

Eclipse mulch saves water, fights dieback

Award-winning West Australian company Eclipse Soils has met the challenge of water conservation in our increasingly dry environment head-on by developing the most water efficient mulches and soil improvers on the market.

Mulches reduce evaporation, firstly by shading the soil and secondly by slowing the movement of water vapour and liquid from the soil to the atmosphere.

And a good mulch should be chunky and porous and contain very low amounts of fines so that applied water can drain through to the soil and plant roots below, whilst also allowing oxygen exchange between the soil and the atmosphere and suppressing weeds.

Mulches with the optimum characteristics will reduce soil evaporation by up to 70%.

But as well as drastically reducing evaporation and slashing water use, Eclipse Soils award-winning mulch is also leading the fight against destructive dieback in Western Australia's parks and gardens.

Phytophthora dieback has been a devastating presence in the State's south-west forests for decades but has also evolved into a serious menace across urban areas.

The Australian Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has this to say about Phytophthora dieback: "This plant pathogen can spread easily, causing disease, death and potential extinction in



Eclipse Soils Aquamor Mulch

susceptible plants, and loss of habitat for animals.

"The disease, Phytophthora dieback, is often difficult to detect and can cause permanent damage to ecosystems and landscapes before it is identified."

In response to this insidious disease, the team at Eclipse Soils in Kwinana has developed a mulch that takes on the phytophthora at its own game.

Eclipse Soils General Manager, Sean Bennett explained: "Because mulch is beneficial to micro-

organisms in the soil, the healthy micro-organisms essentially outcompete phytophthora for nutrients and space."

But Mr Bennett warned consumers that not all mulches available to the market were of the beneficial variety.

"Poor quality mulch can actually spread dieback and does nothing to preserve water," said Mr Bennett.

"Our mulch is all produced from clean trees so there's no animal or human waste going into the product. There's no municipal green waste going into the product; there's no plastic or rubbish contamination which is hard to control with your council mulches."

Mr Bennett said a good mulch, that fights dieback and saves water should be chunky, with fines screened out and any pathogens destroyed through the composting process.

Mr Bennett said Eclipse Soils only used trees that would otherwise go to waste, "we take our mulch materials from areas which are being cleared for roading or other development activities."

More detailed information on the benefits of mulches can be found in the following link: <https://eclipsesoils.com.au/technical-papers/>