

# Rubber Mulch

Some 10 years ago, the Physical Plant tested a rubber mulch product made from shredded tires. This product was put down loose and then bonded together with an adhesive to form a rubber mulch mat that would allow moisture through while deterring weed growth. This was a new product at the time, and the matting was found to split and tear after weather and foot traffic was experienced for a couple of years. Following these results, the test areas were removed.

We realize that products such as rubber mulch have come a long way since our initial testing. Rubber mulch today can be used as a loose product and comes in many colors. The Physical Plant put together a cost comparison in February, 2011 of Hardwood vs. Rubber Mulch. At that time, an 80-yd. load of red-dyed hardwood mulch cost \$2,150, and an 80-yd. load of red-dyed rubber mulch cost \$15,500. Costs have not been compared since that time.

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## Hardwood vs. Rubber Mulch

(February 2011)

### Pricing

Red-dyed Hardwood Mulch	80-yd. semi-load	\$2,150
Red-dyed Rubber Mulch	80-yd. semi-load	\$15,500

*Rubber mulch is significantly higher in cost than hardwood mulch in up-front cost. If you find an area that does not have many trees, rubber mulch will pay off in the long run. We have to refresh most of our detail beds every year due to leaves.*

### Performance

#### Fading or Bleeding

- Red-dyed hardwood mulch will fade over time. The mulch usually takes 1 ½ years to fade.
- Red-dyed rubber mulch will not fade. Most rubber mulch companies offer at least 10-year warranties.

#### Staying in Place

- Hardwood mulch stays in place unless it is washed, blown or raked out
- Rubber mulch also stays in place unless it is washed, blown or raked out