

Paper or plastic? When it comes to your organic farm, the answer is easy!

Do you use plastic mulch to control weeds and increase yields on your farm? Are you tired of taking the time and spending the money necessary to remove your plastic mulch at the end of the season? Are you concerned about the environmental impact of using plastic mulches?

Then look no further than WeedGuardPlus. WeedGuardPlus is the perfect alternative to plastic mulches. WeedGuardPlus is a highly engineered paper mulch that is 100% Biobased, OMRI certified, and will biodegrade completely in 12 months. Through independent university and extension run studies, WeedGuardPlus has been shown to perform as well as black plastic mulch in increasing total yields and suppressing weeds. These studies have been performed throughout the country, in the open field, greenhouses and high tunnels and with both warm and cool season crops. Unlike black plastic mulches, there is no need to expend any time, energy or money in removing WeedGuardPlus. Simply incorporate WeedGuardPlus into the soil at the end of the season and it will biodegrade and feed the soil with 1000 lbs. of carbon per acre. The cost of removal and disposal of traditional black plastic mulches starts at \$100 per acre. With WeedGuardPlus you are avoiding those costs while not adding anything to the landfill. To find out more about how WeedGuardPlus has performed in organic specialty crop research trials, be sure to check out the new research section <http://weedguardplus.com/research.php>

WeedGuardPlus is particularly well suited for certified organic production because it is one of only a handful of biodegradable mulches allowed under the National Organic Program. Did you know that most biodegradable plastic mulches are not allowed for organic production? This is because they contain petroleum based additives that can contaminate the soil as they decompose. Additionally, some biodegradable plastic mulches have been shown to not fully biodegrade before the start of the following growing season. This lack of complete biodegradation can leave trash in your field that can clog equipment. WeedGuardPlus has been shown to consistently biodegrade completely in 12 months in a variety of climates and growing conditions. The National Organic Program is hearing an appeal to use biodegradable plastic mulches but as of today, a vast majority of biodegradable plastics are not allowed for use on your organic farm. WeedGuardPlus is OMRI certified and there is no question about its acceptable use on your organic farm.

WeedGuardPlus can also help you fulfill specific organic requirements as determined by the NOP. In the NOP final rule, section 205.203 (a) states that “The producer **must** select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and

minimize soil erosion.” WeedGuardPlus can help fulfill this requirement by reducing tillage which in turn should lead to improved physical and biological condition of your soil. WeedGuardPlus can also reduce in season erosion from wind, precipitation and irrigation by physically protecting the soil surface from these forces. In addition to conserving soil, WeedGuardPlus will actually build the soil as it decomposes. WeedGuardPlus is 100% Biobased and that means it contains a lot of carbon. In fact WeedGuardPlus contains over 400 lbs. per acre. As WeedGuardPlus decomposes, this carbon is slowly released into your soil where it feeds beneficial microbial growth and may improve soil quality by increasing soil organic matter content, soil water retention and soil aggregation.

So if you are tired of using plastic mulch on your organic farm please consider WeedGuardPlus as an alternative. WeedGuardPlus provides all the benefits of plastic mulches but without any of the concerns about their suitability on organic farms.

Article By:

Dan Goldhamer; Colorado State University, M.S. Soil Science
Horticulture Technical Advisor, WeedGuardPlus

dgoldhamerwgp@gmail.com