



Plastic mulch and row crops

4-foot plastic mulch is common. Plant one or two or three crop rows on each mulch row. The exposed mulch top can be as wide as 36" on flat beds or 28-32" on raised beds (depending on bed height).

The most efficient use of field space may lead to three crop rows per bed for some crops. The 1-2-3 row system is relevant to followers who pursue equipment than can be easily changed for one, two or three rows. If needed, the Junior Series accommodates 4-1/2-foot plastic to widen the mulch top, which helps to place outside rows away from the bed shoulder. Wider plastic also covers more ground for weed control.

3-foot plastic mulch covers the row area, typically for one row for a vine crop. With more bare soil between mulch rows, we have cultivators for tillage of wide paths. 3-1/2-foot plastic can be useful for wheel spacings under 54".

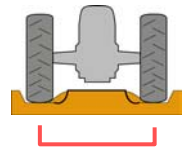
Lay wider mulch with narrower tractors but second-guess placing front opening disks in tractor wheel tracks as this can affect mulch layer performance. Like row cover layers, we have customized mulch layers with tillage attachments.

If intending to drive ovetop plastic mulch rows during the season for various field work, minimum tractor wheel spacing (measured center-to-center of wheels) is 54" with 48" mulch (add minimum 6" to mulch width). There are few "standards" but arranging 4-ft plastic on 5-ft row centers accommodates many tractors and growers and offers a good walking path.

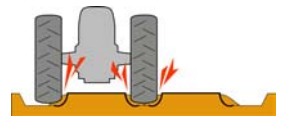
Row cover

Application of clear plastic is one of many methods to warm early spring soil or protect from frost. Use a mulch layer in the same manner to cover sweet corn.

High-clearance layers are also available to apply material over hand-set wire hoops for in-field tunnels. Be sure tractor has sufficient underbelly clearance.



54" wheel spacing is minimum with use of 4-ft plastic mulch



Noticeably less than 54" spacing is not workable with 4-ft mulch - the mulch layer will likely contact buried mulch on the row beside it. Mulch or bed rows can simply be spaced further apart, but tractor wheels still drive on buried edges, making mulch removal much more difficult from compaction. Use 3 or 3-1/2 ft mulch for narrower wheel spacings



Wide or narrow furrows or paths are possible

