**Mulch**

Mulch is a staple in most gardens, and with good reason. Mulch made of straw, bark chips, pine needles, or other organic material retains soil moisture, promotes healthy drainage, protects roots against temperature fluctuations, staunches growth of weeds, and enriches the soil as it gradually decomposes.

While pine needles effectively hold moisture and make the soil more acidic, which limits weed growth, in a moist climate mold and mildew may grow in your mulch. Breathing in mold spores won’t affect you severely, unless you live where there is a lot of mold growth, or have a compromised immune system (i.e. people with asthma, shortness of breath, etc).

Can I Use Crushed Rock Instead Of Mulch?

Here are a few benefits of a crushed rock landscape:

**Appearance:** Rock or crushed stone mulches are available in a range of sizes, shapes, and colors, including custom colors to complement your home or garden.

**Longevity:** Unlike organic mulch, crushed stone mulch will last just about forever, and it doesn’t need to be replenished every season. It won’t blow away in a strong wind, and it’s unlikely that water will ever carry it away.

**Price:** Using crushed rock instead of mulch might cost more initially depending on your choice of rock, but because it’s so long-lasting, crush stone mulch soon pays for itself.

**Maintenance:** Once it’s in place, crushed rock as mulch requires very little maintenance to keep it looking good. Stones don’t attract insects, and they aren’t prone to mold or mildew.

**Fire safety:** Crush rock mulch applied around the perimeter of your house creates an effective fire barrier, while most organic mulches are flammable.

Possible Problems With Crushed Stone Mulch

You may decide that crushed stone mulch is best for walkways, rock gardens, or open areas without mulch.

**Heat:** Crushed rock mulch absorbs heat in a hurry, especially if you live in a warm climate. If soil temperature is too hot, plants can suffer leaf burn and heat stress. You’ll need to water plants more often, and some heat-sensitive plants may not survive.

**Soil health:** Unlike organic mulch, rocks add no nutrients to the soil. In fact, crushed stone mulch can compress the soil and destroy air pockets that keep roots aerated.

**Difficult to remove:** If you ever get tired of crushed rock as mulch, you’ll have a big job on your hands. Removing organic mulch generally requires only a rake and a wheelbarrow.

**Weeds:** Weeds eventually sprout between rocks, and they can be difficult to remove. However, using landscape cloth can mitigate this problem.

**Upkeep:** Although rocks are clean and don’t need much upkeep, you may have a mess on your hand if the rocky area is under trees or shrubs.

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/mulch/crushed-stone-mulch.htm>