

EFFECTS OF MULCH ON AVOCADO AND CITRUS

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Organic mulches were applied to two avocado and two citrus orchards over a four year period. Soil moisture, weed suppression, tree canopy, root growth, soil/leaf nutrient status and fungal populations were measured. There was a pronounced effect of mulches on soil moisture (reduced evaporative loss) and weed growth (substantially reduced with mulch), but plant canopy and leaf nutrient status changes were negligible during the time frame, although soil nutritional changes were noted. An important effect of mulches on root architecture was an increase in root length and spatial distribution in avocado, which was not found in citrus. This change in rooting pattern may partially be responsible for improved disease resistance in avocado.