Tue, 06/24/2008 - 11:52 -- Kitchy
Question:
How do I make compost tea?
Topics::
composting and soil fertility [1]
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A You'll need finished compost, a 5-gallon/18.9 L bucket full of water, a burlap bag, and some string to make this simple recipe. Place two shovelfuls of compost in the burlap bag, and tie it shut. (You can also use a large square of burlap tied shut.) Place the burlap-encased compost in the water, and leave it to soak for a few days to let it brew. Then remove the bag, and dilute the resulting brew with water until it is the color of weak tea. Dump the wet compost in your garden or back on the compost pile.Aerated compost tea is another

option, and compost brewers are available in catalogs and at garden centers. Proponents claim that compost tea prepared using optimum oxygen levels contains more beneficial aerobic microorganisms and compounds than tea prepared using more conventional methods.To make manure tea, brew two shovelfuls of well-rotted (composted) manure in water for a few days to make manure tea. Be sure to dilute it with water before using it: Manure tea is quite a bit stronger (and darker) than compost tea and will burn crops if not diluted. It, too, should be the color of weak tea when diluted. Do not use manure tea on a crop that is to be harvested soon, since it is not safe to consume.After applying it, wait at least 90 days to harvest if the edible portion of the crop does not come in contact with the soil (tomatoes, peppers, beans, for example). If the edible portion of the crop does come in contact with the soil, wait at least 120 days (onions, potatoes, lettuce, for example). Both manure and compost teas are great for giving crops a quick fix of nutrients. You can fill up a watering can and use it to feed plants weekly or every other week. Sprinkle diluted compost or manure tea directly on plant leaves for foliar feeding, or use either one for watering.Reprinted from The Veggie Gardener's Answer Book Copyright 2008 by Barbara W. Ellis, with permission from Storey Publishing. Creative Commons photo credit: Sonic Penguin

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