choose from during the spring. Avoid dyed mulch.

Hazards of Incorrect Mulching

Improper mulching can inadvertently cause health problems for your plants and trees.



Moisture or Air Barriers

Too much mulch can make it hard for air to reach roots. It can both keep the soil too wet or too dry.

Root Rot

Too much mulch against the trunk of a tree can lead to root decay and other insect and disease problems.



Too Much Heat

As mulch decomposes, it generates heat which causes stress for plants.

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