

Landscape Mulch Demonstration at the Hammond Research Station

We are all interested in mulches. Many new mulches have arrived on the scene the last couple years. Which are good? Which have the best weed suppression potential? The LSU AgCenter has a demonstration planting showcasing different mulches available for landscape contractors and home gardeners at the Hammond Research Station. This study was started in August 2008. Mulches were applied to a depth of 2”.

Visual appearance ratings of the different mulches were taken in October, November and December 2008 (Fall 2008) along with March and April 2009 (Spring 2009). Weed suppression ratings for the different mulches were taken on the same schedule. See the ratings scale below. This preliminary data listed is a pooled mean of the three months when data was collected in the fall and of the two months when data was collected in the spring.

| Mulch | <u>Visual Appearance Rating</u> | | <u>Weed Suppression Rating</u> | | Comments |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--|
| | Fall 2008 | Spring 2009 | Fall 2008 | Spring 2009 | |
| Control (no mulch) | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.7 | 3.0 | |
| Pine Bark | 3.0 | 2.5 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 3/8” slightly aged pine bark |
| Rainbow Mulch | 4.0 | 3.5 | 4.4 | 4.2 | dyed bark shavings from hardwood trees |
| Loblolly Pine Straw (bale) | 4.4 | 2.9 | 5.0 | 4.0 | whole pine needles; Florida source |
| Red Eucalyptus | 4.5 | 4.0 | 4.8 | 4.5 | red dyed eucalyptus |
| Eucalyptus | 3.0 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 4.5 | natural color eucalyptus |
| Colored Red Mulch | 4.2 | 4.0 | 4.8 | 4.0 | wood, dyed red |
| Dupont Redwood Rubber | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 4.2 | crumb rubber dyed red |
| Dupont Earthtone Rubber | 4.5 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 4.5 | crumb rubber dyed “earthtone” |
| Softscape Chestnut | 4.2 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.0 | www.softmulch.com |
| Softscape Sienna | 4.8 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 3.0 | www.softmulch.com |
| Softscape Gold Durado | 4.8 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 2.8 | www.softmulch.com |
| Loblolly Pine Straw (bag) | 3.8 | 2.5 | 4.0 | 2.5 | shredded pine needles |
| Pine Bark Nuggets | 3.0 | 2.5 | 3.8 | 2.5 | chunks of pine bark |
| Florida Gold - Midnight Black | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.0 | www.floridamulchonline.com |
| Florida Gold - Rouge Red | 4.0 | 3.5 | 3.4 | 2.5 | www.floridamulchonline.com |
| Cypress (grade B) | 2.8 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 | cypress wood; natural color |

Visual appearance rating is based on appearance of the mulch (1=worst, 5=best); Weed suppression rating is based on weeds present (1=worst, 5=best).

Contact Information:

Allen Owings, Professor (Horticulture)
 Regina Bracy, Professor (Horticulture) and Resident Coordinator
 Roger Rosendale, Research Associate (Horticulture)
 LSU AgCenter – Hammond Research Station
 21549 Old Covington Highway
 Hammond, LA 70403
 Phone 985.543.4125
 Fax 985.543.4124
 Cell 225.603.8096
 E-mail aowings@agcenter.lsu.edu

