

August 2006 E-zine

Please excuse the lag in me getting these out! My time is getting taken by groups of people hiring me to help them with their specific projects. The up-coming year for me is nearly filled up, so if you want to have me come and work with you or your group to get programs started, you need to get your dibs on my time ASAP.

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1. Up-coming Meetings

1.a. Sustainable Studies Workshops on the Soil Foodweb

November 13-18: Core Workshops and Microscope Class in Corvallis, Oregon

The November workshops continue to fill up. Registration forms are here:
http://soilfoodweb.com/04_news/calendar.htm

February 4-9: Core Workshops and Microscope Class in Corvallis, Oregon

If November's dates won't fit your schedule, we hope these dates in February will serve. Registration forms for this set of workshops will be made available as soon as possible.

1.b. Jennifer Appel speaking calendar

Certified Soil Foodweb Advisor Jennifer Appel will speak at several upcoming events:

American Society of Landscape Architects sponsored by www.epa.gov/greenscapes

Friday, October 06, 2006

Designing for Water Efficiency

Plant and media selection; water quality and mitigation; making and using compost and compost tea for NPDES reduction

HCC Organic Gardening Class Saturday, October 14, 2006

Houston Community College

Organic Gardening Class

Location: HCC Town & Country 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Fee

To register: contact Elizabeth at 713-718-5718

AIA CEPH Class November 2006 Wednesday, November 08, 2006

Join Jennifer the second Wednesday of every month for an entertaining education on sustainability issues.

November 2006: Soil Biology

Fee

Register through the CE button at www.aiahouston.org

American Institute of Architects Continuing Ed Wednesday, December 13, 2006

Join Jennifer the second Wednesday of every month for an exciting education on sustainability issues. Please bring your project for discussion.

December 2006: Water quality and flooding

Fee

Register through the CE button at www.aiahouston.org

These events are also listed at www.landscapevitamins.com and more are sure to appear there in future.

1.c. Todd Harrington teaching at NOFA Course in Organic Land Care

Certified Soil Foodweb Advisor Todd Harrington will be teaching at the 6th Annual NOFA Course in Organic Land Care:

<http://www.organiclandcare.net/events/6thannual5day.php#course>

Todd will teach Soil Foodweb concepts and the organic lawn section on January 9-10 in Leominster, Massachusetts and January 31 and February 1 in New Haven, Connecticut.

2. Notes from Elaine!

2.a. Root rots in trees

The question that was asked me was about a root rot fungus that attacks roots, grows into the xylem and phloem, plugs up the movement of nutrients from the roots into the aboveground part of the plant, and stops sugars from photosynthesis from getting to the roots.

Is there any way to deal with a tree in this condition?

My answer:

When you have a root rot, and it has gotten into the vascular tissue, you somehow have to get the competitive fungi into the vascular tissue as well.

There are a limited number of species of fungi that grow in tree vascular tissue without harm to the plant. Were they not present in these trees to begin with, and that's why the rot can get in?

Were conditions so bad that the good guys couldn't grow, and so when the rot showed up, they weren't able to protect? Did stress conditions kill or stop these good guy fungi, so the disease could win? How do we reverse the conditions so the good guys win again?

Were the roots not mycorrhizal, so the infection sites on the roots were open, and then infection could sneak in? If we got the roots mycorrhizal, would it shut down the infection now? If we got the diversity of organisms into the tree, would the beneficial fungi get re-inoculated, and exit the tree?

Well, something like that has to be happening, in the case of Dutch Elm, Oak Wilt and pine beetles. We have shown success in bringing plants back to life. The folks to talk to are James Sottilo in New York (Treewise.com), the folks at Sonoma Mountain Institute in California, Carole Anne Rollins at Nature Tech in California, and George Hahn, at Worm Gold in California.

But, will the same mechanism that worked to deal with these diseases work for a similar disease? What exactly were the mechanisms for suppression with the elms, the pines or the oaks? Ahhhhh, don't know for sure.

Simplest thing to do is give the trees a good, total, absolute tea drenching and see if that might work. IF the beneficial organisms are on the outside of the tree, and the little bugs and insects carry those beneficials into the diseased wood, will the beneficials get established and out-compete the disease?

If not, then we observe what happened, and work out some other way to get the beneficials into the wood. We might have to add bunches of beneficial insects, to carry the beneficial fungi into the tree, especially if lots of insecticides have been used recently.

If the drench approach works, then let us try to proceed to try to figure out what the mechanism was that gave the positive control.

Elaine

2.b. How do you know what dilution of compost tea can be used?

Dear Prof. Ingham,

I am Emanuil Angelov from Bulgaria. About two years ago I send & receive an email to/from you. Thanks!

Well, I produce and use compost teas made from worm casting of my worm farm. And a friend of mine would like to use my teas.

Because of the transport I brew concentrated tea for my friend. He dilutes it 1:50 /for soil&root/ or 1:70 /for foliar spray/. I make this concentrate with about 60 litres water and 30 litres worm compost.

My question is: Do you think this watered down concentrate /1:50, for example/ works good or it is much thin/diluted?.....As I know, according to homeopathy, such watered solutions work well. What is your opinion?

Yours faithfully
Emanuil Angelov

Hello Emanuil;

The only way I could tell if the dilution is acceptable or not is to be able to assess the biology in the tea. If the concentration of the organisms is in good ranges in the compost, and the tea brewer is maintaining aerobic conditions, then the tea will have the sets of organisms that you want in it.

If you don't add anything else into the tea brew, and the compost is aerobic, what is the color of the tea? If it is deep rich brown, **MOST LIKELY** the biology is present.

But really, the only way to know is to look at the organisms.

Hope this helps!

Elaine