

Use of Plastic Mulch and Row Covers in Vegetable Production - HLA-6034

Answer Key

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct words using the fact sheet.

1. Growing vegetables commercially requires intensive management and involves risk whether in a market garden, a truck farm or a larger commercial farm.
2. Price is generally the highest when supply is the lowest.
3. Mulching is a technique, which has been used by vegetable growers for many years.
4. Mulches are either organic or inorganic
5. Organic mulches are those derived from plant and animal materials.
6. Inorganic mulches include plastic mulch and accounts for the greatest volume of mulch use in commercial vegetable production.
7. Black or clear mulch intercepts sunlight which warms the soil.
8. White or aluminum mulch reflects the sun's heat and keeps the soil cooler .
9. Plastic mulch helps prevent soil water loss during dry years and sheds excessive water away from the crop root zone during periods of excessive rainfall.
10. Black plastic mulch prevents weeds from growing.
11. Clear mulch does not prevent weeds from growing.
12. Fruit tends to be smoother with fewer scars when plastic mulch is used because it keeps fruits such as tomatoes from contacting the ground.

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13. Plastic mulch costs about \$275 to \$300 per acre including installation and removal.
14. Non-degradable plastic mulch must be removed from the field before more plastic mulch can be laid.
15. Plastic mulch can be anywhere between 36 and 60 inches wide.
16. Most agricultural mulch is black.
17. Plastic mulch is not a substitute for thorough soil preparation.
18. The soil should be free of rocks, sticks, hard clods and other material which could puncture the plastic.
19. The simplest planter (for planting after mulch has been laid) is a water wheel planter which punches a hole through the mulch and fills it with water/starter solution.
20. Crops should be observed regularly for insect build up under the plastic around plant openings.
21. Plastic should be removed after it has produced one or more crops.
22. Two major benefits of row covers are earliness and wind protection.
23. Earliness is generally attributed to warming beneath the cover.
24. Wind protection reduces stress on plants particularly during early growth stages.
25. Plastic mulches and row covers used alone or in combination offer the grower a management tool which can increase earliness, yield, quality and return per acre in exchange for an additional input.