



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Using Wool in the Garden

Jaelyn Whaley, Sheep Field Specialist

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Why does wool work as mulch?



NATURAL NITROGEN
SOURCE



IMPROVES WATER
CONSERVATION



PEST/WEED CONTROL



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Natural Nitrogen Source

- ~9% nitrogen
- Equal or higher yields than commercial fertilizer
 - 58-69% larger tomatoes (Bradshaw and Hagen, 2022)
 - Up to 33% greater yields for tomatoes and peppers (Gorecki and Gorecki, 2010)
- Fits organic operations
 - Potential for other marketing claims?
 - Reduces the use of plastics - microplastics



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Improves Water Conservation

- Wool holds 30% of its weight in water
 - Optimal for potted plants
- Increases water use efficiency
 - decreases evaporation & increases transpiration
- Water is stored right next to the roots
- Wool warms as it gets wet – soil temperature

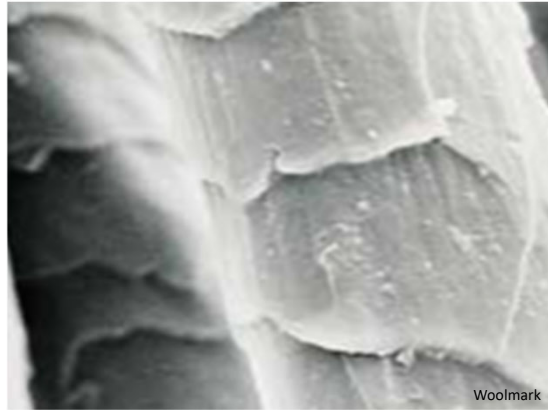


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Weed/Pest Control

- Anecdotal evidence
- Scales on wool deter slugs
- Mulch on top of soil creates a weed barrier
 - Weed introduction?



Woolmark



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Loose Wool or Pellets?

Loose Wool

- Untreated, raw wool
- On top of or incorporated into soil
- Wind!
- Amount needed may be trial and error

Pellets

- Incorporated into soil
- Heat treated during pelleting
 - Weed seeds
 - Bacteria
- Application specified per product instructions



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Where can you get wool?

- Low-priced/unsalable wool from sheep producers
- Pellet mills are growing
 - Promote small businesses
- Wool buyers across SD
 - Center of the Nation, Belle Fourche
 - Independent wool buyers



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**You can
always
contact me!**

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