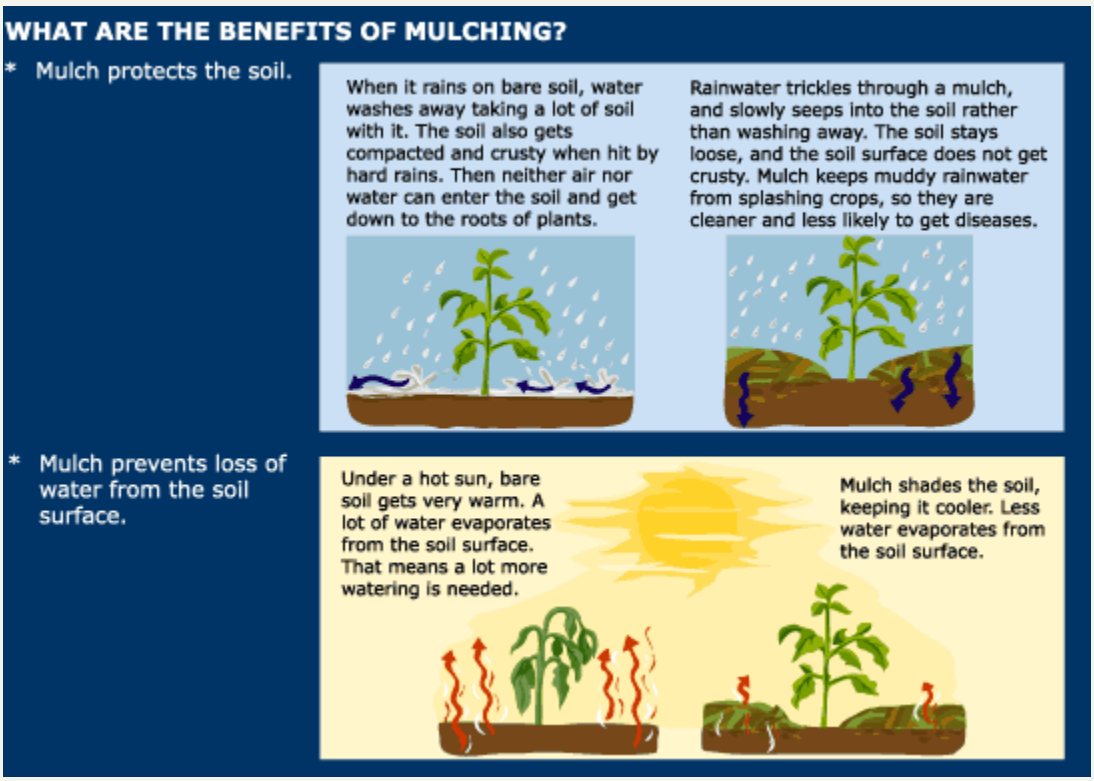
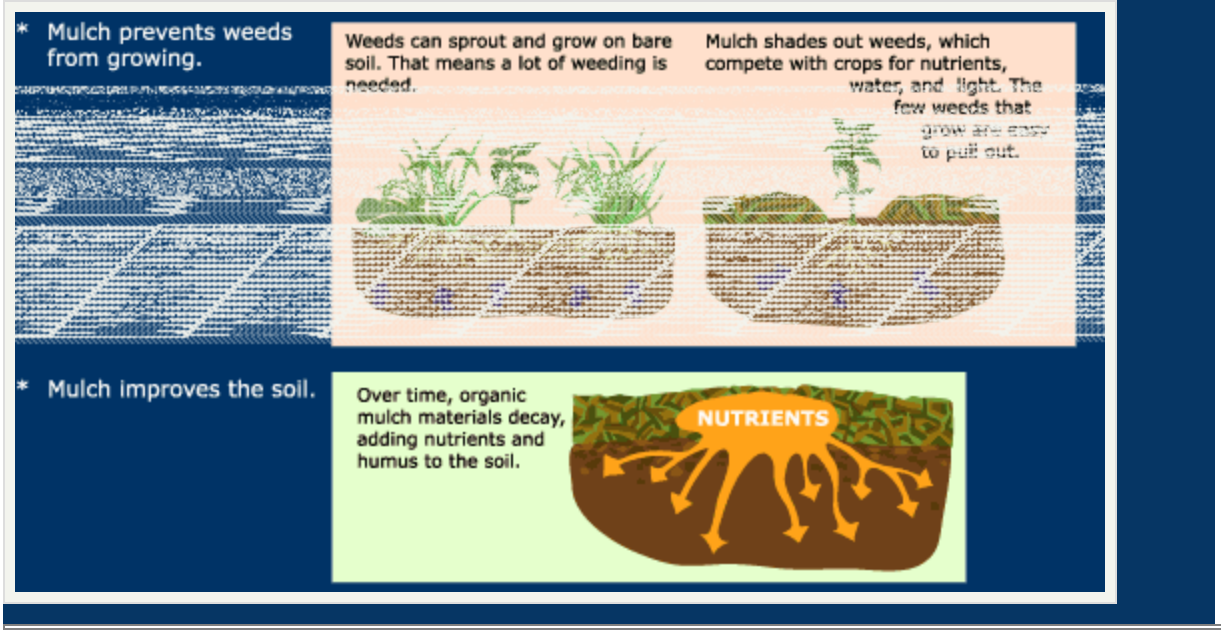
Mulch

MULCH MATERIALS
Mulch is a covering that is placed on top of bare soil. Some materials that are used for mulching include:
black plastic
compost
yard wastes, such as grass clippings and leaves
hay, straw, or wood chips


WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MULCHING?
* Mulch protects the soil.
When it rains on bare soil, water washes away taking a lot of soil with it. The soil also gets compacted and crusty when hit by hard rains. Then neither air nor water can enter the soil and get down to the roots of plants.
Rainwater trickles through a mulch, and slowly seeps into the soil rather than washing away. The soil stays loose, and the soil surface does not get crusty. Mulch keeps muddy rainwater from splashing crops, so they are cleaner and less likely to get diseases.
* Mulch prevents loss of water from the soil surface.
Under a hot sun, bare soil gets very warm. A lot of water evaporates from the soil surface. That means a lot more watering is needed.
Mulch shades the soil, keeping it cooler. Less water evaporates from the soil surface.



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