

## HOW TO GET RID OF YOUR OLD LAWN USING SHEET MULCHING!

Sheet mulching is a natural process which allows you to kill a weedy old lawn and replace it with good quality soil for planting native plants or anything else. The best time to start your sheet mulching is in early winter just before the winter rains. The process takes between 3-4 months depending on your situation. The process is not difficult, and the initial start of sheet mulching can easily be done in one day (depending on the size of your old lawn.)



### Getting Prepared!

1. Measure your lawn or area that you want to sheet mulch. You will need this information in order to get the right quantities of materials.
2. Mow your lawn/weedy area so the area is fairly flat.
3. If you can, dig out the old lawn from the edges about 2 inches so you won't have to keep weeding the edges during the sheet mulching.

#### 4. MATERIALS NEEDED:

**Chicken manure or other nutrient**—coffee grounds work well to cover old lawn area ½ -1 “ deep (Peet’s Coffee was helpful for us!)

**Roll of cardboard** large enough to cover lawn area with overlapping edges of 6-8”. If small area, may use collapsed cardboard boxes.

**Top Soil:** need 2-3 inches deep of top soil to cover lawn area

**Mulch:** need 2-3 inches deep of mulch to cover lawn area. Total of top soil & mulch should be 5-6 inches deep.

**Sources:** American Soils in Richmond is excellent source of mulch/top soil. They can help you estimate the amount you need. Urban Gardener located next to American Soil in Richmond is a good source for a roll of cardboard.

5. Tools needed: shovel(s), rake(s), wheel barrow, knife or blade, water source. Number of tools needed depends on size of old lawn & # of workers.



## Sheet Mulching! Try to do this in one day!

**Step 1.** Spread chicken manure or coffee grounds or other nutrient ½ inch deep on lawn area. Use rake to spread relatively evenly.

**Step 2.** Water your area with a hose until it's wet. The idea is to wet each layer as you go along in the sheet mulching process.

**Step 3.** Lay out your cardboard to cover your lawn area. Cut your cardboard with a blade. You want the cardboard edges to overlap by 6 – 8 inches, and you want to have the cardboard layer to go to the edges of the lawn. This cardboard layer/barrier is important in the elimination of your old lawn! When you finish, you need to water down the whole area again so it's wet.

**Step 4:** Spread your top soil 2-3 inches deep over the entire cardboard/lawn area. Use rake(s) to make it fairly level. Water this layer too!

**Step 5:** Spread your mulch 2-3 inches deep over the entire work area and rake again to level so you have a total of 5 – 6 inches deep of material above the cardboard barrier level. Water this final layer too. Your final result will be relatively smooth mulch/top soil layer about 5-6 inches higher than your old lawn.

That's it! You may want to take pictures as you go along!

### After Sheet Mulching:

You want to keep your sheet mulched lawn area fairly moist to help the decomposition of your old lawn. If you're doing this during the winter rainy season, you may just need to fill in with some watering during any dry spell. If you're doing it during some other dry time of year, you will need to water your sheet mulched lawn regularly. You may get a few weeds coming up through the cardboard/new soil/mulch or around the edges. You want to weed these if you can! In 3-4 months, your old lawn should be gone. If you're not sure if the old lawn is entirely dead, you can dig down and find out!

Congratulations! Now you can plant right through the mulch. The cardboard will be soft, or even gone, and in its place will be soft, rich soil. Plant right through the mulch and what's left of the cardboard. Enjoy creating your new garden area!



