How Much Mulch Do You Need?

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Mulch is usually purchased in bulk by the cubic yard. Follow these simple instructions to calculate how much mulch you need for your landscape bed:

1. Measure the area that you are looking to cover.
   Multiply the length (in feet) by the width (in feet) to get the Area (square footage.)
2. Divide the area by 27 (27 cubic feet in a cubic yard.)
3. Divide that answer by 12 (12 inches in a foot.)
4. Multiply that answer by the number of inches (depth of the material) desired.
5. You now have the number of cubic yards required for your project.

How much is one cubic yard? One cubic yard is equal to 27 cubic feet. One yard covers approximately:

100 square feet at 3 inches deep
150 square feet at 2 inches deep

If you have a wheelbarrow, the following might be helpful:

You would need (7) 4 cubic feet wheelbarrows to equal 1 cubic yard.
You would need (5 1/2) 5 cubic feet wheelbarrows to equal 1 cubic yard.
You would need (4 1/2) 6 cubic feet wheelbarrows to equal 1 cubic yard.

A large pick-up truck bed can hold from 1½ to 2 yards depending on how it is packed and how heavy (wet) the mulch is.

Tips for success:

- Be sure to herbicide weeds/turf area before mulching over them.
- Initial mulching is recommended at 3 – 4" deep for shrubs and trees; 1 – 2" for perennials. Thereafter add only an inch or two at a time.
- Before mulching a second time rake the existing mulch a bit to break it up so water will penetrate. (Hardwood mulch tends to crust over & cake so the surface becomes impermeable to water over time.)
- Do not mulch up against tree trunks or plant crowns; do not "volcano" mulch.

If you are still unsure as to how to calculate the amount of mulch you require for your needs, contact your local garden center with Virginia Certified Horticulturist on staff or Virginia Certified Landscape Designer at www.vsld.org