



Compost Tea

Compost tea is simply a concentrated liquid extract from compost. It is full of living beneficial microorganisms. Our compost tea is aerobically-brewed from high quality manure compost. Compost tea provides many benefits to gardens, landscapes, and plants of all kinds.

- Supplies a wide array of nutrients to the soil and to plant leaf surfaces
- Delivers nutrients in a form that the plants can absorb and the beneficial soil microbes can use
- Breaks down toxic pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and other chemical residues
- Helps to fix nitrogen
- Competes with and fights against disease organisms
- Improves the soil's structure, water permeability, and water- and nutrient-holding capacity
- Breaks down plant residues more quickly, including thatch in the lawn

Our compost tea is brewed fresh each week. **It is usually available for purchase Thursday through Sunday – call first for availability. The compost tea should be used within 24 hours of purchase.** This is because once the microorganisms leave the aerobic brewer, they only have 24 hours' worth of oxygen in the bottle on which to survive. Always filter the compost tea – using a sock or pantyhose for example – before pouring into a sprayer. It contains particles that may clog a sprayer.

As a general purpose supplement for plant health: One gallon of compost tea may be mixed with one gallon of **non-chlorinated** water and sprayed on all plants. A pump sprayer works well for this. This two gallon amount can cover up to 5000 square feet. As with any liquid, spray leaves only in early morning or late evening. To be on the safe side, we don't recommend spraying compost tea on any edible parts of plants. For example, a tomato plant may be sprayed up until the point when it forms the first fruit. In addition, compost tea may be sprayed on the soil and poured around the root system, drenching plants with its rich goodness.

As a disease-control spray: Compost tea should be sprayed undiluted. In this form, one gallon may cover up to 2500 square feet. Ideally, for disease control, spray the compost tea undiluted thoroughly onto plant leaf surfaces once a week for one month, and then once a month thereafter. As with any liquid, only spray leaves early in the morning or late in the evening. For soil-borne diseases and for further benefits, the soil around the plants may be drenched, as well.

Properly brewed, aerobically-produced, good quality compost tea is a state-of-the-art organic supplement that safely nourishes, protects, and enhances plant growth. For more information on compost tea visit www.soilfoodweb.com.

Happy gardening!

How to Make Compost Tea

5-Gallon Recipe

Compost tea has many benefits in the yard and garden. It adds nutrients, makes nutrients more available to the plant, and fights disease through the presence of microorganisms. We sell compost tea, but for those who would like to brew their own, here are the instructions. There are many variations in methods of brewing homemade compost tea ~ this is just our basic recipe.

You will need the following ingredients and equipment. Most of the equipment can be found at fish aquarium supply stores. The Natural Gardener carries the ingredients; compost, fish fertilizer, worm castings and humus.

- 1 5-Gallon bucket or other container
- 5 Gallons water (rainwater or non-chlorinated water, if available)
- 1 aquarium air pump rated for a 25-gallon tank (with 2 ports or get a T for the tubing to create 1 line per stone)
- About 6 feet of aquarium airline tubing
- 2 aquarium air stones – 1 standard small air stone and 1, 4-6” air stone
- 3 Cups finished **Compost**
- 1 Cup **Earthworm Castings**
- 4 Tablespoons **Hydrolized Fish fertilizer**
- 2 ½ Tablespoons **Liquid Humus**
- 1 fine mesh bag (or cheesecloth or other sturdy, porous material formed into a bag) to hold the compost
- 2 sticks, each longer than the diameter of the bucket

To make compost tea, choose a location out of the sun, cooler than 90°F, and where you don't mind making a mess. The temperature of the tea should remain 76 °F or less (temps much lower than this will slow the reproduction rate of the microbes). Place the pump outside of the bucket. Connect one section of airline tubing from the pump to the larger air stone. Place the stone at the bottom of the bucket. You may need about 3 feet of tubing. Connect another section of tubing from the pump to the smaller stone. Place this stone in the bucket also.

Mix the fish fertilizer, liquid humus, and water and add to the bucket. Plug in the pump to begin aerating. Continue aerating this mixture for 24 hours before adding the compost. This is necessary to help break down chlorine and chloramine in the tap water, as well as the stabilizers and other unnecessary ingredients in the humate and fish fertilizer. Note that Austin tap water contains a combination of chlorine and ammonia, called chloramine. Unlike Chlorine, Chloramine does not evaporate when we allow the tap water to sit out overnight.

Make an “X” with the two sticks on top of the bucket, creating a framework on which the bag of compost can be suspended. Put the compost inside the sturdy porous bag. Place the smaller air stone inside this bag also. Allow the compost to be in a loose state inside the bag along with the smaller air stone. Tie the bag of compost to the frame so that it is completely immersed in the fish, humate, and water mixture, but suspended close to the surface.

Continue to aerate for 8-11 hours. Pull the compost bag out. Remove the small air stone and drop it back into the tea. Squeeze the excess liquid out of the compost tea bag into the bucket. The spent compost can now be used as a soil amendment. Let the tea continue to aerate for another 13-16 hours. The compost tea can be used right away, or it can be used, if aerated, for up to 2 – 3 days more. As it is brewing and especially as it is finishing, the compost tea should create a large amount of frothy brown foam and have a pleasant, earthy smell. These two signs, along with a dark brown color, are indications that it is a good batch of tea. The tea should not smell sulfuric or like ammonia or vinegar. If it does, the tea should be discarded by distributed throughout the landscape, on the compost pile or down the drain. It may have been caused by a number of things: too much heat, unclean equipment, or not enough aeration. Try again!

It is best to clean the equipment as soon as possible after brewing. Wash all components with dish soap and water, using a non-abrasive sponge or cloth. After rinsing, equipment can be sterilized with undiluted hydrogen peroxide. Rinse thoroughly.

Enjoy making and using your homemade compost tea!