

## Instructions for making a 5-gallon compost tea brewer

OSU Extension Service Lane County Compost Specialists

### Materials:

One clean 5-gallon plastic bucket  
30" of ½ " white PVC tubing  
One T shaped, slip-to-slip PVC connector  
Two ½" PVC end caps  
One plastic or brass ½" barb adaptor  
One female-slip PVC fitting  
Two feet of ⅜" clear plastic tubing  
One 18w diaphragm air pump  
One submersible water heater, with thermostat  
One, gallon paint strainer bag  
One 12" long nylon chord  
Thick rubber band  
Four 12" zip ties  
Hack saw or PVC cutter  
Electric drill with ¼" drill bit

### To assemble the brewer:

Cut the PVC tubing into the following lengths:

Two, 7½" long pieces  
One 13½" long piece

- Attach the 7½" pieces to the PVC T-connector. On one end of this assembly securely place one ½" end cap.
- Attach the 13½" of cut PVC tubing to the T-connector.
- Attach the other end cap to the bottom of the 13½" PVC tube.
- Drill a small hole in the bottom of the end-cap for the airflow. The end of the tube should be about ½" from the bottom of the bucket.
- Lay the PVC aerator across the top of the bucket. To keep the tubing from sliding around while brewing secure the ends of the tube to the sides of the bucket through the handles with zip ties. Or drill a small hole near the top of the bucket on opposites sides and thread zip ties through the holes. Secure the cross bar of the aerator to the zip ties.
- Attach the ½" barb fitting to the female-slip fitting.

Brewer Parts



The assembled brewer

- Attach the barb adaptor to the shortest length of tubing possible so the pump sits on a shelf level with the cross bar of the aerator assembly.
- Attach the free end of the tubing to the barb on the pump.

### To brew a batch of compost tea:

Supplies needed:

2 cups of microbiologically active compost or vermicompost or a 50/50 blend of both

2-4 tablespoons of unsulphered molasses

Liquid or granular kelp

Water

- Fill the bucket to within 6" of the top with fresh water. Place the aerator assembly in the bucket, securing to the sides with the zip-ties. Attach the pump to the aerator and turn the pump on. Allow the water to aerate for about 5 minutes to dissipate the chlorine in the water. Or let the water stand overnight to allow the chlorine to escape.
- Place the compost in the paint strainer bag.
- Add the granular kelp to the compost in the bag if using it. If using liquid kelp add directly to the water. Secure the top of the bag tightly closed with either nylon string or a thick rubber band. Suspend the bag from the cross bar of the aerator. Or add two ping-pong balls to the bag to help it float in the water.
- Add 2-4 tablespoons of molasses to a ½ cup of water and stir to dissolve. Add the molasses water to the water in the bucket.
- Suspend the heater in the bucket and adjust the temperature to 72° F - 75° F. Be careful to not allow the heater to come into contact with the paint strainer bag.
- Brew from 12-18 hours. At the end of the brew cycle unplug the heater and pump and remove from the bucket. Remove the compost bag. Dump the compost in the garden or back in the compost bin.
- Thoroughly clean all parts of the brewer, including the paint strainer bag before the next batch of tea.



The tea may be used as a soil drench or sprayed on any garden plant. If spraying you may need to strain the liquid through another paint strainer bag in order to keep the compost particles from clogging the sprayer. You may also use a watering can to water plants with the tea. Tea may be used full strength or diluted.

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