Mulches and Fire Risk

FireSmart™ Plant Program

Colour Key

🟩	Very Low Risk	Levels of risk are based on the combined results from research regarding: ignition probability, flame height, rate of spread, and temperature.
🟨	Low Risk	
🟧	Moderate Risk	
🟧	High Risk	
🟥	Extremely high Risk	

Mulch Materials

Mulch Materials		Home Ignitions Zones		
		Immediate (0-1.5 m)	Intermediate (1.5-10 m)	Extended (10-30 m)
Inorganic	Rock, gravel, shale, stone, lava, etc. The inorganic materials noted will not burn, however combustible debris such as leaves could accumulate on the surface and ignite.	Very Low Risk	Very Low Risk	Very Low Risk
Organic	Mature Compost	Moderate Risk	Low Risk	Very Low Risk
	Composted Bark/Wood	Extremely high Risk	High Risk	Moderate Risk
	Bark Nuggets	Extremely high Risk	High Risk	Moderate Risk
	Medium Bark Mulch	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk	High Risk
	Raw Wood Chips	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk	High Risk
	Pine Needles	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk
	Shredded Cedar	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk
	Shredded Rubber	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk	Extremely high Risk

Description of Organic Mulch Materials

Mature Compost	Formerly living plant materials that have decomposed to the point of being dark brown, crumbly, and the original contents are no longer recognizable. Not typically commercially available, but found in a backyard compost pile.
Composted Bark/Wood	Bark and/or wood pieces that have partially decomposed and are dark in colour.
Bark Nuggets	Bark pieces that are predominantly about 2.5 cm in diameter, with a portion made up of wood chips and other unrecognizable materials.
Medium Bark Mulch	Undecomposed bark mulch pieces of varying sizes.
Raw Wood Chips	Undecomposed or freshly chipped tree pieces, often a product of arborist operations.
Pine Needles	Made up mostly of pine needles of varying lengths with a small amount of other woody debris.
Shredded Cedar	Cedar wood that has been shredded into stringy, fibrous material, with a small portion of wood chips.
Shredded Rubber	Recycled rubber that has been processed to mimic wood mulch products.

This chart is meant to be a general guide and is based on research done to date. Research is ongoing and additional information will be provided when available.
Please take into consideration the risk of wildfire to your individual property and follow all FireSmart landscaping best practices.