

Creative Uses for Yard Waste

IDEAS FOR THE
REUSE OF
WOODY
YARD WASTE

Even when we try our best to reduce the amount of woody yard waste, there are times when we still have to reuse or recycle it.

One way to recycle woody yard waste is through composting, though it takes quite a while for it to decompose to the point where

we can use it. Another way to recycle woody yard waste is by chipping it and using it for mulch. However, you can also reuse sticks and branches to produce some very attractive and functional trellises, fences, and plant supports by just being creative!



USING BRANCHES

Fences and trellises made from branches leftover from pruning can enhance your landscape by adding structure and vertical focal points, as well as provide great support for your plants. These kinds of supports are very popular and you can purchase them through gardening and landscape catalogs. However, they are expensive, and here you have all the materials to make your own while “reducing, reusing and recycling” your yard waste!

TO DO/Create fences and trellises:

To make them, lay out the pieces of wood on your driveway or sidewalk, arranging them in a pattern you like (SEE FIGURES 1 AND 2). Sometimes the wood is hard to work with and difficult to nail into easily. An alternative is to tie the branches together using wire from a floral or craft store (#16 or #18 gauge). To make them look more finished, tie raffia or twine over the wire. This will hide the wire (in case it rusts!) and still keep that rustic look. These creations will last several years. The wooden footings will begin to decompose from being in direct contact with the soil, so it's a good idea to lengthen the life of the fence or trellis by protecting them with a plastic pipe, such as PVC. Drill 3 or 4 small drain holes in an endcap and glue it to a piece of pipe. Sink it into the ground so the top of the pipe is just above the soil line. Then just insert the wooden footing of the fence or trellis into the pipe. The plastic pipe will protect the wooden footing and make it last much longer (SEE FIGURE 3).

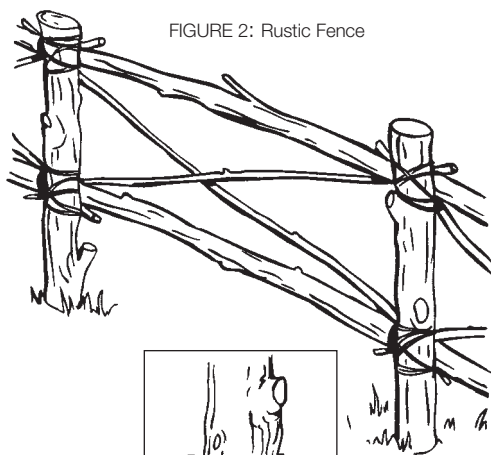


FIGURE 2: Rustic Fence

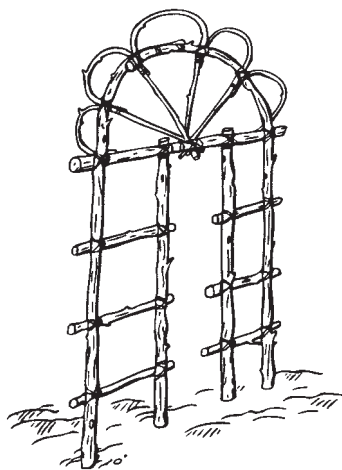


FIGURE 1: An attractive trellis can be made from woody yard waste.

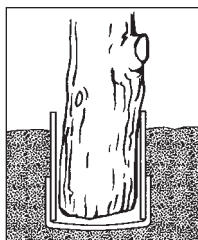


FIGURE 3: Wooden footings can be protected from rotting in the soil by using capped PVC pipe.

TO DO/Use small branches for plant support:

Small to medium branches (about 1/2"-1 1/2" in diameter) can be used as plant supports. This works well for holding up taller perennials. Take four similar sized branches and secure them into the ground in the shape of a square around a plant (SEE FIGURE 3). Fasten smaller branches in a criss-cross pattern across the four supports. These should be 6-8 inches above the soil line. As the plant grows, continue adding small, criss-cross branches at 6-10 inch intervals until the plant reaches mature height. At maturity, the plant should hide the supports.