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### SUMMER MULCHES

A garden mulch can make gardening easier. A good mulch will control weeds by smothering them and eliminating the need for hoeing and cultivating. Often the roots of plants we are growing are cut off during cultivation and the plants suffer from lack of moisture. In tomatoes, root pruning through cultivation is often a cause of blossom-end rot.

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A mulch will act as a sponge and conserve moisture for surrounding plants. Also, the temperature is usually cooler under the mulch. Many rots of fruits and vegetables may be caused by contact with the soil. Mulches keep fruits and other edible parts of vegetables off the ground, free of grit and soil.

\* \* \* \*

Some good mulching materials include grass clippings, clean straw or hay, ground corncobs, sphagnum moss, sawdust and wood shavings. Apply the mulch to a depth of two or three inches around the plants and between the rows in mid July, preferably after a heavy rain. Recently gardeners have had good success with black plastic as a garden mulch.

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