

ABOUT BARREL COMPOST

Introduction

Barrel Compost is a specially prepared product formulated by Maria Thun, who has spent many years in biodynamic research in Europe. Barrel Compost is also referred to as manure compost; manure concentrate; *fladenpreparat*; or compound preparation. All these terms are further identified by linking them with the originator's name. Our current choice is Barrel Compost (Thun recipe), or simply B.C.

Barrel Compost consists of 4 basic components: cow manure, basalt powder, ground eggshells, and the 6 Biodynamic Compost Preparations #502-#507. The first three ingredients are carefully mixed in a systematic way referred to as a potentizing process. The mixture is placed into a barrel which has been dug into the ground, the BD compost preparations #502-#507 are then inserted, and the composting process is carried to completion. For the exact recipe and more detailed information see issues #137, Winter 1981, and #138, Spring 1981 of *BIODYNAMICS*.

The nine Biodynamic agricultural preparations are meant to work together as a whole and are not intended to be used in isolation. The basis or foundation of the method involves making compost with the group of compost preparations, #502-507, and the application of that compost to the soil prior to the use of BD #500 or BD #501. The BD #508 (Horsetail; *Equisetum arvense*) spray is used as a preventative to lessen the effects when conditions conducive to fungus problems exist. The Barrel Compost offers a spray form for applying the compost preparations #502-#507.

While the use of compost made with the Biodynamic Compost Preparations should still be the emphasis of a fertility program, the Barrel Compost has a place as a transition measure. Its use must still be regarded as experimental, since there have not been sufficient trials to confirm its value in bringing the impulse of the Biodynamic Compost Preparations to a field that has yet to receive Biodynamic compost. However, reports are generally favorable.

Directions

FOR USE AS A SPRAY: the B.C. is stirred in the same vigorous manner used for BD #500 or BD #501, but requires only 20 minutes stirring time versus the one hour needed for #500/#501. If using spray equipment, strain or filter after stirring so as not to clog nozzles.

FOR FIELD USE: Spray B.C. on the field during seed bed preparation prior to the use of BD #500. One unit of B.C. is one third of a cup by volume (packed) and treats up to one acre. Diluted the appropriate amount of B.C. in three gallons of good water per acre and stir for 20 minutes. Field sprayers should be calibrated as nearly as possible to these guidelines. BD #500 can be used as immediately after the B.C. as available time and labor permit. Optimum time of day for application is probably late afternoon, but no harmful effects have yet been observed from A.M. applications. As with any of the BD preparations, using within one hour of meridian noon should be avoided. Cultivation immediately after use of B.C., as well as #500 gives better results.

Some suggested additional uses for Barrel Compost

- For pastures and hayfield - use B.C. along with BD #500 and BD #501 with sprays timed as detailed in the referenced articles.
- For plants under stress due to drought, insect attack, or other reasons, a "first aid" spray with B.C. gives dramatic recoveries. For barns, feed lots, and pens where livestock are kept, use of a B.C. spray reduces both fly and odor problems.
- For getting plants off to a good start, use a seed soak of B.C. Also useful with transplants as a root bath or for watering newly set out plants.
- For rejuvenating fruit trees the B.C. in combination with BD #500 and applied to the previously cultivated or aerated drip line area under the tree can be quite effective.