

HOME & GARDEN SPECIALS

Mulch - more there than meets the eye

Gardeners and lawncare aficionados are always looking for ways to make their plants, gardens and property more appealing. If they can do so in ways that help the environment and save them some time, that's even better. While veteran green thumbs are well aware of the numerous tricks of the trade, some new to the gardening game might not know all the ins-and-outs.

One of the best and more reliable means to keep your flowers and gardens aesthetically appealing is mulching. In addition to looking good, mulch provides numerous

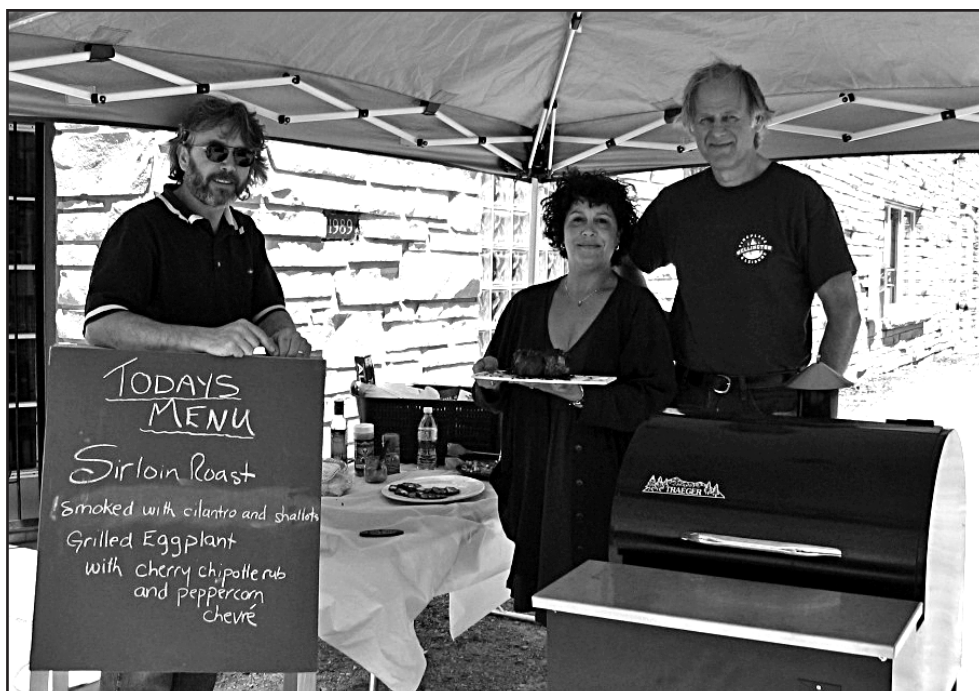
benefits as well, some that less experienced gardeners might not know about.

*** Reduced labor:** Though many gardeners enjoy spending time planting flowers or tending to their gardens, when summer heat settles in and the mercury keeps rising, too much time outside can be very draining. A good way to ensure you don't spend any unnecessary time in the hot summer sun is by using mulch around flower beds. A thick layer of mulch greatly reduces the germination of weeds, adding to the visual appeal of your flower beds while keeping gardeners from spending

time applying herbicides or pulling weeds from the beds by hand.

*** Less time watering:** Mulch helps to moderate soil temperature and retains moisture, something that's especially valuable to gardeners living in regions where summertime temperatures tend to soar. In addition to ensuring flowers and plants get enough moisture, the water retention properties of mulch allow gardeners to water less.

*** Limits crusting:** In areas where rainfall is prevalent, soil tends to crust. This is akin to a human suffering a cut and a scab forming as a



SATURDAY'S SUMPTIOUS SAMPLES: Wellington Fireplace and Leisure in Rockwood is treating visitors to gourmet samples of food cooked on their Traeger Wood Pellet Barbecues every Saturday throughout summer, weather permitting. Fine foods such as smoked sirloin roast with cilantro and shallots, grilled eggplant with cherry chipotle rub and peppercorn chvre are served. From left are owner Ian Clark, salesperson Romke de Vos, and salesperson/chef Lynn Frost Arcand. - Rebecca Ring Photo

result. If soil falls victim to significant crusting, it can be difficult for seedlings to germinate. However, mulch protects soil from crusting, promoting seedling germination in the process.

*** Restorative powers:** Organic mulches, such as wood chips or grass clippings, can have a restorative effect by adding organic matter as they decompose.

In turn, organic mulch increases the availability of nutrients for plants.

While mulch has many benefits, it's important for beginning gardeners to recognize that only ample application of mulch will do the trick. Many gardeners don't apply enough mulch, and the result is a waste of time and money, and flower and plant beds that don't

look good. When applying mulch, make sure the mulch is between two and four inches thick. Price is often not an issue (particularly with organic mulches) and some communities even provide free organic mulch to their residents. It's also good to note that mulch application, if you go the organic mulch route, will need to be done annually.

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Saturday May 19 - BIG GREEN EGG - 10am- 3pm -Demos by Daryl - a member of the Canadian Grand Championship BBQ Team.

Saturday May 26- TRAEGER- 10am- 3pm - Demos by Lynn- a competitor and category winner at the Rockwood BBQ Cook Off

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