



Question of the Week, March 26, 2007

Q. Is it too early to remove the mulch from my perennial garden?

A. Remove the mulch as soon as new growth begins. The purpose of winter mulch—loose organic material such as straw or chopped leaves, typically applied after several freezes—is to keep the soil uniformly frozen. This prevents the plants from heaving out of the ground during repeated freeze-thaw cycles, which can damage or kill unprotected plants.

Mulches play important protective roles in the summer garden as well. Apply fresh mulch to your perennial beds again as soon as the plants are actively growing, to suppress weeds, conserve moisture and moderate soil temperature throughout the growing season.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. You can also email us at answers@unh.edu