

MULCHING (with Plastic)

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service – Practice Code 484



MULCHING

Mulching is applying a protective cover of plant residues or other suitable material not produced on the site to the soil surface.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

Mulching is used to help control soil erosion, protect crops, conserve moisture, moderate soil temperature, prevent soil compaction and crusting, reduce runoff, and suppress growth of weeds. The practice is utilized on sites subject to erosion and high runoff rates that need the additional protection from material brought in from off the site. The material may be manufactured and commercially available, such as plastics or fabrics. Selection of materials is dependent upon site condition and the availability of materials. Manufactured mulches should be applied according to the manufacturer's specifications.

Mulching is a high input practice used primarily on construction sites. However, plastic and fabric mulches are often used on cropland in the production of specialty crops including grapes, other fruits, and vegetables.

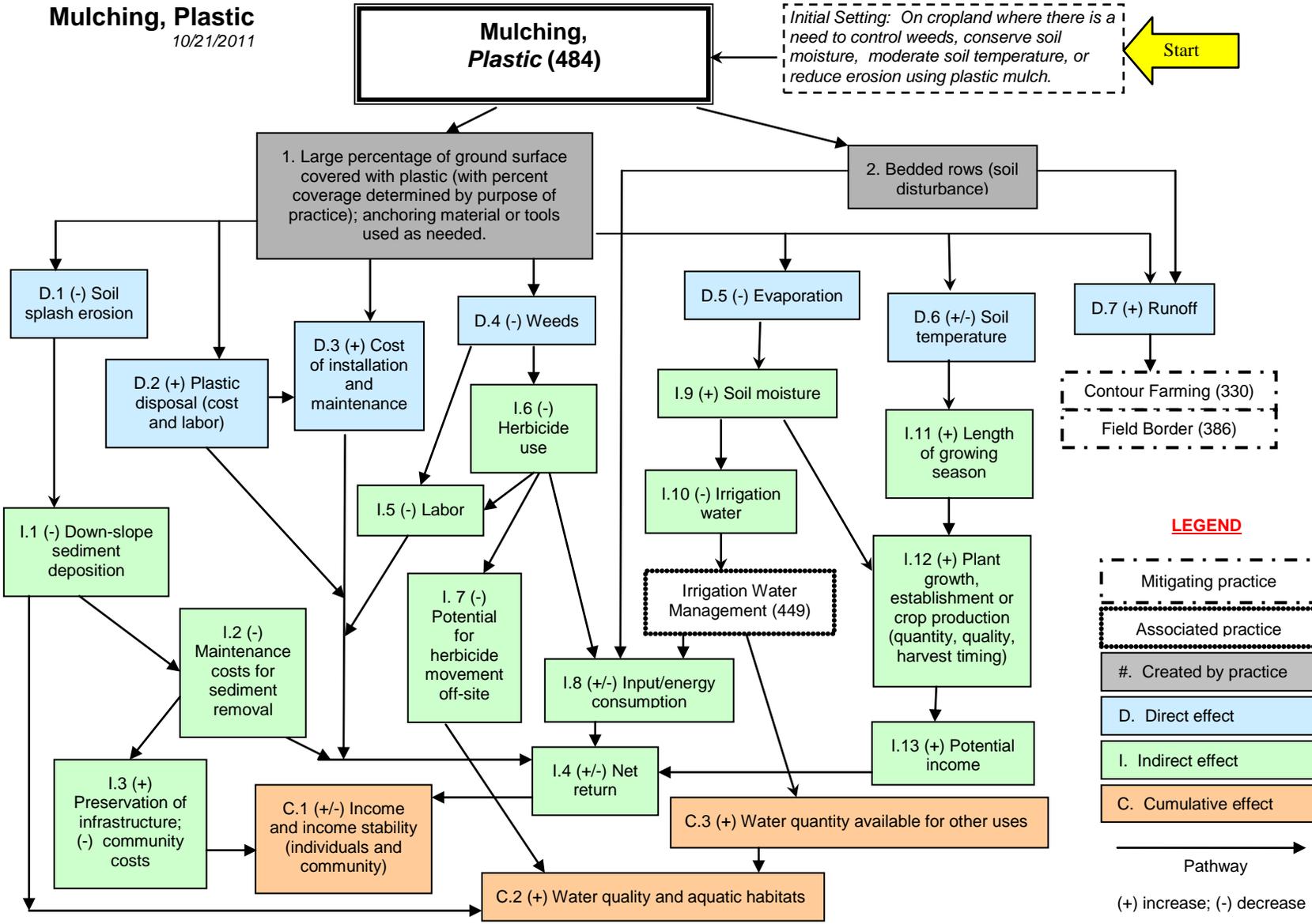
COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Mulching is often used in conjunction with other practices. It is commonly used in Conservation Management Systems with a new vegetative seeding, Critical Area Planting, Nutrient Management, Integrated Pest Management, Irrigation Water Management, and Contour Farming.

Refer to the practice standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide and associated specifications and Job Sheets for further information.

The following page identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.

Mulching, Plastic
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Note: Effects are qualified with a plus (+) or minus (-). These symbols indicate only an increase (+) or a decrease (-) in the effect upon the resource, not whether the effect is beneficial or adverse.

The diagram above identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied according to NRCS practice standards and specifications. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowners and are presumed to have been obtained. All income changes are partially dependent upon market fluctuations which are independent of the conservation practices. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.