

NEW BRUNSWICK LANDSCAPING

---

# Materials & Products

Pavers, stone, mulch, soil, grass seed, fertilizers,  
and materials suited to NB conditions

15 Expert Answers from Landscape IQ

[newbrunswicklandscaping.com/construction-brain](https://newbrunswicklandscaping.com/construction-brain)

# Table of Contents

---

1. River rock vs crushed stone for landscaping?
2. What type of mulch is best for New Brunswick gardens?
3. How do I choose the right topsoil for a NB landscaping project?
4. What grass seed varieties perform best on New Brunswick lawns?
5. What natural stone options are available in New Brunswick for patios?
6. How do I choose the right fertilizer for acidic New Brunswick soil?
7. Are landscape fabric alternatives better than fabric for NB gardens?
8. How do I select quality compost for New Brunswick garden beds?
9. Is rubber mulch or wood mulch better for NB flower beds?
10. What type of sand should I use under pavers in New Brunswick?
11. What salt-resistant plants and materials work best along NB driveways?
12. What type of gravel is best for New Brunswick landscaping projects?
13. Should I use cedar or pressure-treated lumber for raised beds in NB?
14. What ice melt products are safe for concrete in New Brunswick?
15. How do I choose the right polymeric sand for paver joints in NB?

## River rock vs crushed stone for landscaping?

**River rock and crushed stone serve different landscaping purposes, with crushed stone being more functional for drainage and pathways, while river rock excels in decorative applications.** The choice depends on your specific project needs, budget, and aesthetic preferences.

**Crushed stone** is the workhorse of New Brunswick landscaping. It's angular pieces lock together, making it ideal for driveways, walkways, and as a base material under patios and retaining walls. In our freeze-thaw climate, this interlocking quality prevents shifting and settling that can damage hardscaping. Crushed stone also provides excellent drainage, which is crucial given our clay-heavy soils in areas like Fredericton and the Saint John River valley. Common sizes include 3/4" clear for driveways, 1/4" screenings for paver bases, and larger 2-3" stone for drainage applications behind retaining walls.

**River rock** offers smooth, rounded stones that create attractive decorative features but don't compact or interlock like crushed stone. It's perfect for dry creek beds, around water features, or as mulch in garden beds where you want a clean, modern look. However, river rock can shift and migrate, especially on slopes or in high-traffic areas. In coastal New Brunswick, river rock works beautifully in xeriscaped gardens that can handle salt spray and wind.

**For New Brunswick conditions**, consider these factors: Crushed stone handles our heavy snow loads better since it compacts firmly and doesn't shift under snow removal equipment. River rock can become projectiles during ice storms or high winds common along our coast. Both materials help with drainage, but crushed stone is superior for areas that need structural support.

**Cost-wise in the NB market**, crushed stone typically runs \$25-\$40 per ton delivered, while river rock ranges from \$35-\$65 per ton depending on size and color. River rock's higher cost reflects its decorative nature and sometimes longer transport distances.

**Practical applications:** Use crushed stone for functional areas like drainage behind retaining walls, under decks, or as a base for sheds. Choose river rock for decorative dry streams, around specimen plants, or in contemporary garden designs. For pathways, crushed stone with fines (like limestone screenings) compacts into a firm walking surface, while river rock creates an unstable, rolling surface.

**When to hire a professional:** For large installations, proper grading, or areas requiring drainage calculations, a landscaper ensures correct material selection and installation. They can also advise on local aggregate sources and delivery logistics, which vary significantly across New Brunswick's rural areas.

Need help finding a landscaper for your stone project? New Brunswick Landscaping can match you with local professionals who understand our unique Maritime conditions and material requirements.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Lawrence Landscaping ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q2

## What type of mulch is best for New Brunswick gardens?

**Cedar mulch is generally the best all-around choice for New Brunswick gardens**, offering excellent longevity, natural pest resistance, and an attractive reddish-brown colour that holds well through Maritime rain and humidity. At \$50 to \$70 per cubic yard delivered in the Moncton and Fredericton areas, cedar costs slightly more than hardwood mulch but lasts 2-3 seasons compared to hardwood's single season, making it more cost-effective over time.

For New Brunswick's specific climate conditions, mulch serves several critical purposes beyond aesthetics. It insulates soil against NB's dramatic temperature swings — from -30°C winter lows to 30°C summer highs — protecting root systems from frost heaving and reducing summer moisture evaporation. With NB's acidic soils (pH 4.5-6.0), most organic mulches actually help by slowly decomposing and adding organic matter, though they can slightly lower pH further. If your soil is already very acidic, consider using hardwood mulch instead of cedar, as hardwood breaks down into a more neutral amendment.

**Apply mulch 2 to 3 inches deep for flower beds and around shrubs**, refreshing annually in late spring after the soil has warmed. A common New Brunswick mistake is piling mulch too deep or creating "mulch volcanoes" around tree trunks — keep mulch 3-4 inches away from tree bark and 1-2 inches from perennial crowns to prevent rot and rodent damage. For a typical NB residential property, budget 5-10 cubic yards for full bed coverage, which translates to roughly \$250-500 for materials depending on the mulch type.

**Hemlock bark mulch is another excellent option for NB**, prized for its dark, rich colour that complements the Maritime landscape aesthetic. It is particularly popular in Saint John and Fredericton garden centres at \$45-65 per

yard. For vegetable gardens, straw or untreated hardwood mulch are preferred since they decompose more quickly and will not tie up nitrogen as aggressively as fresh cedar chips.

One important note for NB gardeners: avoid applying mulch too early in spring. Wait until the soil has thawed and warmed to at least 10°C, typically mid to late May in most of the province. Mulching over cold soil traps that cold in and delays plant emergence. In fall, add an extra inch or two over perennial beds after the ground starts to freeze for winter insulation, which is especially important in NB's zone 3b-4a areas inland where winter temperatures regularly hit -30°C.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

Q3

## How do I choose the right topsoil for a NB landscaping project?

**Choose a screened, loam-based topsoil with a balanced texture of sand, silt, and clay, ideally with 3-5% organic matter content, and always buy from a reputable NB supplier who can tell you the soil's origin and composition.** At \$35 to \$60 per cubic yard delivered in the Fredericton and Moncton areas, topsoil is a significant investment for any landscaping project, and quality varies enormously between suppliers — cheap topsoil often comes loaded with weed seeds, clay clumps, rocks, or construction debris.

**Screened topsoil has been passed through a mesh to remove rocks, roots, and large debris**, producing a uniform, workable material. Ask for topsoil screened through a 1/2-inch or 3/4-inch screen — anything coarser may contain chunks that interfere with seeding and planting. The best NB topsoil suppliers offer a "garden blend" or "lawn mix" that combines screened loam with compost, typically at a 70/30 or 60/40 ratio. This blended product costs slightly more (\$45-70 per yard) but saves you the trouble of mixing in amendments separately and provides a ready-to-plant growing medium.

When ordering topsoil in New Brunswick, **consider the pH of the material.** NB's native soils are acidic (pH 4.5-6.0), and topsoil sourced from local fields will likely share this acidity. If you are establishing a new lawn, request a soil test on the topsoil before spreading it, or ask the supplier for their test results. You may need to incorporate dolomitic lime at the time of spreading to bring the pH up to the 6.0-6.5 range that turf grass prefers. A soil test costs just \$30-60 and can save you from spreading 6 inches of soil that needs heavy correction.

**For lawn establishment, apply 4-6 inches of quality topsoil over graded subsoil,** which requires approximately 5-10 cubic yards per 1,000 square feet. For garden beds, you may want 8-12 inches of depth, especially if the underlying soil is heavy Fredericton clay or rocky northern NB ground. For tree and shrub planting, use topsoil to backfill around root balls mixed with the native soil at a 50/50 ratio — using 100% imported topsoil in the planting hole can create a "bathtub effect" where water pools in the amended hole and drowns roots.

**Order topsoil in spring or early fall for the best availability and pricing.** Late spring and early summer are peak demand season in NB, and suppliers sometimes run low on quality screened material. Have the delivery dumped on a tarp or driveway rather than directly on existing lawn, as a pile of topsoil will kill grass underneath within days. Budget for delivery charges of \$50-100 per load on top of the material cost, with most NB suppliers offering free delivery for orders over 10 cubic yards.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- [Urban Landscaping Ltd ?](#)
- [Lawrence Landscaping ?](#)
- [Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

## What grass seed varieties perform best on New Brunswick lawns?

**Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass blends are the most popular and successful grass seed choices for New Brunswick lawns**, with fine fescue varieties providing the best performance in shaded areas and on sandy coastal soils. The ideal NB lawn seed mix contains roughly 40-50% Kentucky bluegrass, 30-40% perennial ryegrass, and 10-20% fine fescue, giving you the beauty, durability, and adaptability needed to thrive across the province's varied conditions.

**Kentucky bluegrass is the backbone of most NB lawns** because it produces a dense, dark green turf with excellent self-repair ability through underground rhizomes. It is hardy through NB's zone 3b-5b range and recovers well from winter damage. The drawback is that it is slow to establish from seed (14-21 days to germinate) and performs poorly in shade. Choose improved cultivars rather than generic "common" Kentucky bluegrass — varieties like 'Midnight,' 'Award,' and 'Barron' offer better disease resistance and cold tolerance for Maritime conditions.

**Perennial ryegrass is the ideal companion species** because it germinates in just 5-7 days, quickly providing a green cover that protects the slower Kentucky bluegrass seedlings from erosion and competition. Ryegrass also contributes a fine-textured, wear-resistant component to the lawn that handles foot traffic and children's play. It is somewhat less cold-hardy than bluegrass, so in NB's zone 3b areas like Campbellton and Bathurst, reduce the ryegrass percentage in your mix to 20-25% and increase bluegrass accordingly.

**Fine fescues — creeping red fescue, chewings fescue, and hard fescue — are essential for shady NB properties.** They tolerate up to 60-70% shade, thrive in NB's acidic soils (pH 4.5-6.0) without heavy liming, and require less water and fertilizer than bluegrass. For lawns under mature maples and oaks, a mix heavy in fine fescue (50% or more) will outperform any bluegrass-dominant blend. Fine fescues are also the best choice for sandy coastal soils around Shediac and Miramichi, where their drought tolerance gives them an advantage over moisture-hungry bluegrass.

**Seed your NB lawn in late August through mid-September for the best results.** This fall window gives seed warm soil temperatures (15-25°C) for rapid germination, cooler air temperatures that reduce seedling stress, and steady fall rainfall that reduces the need for constant watering. Spring seeding (mid-May to early June) is the second-best option but puts young grass into the stress of summer heat before it is fully established. Apply seed at 3-4 pounds per 1,000 square feet for new lawns and 1-2 pounds for overseeding, and keep the seedbed consistently moist for the first 2-3 weeks. Quality seed mixes for NB conditions run \$3-6 per pound at local garden centres.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

Q5

## What natural stone options are available in New Brunswick for patios?

**New Brunswick offers several excellent natural stone options for patios, with locally quarried sandstone, granite, and slate being the most popular and cost-effective choices because they are sourced within the province, reducing transportation costs while providing materials naturally suited to Maritime freeze-thaw conditions.** Using NB stone also supports local quarrying operations in communities across the province.

**Sandstone is the most widely used natural patio stone in New Brunswick**, available in warm buff, brown, grey, and reddish tones that complement Maritime architecture. New Brunswick has significant sandstone deposits, particularly in the southeastern part of the province, making it one of the most affordable local stone options at \$8-15 per square foot for flagstone suitable for patios. Sandstone cuts and shapes easily, provides good traction when wet (important for NB's rainy climate), and weathers attractively over time. The main consideration is that softer sandstone varieties can spall in severe freeze-thaw cycles, so choose denser, harder grades for ground-level patio applications.

**Granite is the most durable natural stone option available in NB** and the province has world-class granite deposits, particularly the famous black granite from the St. George area and grey granites from various quarries. Granite pavers and flagstone are virtually indestructible in NB's freeze-thaw environment and will last generations without cracking, spalling, or significant wear. The tradeoff is cost — granite flagstone runs \$12-25 per square foot, and the material is harder to cut and work with during installation. For a premium patio that will never need replacement, NB granite is the finest choice.

**Slate from the Maritimes provides a distinctive, elegant patio surface** with rich colours ranging from deep grey to green, purple, and rust. It splits into naturally flat pieces ideal for flagstone patios, and its slightly textured surface provides excellent grip in wet and icy conditions. However, slate requires careful selection for outdoor NB use —

choose only "exterior grade" slate rated for freeze-thaw cycling, as some decorative slates are too soft or absorbent for Maritime winters. Expect to pay \$10-20 per square foot for quality exterior-grade slate.

**Natural stone patio installation in New Brunswick typically costs \$20-40 per square foot fully installed**, including the base preparation, which is critical for longevity in NB's frost conditions. A proper base consists of 6-8 inches of compacted 3/4-inch crusher run gravel topped with 1-2 inches of stone dust or concrete sand. This depth prevents frost heaving from lifting and cracking the stone surface. A 200-square-foot natural stone patio — a common size for NB backyards — will run \$4,000-8,000 installed depending on stone type, pattern complexity, and site access. For the best results, hire a mason or landscaper experienced with natural stone in Maritime freeze-thaw conditions, as improper base preparation is the leading cause of stone patio failure in New Brunswick.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

Q6

## How do I choose the right fertilizer for acidic New Brunswick soil?

**Before choosing a fertilizer for New Brunswick's acidic soil, address the acidity itself with dolomitic lime — fertilizer applied to soil below pH 6.0 is largely wasted because essential nutrients become chemically locked up and unavailable to plants at low pH levels.** NB soils typically range from pH 4.5 to 6.0, well below the 6.0-7.0 range where most lawn grasses, shrubs, and garden plants absorb nutrients most efficiently. A \$30-60 soil test is the essential first step before spending money on any fertilizer.

**Dolomitic lime is not technically a fertilizer, but it is the most important amendment for NB soils.** It raises pH while simultaneously supplying calcium and magnesium, two nutrients commonly deficient in Maritime soils. Application rates depend on your soil test results and soil type — clay-heavy Fredericton soils require more lime to shift pH than sandy coastal soils near Shediac. A general guideline is 50-75 pounds of pelletized dolomitic lime per

1,000 square feet for moderately acidic soil (pH 5.0-5.5), applied in fall or early spring. Pelletized lime is easier to spread evenly than powdered lime and is available at all NB garden centres for \$8-15 per 25-pound bag.

Once your pH is corrected to at least 6.0, **choose a balanced slow-release granular fertilizer** for general landscape use. A 10-10-10 or 14-14-14 formula provides equal parts nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) and works well as a maintenance fertilizer for most NB landscapes. For lawns specifically, a higher-nitrogen formula like 24-4-8 or 30-0-4 promotes thick green growth. Apply lawn fertilizer in late May and again in early September — these two applications timed to NB's growing season provide the most benefit with the least waste.

**Slow-release fertilizers are significantly better than quick-release formulas for NB conditions.** New Brunswick receives substantial rainfall that leaches water-soluble nutrients out of the root zone before plants can use them. Slow-release granules break down gradually over 6-12 weeks, providing steady nutrition even during rainy periods. They also reduce the risk of fertilizer burn during dry spells. Look for products where at least 50% of the nitrogen is in slow-release form — check the guaranteed analysis on the bag for terms like "water insoluble nitrogen" or "slowly available nitrogen."

**For acid-loving plants like blueberries, rhododendrons, and azaleas, use an acidifying fertilizer** (often labelled for evergreens or acid-loving plants) that contains ammonium sulfate or sulfur-coated urea. These fertilizers actually lower pH, which is exactly what these species need in their immediate root zone even though the rest of your landscape benefits from higher pH. Organic options like fish emulsion, blood meal, and composted manure are excellent supplemental fertilizers for NB gardens, adding both nutrients and organic matter that improves soil structure over time.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

## Are landscape fabric alternatives better than fabric for NB gardens?

In most New Brunswick garden situations, **thick organic mulch (3-4 inches of cedar or hardwood) is a better weed suppression strategy than landscape fabric**, which tends to cause more problems than it solves in Maritime conditions within 2-3 years of installation. While landscape fabric initially blocks weeds effectively, NB's heavy rainfall, spring thaw cycles, and abundant organic debris create conditions where fabric degrades, clogs, and actually traps weed seeds on top of the fabric surface.

The core problem with landscape fabric in New Brunswick is that **organic matter accumulates on top of the fabric very quickly** in the Maritime climate. Decomposing leaves, pine needles, and mulch break down into a thin layer of soil-like material on the fabric surface, and weed seeds readily germinate in this layer. Within 2-3 years, you often end up with weeds growing on top of the fabric while the fabric itself prevents you from easily pulling them out because their roots weave through the mesh. Meanwhile, the fabric blocks beneficial earthworms and soil organisms from accessing the surface, degrading soil health underneath.

**Cardboard and newspaper are effective short-term biodegradable alternatives** that work well for new NB garden bed establishment. Lay overlapping sheets of corrugated cardboard (remove tape and staples) or 6-8 layers of newspaper directly on the ground, wet them thoroughly, and cover with 3-4 inches of mulch. These materials block weeds for one full growing season while they decompose, adding organic matter to the soil rather than leaving behind a plastic barrier. This technique is particularly effective for smothering existing grass when converting lawn to garden beds — a common project across Fredericton and Moncton properties.

**The one situation where landscape fabric makes sense in NB is under gravel or stone pathways and patios** where you want permanent separation between the stone layer and the soil below. In these non-planted applications, fabric prevents gravel from sinking into NB's soft soils (especially the clay around the Saint John River valley) and keeps soil from migrating up into the stone layer. Use a heavy-duty woven geotextile fabric rated for ground separation, not the thin spun-bond fabric sold in garden centres — the heavier material lasts decades and handles the weight of foot traffic and frost movement.

**For perennial garden beds and around shrubs, deep organic mulch remains the best approach for NB.** Cedar mulch at \$50-70 per cubic yard suppresses weeds effectively when maintained at 2-3 inches deep, improves soil as it decomposes, regulates soil temperature through NB's extreme seasonal swings, and can be easily refreshed each spring. The annual cost of mulch replacement is comparable to the one-time cost of fabric installation, and mulch provides ongoing soil health benefits that fabric never will. If weeds are a persistent problem despite adequate mulch depth, the issue is usually that the mulch layer has thinned below 2 inches or that a particularly aggressive perennial weed needs targeted removal before mulching.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q8

## How do I select quality compost for New Brunswick garden beds?

**Quality compost for New Brunswick garden beds should be dark brown to black, smell earthy (never sour or ammonia-like), crumble easily in your hand, and be fully finished — meaning you cannot identify the original source materials.** At \$35-55 per cubic yard from NB suppliers, compost is the single most valuable amendment for Maritime gardens, improving soil structure, water retention, nutrient content, and biological activity in both the clay soils common around Fredericton and the sandy soils along the coast.

**The most important quality indicator is maturity (completeness of decomposition).** Immature or "hot" compost can burn plant roots, rob soil of nitrogen as it continues decomposing, and introduce weed seeds that were not killed during an incomplete composting process. Squeeze a handful — it should feel moist but not drip water, and it should hold its shape briefly before crumbling apart. If it smells like rotting food, ammonia, or sulfur, it is not finished and will harm your plants. Reputable NB compost producers cure their material for 3-6 months after active composting to ensure stability.

**Ask the supplier about the source materials.** The best garden compost is made from a mix of yard waste (leaves, grass clippings, wood chips) and food waste, which produces a balanced nutrient profile. Compost made primarily from municipal biosolids (sewage sludge) may contain elevated heavy metals and is not recommended for vegetable gardens. Composted manure from local NB farms is excellent, particularly well-aged cattle or horse manure, but it should be composted for at least one year to kill weed seeds and pathogens. Avoid fresh or partially composted manure, which can burn plants and introduce E. coli to food gardens.

**For New Brunswick's acidic soils, consider the pH of the compost.** Most finished compost has a near-neutral pH (6.5-7.5), which makes it a mild corrective for NB's acidic native soils (pH 4.5-6.0). Mushroom compost (spent mushroom substrate) tends to be slightly alkaline (pH 7.0-8.0) and is useful for NB soils that need more aggressive pH correction, though it should be blended with other amendments rather than used as a sole soil conditioner.

**Apply compost at a rate of 1-3 inches spread over garden beds,** worked into the top 6-8 inches of soil. For new beds on native NB soil, use the higher rate. For established beds receiving annual amendment, 1 inch of compost top-dressed in early spring is sufficient. A 4x8-foot raised bed needs approximately 1 cubic yard of compost for initial filling when mixed with topsoil at a 40/60 ratio. For lawn top-dressing, screen the compost through 1/2-inch mesh and spread a 1/4-inch layer over the grass in early fall, which feeds the soil biology without smothering the turf. Many NB municipalities, including Fredericton and Moncton, sell compost from their municipal composting programs at competitive prices — check with your local waste management department.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- [Urban Landscaping Ltd ?](#)
- [Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?](#)
- [Lawrence Landscaping ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

Q9

## Is rubber mulch or wood mulch better for NB flower beds?

**Wood mulch is the better choice for New Brunswick flower beds in almost every situation,** providing essential soil-building benefits that rubber mulch cannot match while costing significantly less upfront. Cedar or hemlock bark mulch at \$45-70 per cubic yard decomposes slowly over 2-3 seasons, feeding the soil organisms and earthworms that keep NB's acidic, often nutrient-poor soils productive. Rubber mulch at \$80-120 per cubic yard never decomposes, which sounds like an advantage but actually means it never contributes organic matter to your garden soil.

**The soil-building argument is especially compelling in New Brunswick** because Maritime soils desperately need organic matter. Whether you are gardening in Fredericton's heavy clay or Shediac's sandy coastal soil, the slow decomposition of wood mulch adds humus that improves water retention, nutrient cycling, and soil structure over time. Rubber mulch sits permanently on the surface, contributing nothing to the soil underneath. After 5-10 years of rubber mulch, the soil beneath it is typically compacted, lifeless, and less fertile than when the mulch was installed — the opposite of what happens under wood mulch.

**Temperature is another critical concern for NB flower beds.** Rubber mulch absorbs and retains significantly more heat than wood mulch, reaching surface temperatures 20-30°C higher on sunny summer days. While NB summers are moderate, this heat transfers to the soil and root zone, stressing plants during hot spells in July and August. Conversely, rubber mulch provides no meaningful insulation against NB's winter freeze-thaw cycles because it does not trap air the way organic mulch does. Wood mulch's natural air pockets provide genuine insulation that moderates soil temperature swings, protecting perennial roots through NB's -25°C to -35°C winter lows.

**Environmental and health concerns surround rubber mulch.** It is made from ground-up recycled tires, which contain zinc, cadmium, and other heavy metals that can leach into soil and groundwater over time. While the research is still evolving, many NB gardeners prefer not to introduce tire components into their food or flower gardens. Rubber mulch is also flammable — once ignited (from a discarded cigarette or nearby fire), it burns intensely and is extremely difficult to extinguish, producing toxic smoke.

**The one legitimate use case for rubber mulch in New Brunswick is playground surfaces**, where its cushioning properties reduce injury from falls and its permanence means it does not need regular replacement in high-traffic areas. For flower beds, ornamental gardens, and around trees and shrubs, stick with natural wood mulch. Cedar mulch offers the best pest resistance and longevity, hemlock bark provides the richest colour, and hardwood mulch at \$35-50 per yard is the most economical option if you do not mind refreshing it annually. Apply any wood mulch 2-3 inches deep, and keep it away from plant stems and tree trunks to prevent rot.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Lawrence Landscaping ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Leger Steel Roofing ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

## What type of sand should I use under pavers in New Brunswick?

**Use coarse concrete sand (also called bedding sand or C-33 sand) as the setting bed under pavers in New Brunswick, applied in a 1-inch thick screeded layer over your compacted gravel base.** This specific sand type has angular, sharp-edged particles that lock together under compaction and resist shifting, unlike round-grained play sand or mason sand, which are too fine and smooth to provide a stable paver base in NB's freeze-thaw conditions.

The bedding sand layer serves a specific purpose in the paver system — it provides a level, uniform surface for setting individual pavers while allowing minor height adjustments during installation. **The sand must be exactly 1 inch thick after screeding** (using pipes or rails as guides to pull a straight board across the surface). Too thin and you cannot level the pavers properly; too thick and the pavers will settle unevenly over time, especially during NB's spring frost heave cycles. One inch is the industry standard and is particularly important in New Brunswick where the deep frost line (1.2-1.5 metres) causes significant ground movement.

**Do not confuse bedding sand with the base material.** The structural base under pavers in NB must be 6-8 inches of compacted 3/4-inch crusher run gravel (also called Granular A or road base), installed in 2-3 inch lifts and compacted with a plate tamper between each lift. This gravel base is what actually supports the weight of foot traffic and prevents frost heaving from destroying your patio — the sand layer is simply the final levelling medium. In areas with poor drainage like Fredericton's clay soils, consider increasing the gravel base to 10-12 inches for additional frost protection.

**For the joints between pavers, use polymeric sand rather than regular sand.** Polymeric sand contains a polymer binder that hardens when activated with water, locking pavers together and preventing weed growth and ant infiltration. Regular joint sand washes out during NB's heavy rainfalls and freeze-thaw cycles, leaving gaps that allow pavers to shift and weeds to establish. Quality polymeric sand costs \$25-40 per bag (covers roughly 40-80 square feet depending on paver size and joint width) and should be applied in dry conditions with temperatures above 10°C.

**Calculate your sand needs carefully.** One inch of bedding sand over 100 square feet requires approximately 0.3 cubic yards (or about 500 pounds) of concrete sand. For a typical 300-square-foot NB patio, you need roughly 1 cubic yard of bedding sand at \$30-50 per yard from local suppliers, plus 4-6 bags of polymeric sand for the joints. Order 10-15% extra to account for waste and uneven subgrade. Concrete sand is available at all NB building supply yards and landscape suppliers, but verify it meets the C-33 specification — some suppliers sell "fill sand" under generic labels that may be too fine or contain excess clay for paver bedding.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- [Urban Landscaping Ltd ?](#)
- [Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?](#)
- [Leger Steel Roofing ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

Q11

## What salt-resistant plants and materials work best along NB driveways?

**Rugosa roses, daylilies, and native grasses like switchgrass are among the most salt-resistant plants for New Brunswick driveways**, capable of withstanding the heavy road salt exposure that kills more sensitive species along Maritime driveways and walkways every winter. Combined with salt-tolerant hardscape materials like natural granite and concrete pavers, these plants create durable, attractive driveway borders that survive NB's 5-6 months of winter salt application.

**Rugosa roses are the gold standard for salt-tolerant NB driveway plantings.** Originally from coastal Asia, they naturally tolerate salt spray and saline soils, thriving in conditions that would kill hybrid tea roses. They are hardy to zone 3, produce fragrant pink or white flowers from June through September, and require virtually no maintenance. Plant them 3-4 feet from the driveway edge to allow for snow plow clearance and salt splash zones. Daylilies are equally tough — their thick, fleshy roots survive salt damage that destroys fibrous-rooted plants, and they return reliably each spring even after severe salt exposure along Fredericton and Moncton driveways.

**For ground cover along driveways, creeping juniper and sedum are excellent salt-tolerant choices.**

Creeping juniper varieties like 'Blue Rug' and 'Prince of Wales' stay low to the ground (6-12 inches), spread to fill spaces between the driveway and lawn, and tolerate both salt and the drought conditions common along paved surfaces. Sedum (stonecrop) is virtually indestructible in NB conditions — salt-tolerant, drought-tolerant, and cold-hardy to zone 3, with varieties that offer everything from low ground cover to 18-inch flowering specimens.

Among trees, **honeylocust and white spruce demonstrate the best salt tolerance for NB driveway-adjacent planting.** Plant them at least 8-10 feet from the driveway edge to minimize direct salt contact. Avoid sugar maples and lindens near heavily salted driveways — both species are notoriously salt-sensitive and will develop burned leaf margins and progressive decline from chronic salt exposure. Eastern white cedar, the most popular NB hedge

plant, is moderately salt-tolerant but suffers significant browning when planted within 6 feet of salted surfaces.

**For hardscape materials along NB driveways, natural granite and quality concrete pavers rated for freeze-thaw and de-icing salt exposure are the best choices.** Avoid natural limestone and sandstone in areas with heavy salt contact, as salt crystallization within the stone's pores causes surface spalling and deterioration. Concrete pavers should meet CSA A231.2 standards for freeze-thaw resistance. When choosing ice melt products for your own driveway, calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) and calcium chloride are less damaging to adjacent plants than sodium chloride (rock salt), though they cost more at \$15-30 per bag versus \$8-12 for rock salt.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Leger Steel Roofing ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

Q12

## What type of gravel is best for New Brunswick landscaping projects?

**Three-quarter-inch crusher run gravel (also called Granular A) is the best all-purpose base gravel for New Brunswick landscaping projects**, providing the structural stability, drainage, and frost resistance needed in Maritime conditions. For decorative surface applications, 3/8-inch to 3/4-inch washed river rock or pea gravel offers an attractive, natural appearance. The right gravel depends entirely on whether you need structural support or visual appeal — and in NB's freeze-thaw climate, getting the base layer right is critical.

**Crusher run is the foundation of nearly every hardscape project in NB** — patios, walkways, retaining wall bases, and driveway sub-bases all require this angular, compactable material. Its crushed edges interlock under compaction to form a solid, stable base that resists frost heaving better than round-stone alternatives. For patio and walkway bases in New Brunswick, install 6-8 inches of crusher run in 2-3 inch lifts, compacting each lift with a plate tamper. In areas with poor drainage like Fredericton's clay soils, increase to 10-12 inches. Crusher run costs \$15-25 per cubic yard at NB quarries and aggregate suppliers, making it one of the most affordable landscaping

materials available.

**For decorative gravel surfaces** — garden paths, dry creek beds, around garden beds, and landscape accents — washed pea gravel (3/8-inch round stone) and river rock (3/4-inch to 2-inch smooth stone) are the most popular NB choices. Pea gravel costs \$30-50 per cubic yard and creates a clean, uniform surface, though it shifts underfoot and requires edging to contain it. River rock at \$40-70 per yard provides a more natural Maritime look, especially in earth tones that complement NB's landscape. For paths that receive regular foot traffic, 3/8-inch crushed stone (angular, not round) packs down firmer than pea gravel while still looking attractive.

**Clear gravel (washed 3/4-inch stone with no fines) is essential for drainage applications** in New Brunswick, including French drain trenches, weeping tile surrounds, and dry well fills. The absence of fine particles means water flows freely through it without clogging, which is critical for NB properties dealing with spring thaw drainage. Never substitute crusher run for clear gravel in drainage applications — the fine particles in crusher run compact into a semi-impermeable mass that defeats the purpose.

**Calculate your gravel needs based on depth and area.** One cubic yard of gravel covers approximately 100 square feet at 3 inches deep or 65 square feet at 4.5 inches deep. For a 200-square-foot patio base at 8 inches of crusher run, you need approximately 5 cubic yards. Most NB suppliers offer delivery for \$50-100 per load, with discounts for larger orders. Order 10% extra to account for compaction loss and uneven subgrade — you can always use leftover gravel, but running short mid-project means an additional delivery charge.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- [Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?](#)
- [Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?](#)
- [Lawrence Landscaping ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

## Should I use cedar or pressure-treated lumber for raised beds in NB?

**Cedar is the recommended choice for raised garden beds in New Brunswick, especially for growing vegetables and herbs**, because it is naturally rot-resistant without chemical treatment and does not introduce preservative compounds into the soil where food plants grow. Eastern white cedar, widely available from NB lumber suppliers, contains natural oils (thujaplicins) that resist decay for 10-15 years in ground-contact applications — more than enough lifespan for a raised bed that can be rebuilt when it eventually deteriorates.

The concern with **pressure-treated lumber centres on the chemical preservatives** used to prevent rot. Modern pressure-treated wood in Canada uses alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ) or copper azole (CA-B) preservatives, which replaced the arsenic-containing CCA treatment phased out for residential use. While ACQ and CA-B are considered safer than CCA, they still leach copper compounds into surrounding soil, particularly during the first few years. Health Canada has not banned pressure-treated wood for garden use, but many NB gardeners prefer to avoid the question entirely by choosing cedar, especially for food production.

**From a cost perspective, pressure-treated lumber is significantly cheaper.** A 2x10x8 pressure-treated board costs roughly \$12-18 at NB building supply stores, while the same size in cedar runs \$25-45 depending on grade and availability. For a standard 4x8-foot raised bed, the material difference is approximately \$50-100 between the two options. However, cedar's natural beauty — its warm golden colour that ages to an attractive silver-grey — adds aesthetic value to your garden that stained or green-tinted pressure-treated wood cannot match.

**If you choose pressure-treated lumber to save money**, line the interior walls with heavy-duty plastic sheeting (6-mil poly) to create a barrier between the treated wood and the growing soil. This prevents direct contact between preservative-leaching wood and root zones. Use stainless steel or coated screws rather than standard galvanized fasteners, as the copper in ACQ-treated wood accelerates corrosion of regular galvanized hardware. Pressure-treated wood does offer superior longevity — 20-25 years versus cedar's 10-15 years — so it may be the better choice for permanent ornamental raised beds planted with non-edible flowers and shrubs.

**For the best longevity from cedar raised beds in NB's Maritime climate**, use 2-inch thick boards (actual 1.5 inches) rather than 1-inch boards, which deteriorate faster. Set the beds on a gravel base rather than directly on soil to improve drainage and reduce wood-to-soil contact rot. Avoid painting or staining cedar — the natural oils provide adequate protection, and sealants can trap moisture inside the wood and actually accelerate decay. A well-built cedar raised bed using 2x10 or 2x12 boards, corner posts, and stainless steel screws will serve a NB garden reliably for a decade or more.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Urban Landscaping Ltd ?
- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

Q14

## What ice melt products are safe for concrete in New Brunswick?

**Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) and calcium chloride are the safest ice melt products for concrete surfaces in New Brunswick**, causing significantly less surface damage than sodium chloride (rock salt), which is the most commonly used but also the most destructive de-icer for concrete driveways, walkways, and patios across the province. Understanding which products protect your concrete investment is especially important in NB, where 5-6 months of winter mean heavy de-icer usage from November through April.

**Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is the gold standard for concrete safety.** It works by preventing ice from bonding to concrete rather than aggressively melting it, and it causes virtually zero surface damage even with repeated application. CMA is also the most environmentally friendly option, biodegrading completely and causing no harm to vegetation or waterways. The significant downside is cost — CMA runs \$25-40 per bag compared to \$8-12 for rock salt, making it impractical for covering large NB driveways entirely. Many homeowners use CMA on decorative concrete, stamped patios, and front walkways while using cheaper products on less visible areas.

**Calcium chloride is the best balance of performance and concrete safety** for New Brunswick conditions. It melts ice effectively down to -25°C (well below NB's typical winter temperatures), works faster than rock salt, and is significantly less damaging to concrete surfaces. It attracts moisture from the air to initiate melting, which means it works in the dry, extremely cold conditions common in inland NB during January and February when rock salt becomes ineffective below -12°C. At \$15-25 per bag, calcium chloride costs more than rock salt but provides better performance and longevity.

**Sodium chloride (rock salt) is the most damaging de-icer for concrete** and is best avoided on quality concrete surfaces. It accelerates the freeze-thaw cycle within the concrete pore structure, causing surface scaling, spalling, and deterioration that worsens progressively over multiple winters. New concrete (less than one year old) is

especially vulnerable — never apply any chemical de-icer to concrete poured within the past 12 months in New Brunswick. Instead, use sand for traction during the first winter.

**Magnesium chloride is another relatively concrete-safe option** that works to about -15°C and is gentle on vegetation along walkway edges. It leaves less residue than calcium chloride and is easier on pets' paws — an important consideration for NB pet owners who walk dogs on treated surfaces all winter. Potassium chloride, often marketed as "pet safe," is gentler on concrete and vegetation but only effective to about -10°C, limiting its usefulness during NB's coldest periods.

Regardless of which product you choose, **apply de-icers sparingly** — more is not better. Use just enough to break the ice bond, then shovel or scrape the loosened ice away. Over-application wastes money, damages concrete, harms plants, and contaminates groundwater. A broadcast spreader provides the most even, economical application across driveways and walkways.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- [Urban Landscaping Ltd ?](#)
- [Lawrence Landscaping ?](#)
- [Leger Steel Roofing ?](#)

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

**Q15**

## How do I choose the right polymeric sand for paver joints in NB?

**Choose a polymeric sand rated for freeze-thaw cycling and joint widths matching your specific pavers, applying it only when temperatures are above 10°C and no rain is forecast for 24 hours.** In New Brunswick's Maritime climate, where freeze-thaw cycles, heavy rainfall, and spring thaw create exceptionally harsh conditions for paver joints, not all polymeric sands perform equally — selecting a premium product designed for cold climates makes the difference between joints that last 5-8 years and joints that fail within a single season.

**Polymeric sand contains a polymer binder (usually a modified polymer or Portland cement blend) that activates with water and hardens to lock pavers together**, preventing weed growth, ant infiltration, and joint erosion. For New Brunswick installations, look for products specifically labelled as "freeze-thaw rated" or "all-weather" — these contain flexible polymers that can expand and contract with NB's temperature swings without cracking. Budget-grade polymeric sand often uses rigid binders that fracture during the first winter, washing out and leaving gaps by spring. Premium brands cost \$25-40 per bag (covering 40-80 square feet depending on paver size and joint width) compared to \$15-20 for basic products.

**Joint width compatibility is critical.** Standard polymeric sand is designed for joints 1/4 inch to 1 inch wide — the range typical for interlocking pavers. If your joints are wider than 1 inch (common with natural flagstone patios), you need a "wide joint" or "mega joint" polymeric sand formulated with larger aggregate particles that fill wider gaps without slumping or cracking. Using standard polymeric sand in wide flagstone joints is a common NB installation mistake that leads to premature failure.

**Application technique matters as much as product selection in NB.** Sweep the polymeric sand into completely dry joints, ensuring they are filled to within 1/8 inch of the paver surface. Remove every grain of sand from the paver faces before activation — residual sand left on the surface will haze permanently when watered, leaving a cloudy film that is nearly impossible to remove. Use a leaf blower on low setting followed by careful sweeping to clean the surface thoroughly. Then mist the surface gently with a garden hose (shower setting, never jet) in 30-second intervals, allowing water to soak into the joints gradually. Flooding the joints washes out the polymer binder before it can set.

**Timing your polymeric sand installation in New Brunswick requires attention to weather.** The surface and joints must be completely dry at application — even residual moisture from overnight dew can prevent proper bonding. Apply only when temperatures are above 10°C and will remain above freezing for at least 24 hours. This limits the NB application window to approximately May through October. The polymeric sand needs 24-48 hours of dry weather after activation to fully cure, so check Environment Canada forecasts before starting. If rain arrives before curing is complete, the polymer can wash out of the joints, requiring removal and reapplication.

---

## Find a Landscaping Contractor

New Brunswick Landscaping connects you with experienced contractors through the <https://newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com>:

- Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?
- Lawrence Landscaping ?

- Hickory Dickory Decks Moncton ?

[View all landscaping contractors ?](#)

---

**Disclaimer:** This guide is provided for informational purposes only by New Brunswick Landscaping. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any construction or renovation project. Information is current as of March 22, 2026 and may change. Visit [newbrunswicklandscaping.com](https://newbrunswicklandscaping.com) for the latest answers.