

Landscape Fabric

Objective: to familiarize crew members with reasons and method for installing landscape fabric.

Training Materials: landscape fabric, pins, x-acto knife, plants, mulch, sample spec.

Personal Protective Equipment: work boots, gloves.

Lesson: *Landscape fabric is a tool to reduce garden maintenance. It creates a physical barrier that blocks light, so weeds cannot grow. If weeds do grow up through the fabric, they are reacting to light coming through tiny holes in the fabric, so the most effective landscape fabric is a non-woven synthetic product with very small holes that don't let a lot of light through.*

Landscape fabric needs to be strong enough so it doesn't rip during installation, but must also be porous enough so that water and oxygen will filter through to the plant roots. When first installed water may bead on the new fabric, but the material becomes water permeable after several hours.

Generally used in shrub beds, rather than annual or perennial borders. Holes are cut in the fabric to accommodate the plants, so with an annual planting many holes need to be cut in the fabric which allow weeds to grow through. Many perennial plants spread out as

they grow and are constricted by the fabric around their crown.

If landscape fabric is specified in the landscape plan, the specs must be followed for installation.

Otherwise:

1. Remove weeds from soil surface, rake and level soil
2. Unroll the fabric over the soil. Cut it to fit around existing plants.
3. Overlap pieces by 15 cm.
4. Secure fabric with anchor pins.
5. To install plants, cut an X, peel back fabric and plant, being careful to fold the landscape fabric back over the root zone after watering.
6. A layer of mulch (bark, decorative stone or rock) is usually applied over top of the fabric to improve the aesthetic. Mulch can be applied more thinly over landscape fabric – usually a 2.5 cm layer is sufficient.

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- *Organic mulches gradually break down creating a medium for weed seed germination. These weeds will have shallow roots and be easy to remove.*

