



# *The Vital Earth News*

## **Horticultural Edition**

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### ***C&C Nursery*** ***by Clint Doherty***

Charlie Turner started his nursery, C&C nursery, in downtown Winnsboro, Texas in 1992. He offers that small town friendly service and quality plants and products with a smile. People drive from miles around to buy their plants and products from Charlie. He has sold Vital Earth's soils and mulches since he opened in 1992 and says Vital Earth's products have "sold well." He says, "the reason I like Vital Earth's soils and mulches is because they are a local company that makes quality products and they provide great customer service."

The products that C&C Nursery carries are Vital Earth's Composted Cotton Burrs, Premium Potting Soil, Landscaper's Peat Replacer, Shredded Hardwood Mulch, and the Better Bark Mulch. Charlie says his

best sellers are the Potting soil and the Landscaper's Peat Replacer. He also likes the fact that Vital Earth's products are not sold in the big box chain and focuses their efforts on independent garden centers and independent hardware stores.

C&C Nursery specializes in offering customers a variety of plants, ranging from seasonal and annual color, to trees. While I was there, I noticed customers came in and called Charlie by his name, and Charlie knows his customers by name also. It is really a family atmosphere and this



is what keeps his customers coming back. Next time you are in Winnsboro, go in and say "Hi" to Charlie and no doubt he will have a smile on his face at C&C Nursery. ■

## **Personal from the President** ***by Scott Hammer***

### **Staying Motivated**

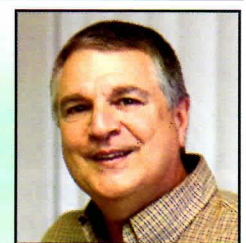
Times are still tough in our industry, especially for growers. As the recession drags on, we must all recognize that it may take years before we see a complete recovery. Our sales models may have to change radically. We may need to find new products to sell as well as new cus-

tomers to spur future growth.

Staying motivated will always be fundamental to our success. Owners must be motivated to search out new markets and new strategies to expand existing markets. We can't just sit back and wait for things to return to "normal." As owners and managers we must keep our employees motivated to always be acutely

aware of customer service and satisfaction. We must strive to ensure we don't lose a single customer.

This is certainly our goal here at Vital Earth. None of us can



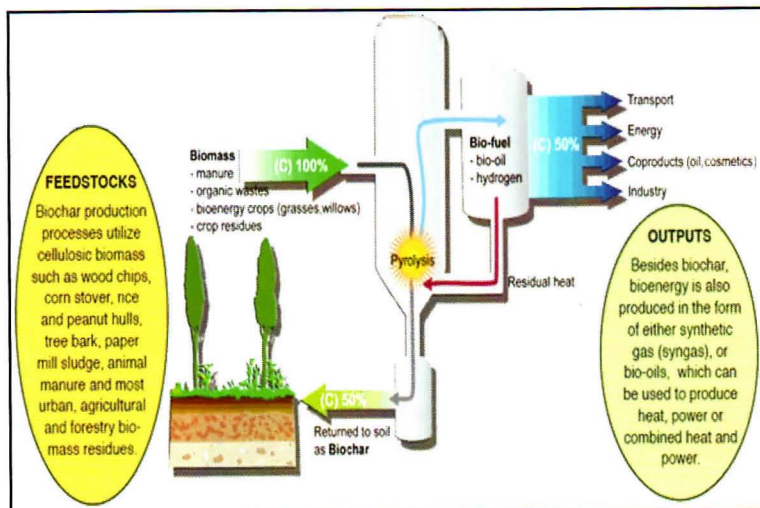
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# Biochar — a Viable Fertility Enhancer for Horticulture?

*By Paul W. Syltie, Ph.D.*

A novel way to improve soils has been developed over the past several years: add charcoal (often called “biochar”). This new development has come on the heels of the discovery of soils in the Amazon Basin which



**For all biochar production processes, a carbon-rich feedstock (such as wood) is partially burned, and the charcoal that remains is sorted and used in soil mixes.**



**Here is a pile of well-sorted biochar ready for use, on fields or in mixes.**



**Biochar is highly porous, as seen in this close-up picture.**

apparent. By mixing uniformly graded charcoal into potting mixes and bedding soils, the grower will achieve a high growth response of healthy, attractive, disease-resistant plants of all sorts.

are unusually high in organic matter in the form of charcoal, which support vigorous and healthy plant growth even after hundreds of years in a harsh, tropical soil environment. Oxisol (highly weathered) soils immediately adjoining

ing these “Terra Preta” soils produce very poor crops, while the high-charcoal soils grow vigorous crops, which are also noted for being of high quality and health-giving. Note the picture below.

Charcoal can be produced using a variety of burning techniques, from open piles, to brick or clay ovens, to home-sized stoves or industrial sized factories. The process causes wood, grain hulls, or even grasses to partially oxidize into a highly porous structure, as seen on the left. This structure is resistant to breakdown, and has a very high total internal surface area.

The potential to utilize biochar in horticultural production should at once be



**The simplest way to produce biochar is to burn wood or other organic materials, and stop the process before full combustion.**



**Some biochar plants have been built that have high outputs, while “home-sized” models can produce up to 50 pounds of biochar per hour, but require propane gas.**



**Amazon Terra Pretas are soils centuries old that have retained their biochar load (right), and even today produce excellent crops of high nutritional value, versus oxisols (left).**



# Horticulture Services — Small Town Feel, Large City Convenience

by Mike Alexander

Not far from Manhattan, Kansas, the home of Kansas State University, is the small sleepy town of St. George, Kansas. St. George is where Horticultural Services is located. Carl and Barb Meyer are the owners and both are active with the National Boards of Landscape and Nursery Retail Organizations.

The retail nursery has been open almost 15 years and the growing operation much longer. Carl and Barb go to many trade shows and at the BWI trade show, some 12 years ago, they saw the Carl Pool booth. Barb was looking for a fertilizer line to sell that was consumer friendly and not associated with the chain stores. That year Horticultural Services tried Carl Pool products and now they sell over 100 cases of BR-61 alone. Barb says, "BR-61 works for us and BR-61 works well for the con-

sumer. Consumers come from all over Kansas to shop for the quality products and for the expertise of the staff."

The property around the nursery is concrete to accommodate the disabled as well as recycling rainwater and nursery water runoff.

Horticultural Services grows what they sell so they recommend products that they use. They recommend Carl Pool Fertilizer because it is the fertilizer that works best and out-performs the national brands. Barb has put together a recipe for containers using Carl Pool 13-13-13 and BR-61. This has proven to be very successful, producing great results and no complaints. Horticultural Services has that small town feel but the convenience of a large metropolitan store. Carl and Barb have put it all together to meet the needs of their diverse clientele. The next time you are in Kansas for a college game or to see the Wizard of Oz, stop by and see the best nursery around. ■



## Personal

afford to drive any of our customers into the arms of a competitor.

Here at Vital Earth, we are in the midst of a remarkable year of growth and expansion in spite of our weak national economy. Bulk soil sales to growers and landscapers are holding steady. Bag sales are up slightly over last year in a very soft market as a result of the hard work of Mike and Clint.

Carl Pool fertilizers are also enjoying a profitable year of growth. We have developed numerous new private label products which are spurring

additional sales for our retail nurseries. Let us help you develop your own private label products to promote your business and improve profit margins.

Our greatest success this year has come in the Ag Division with our Vitazyme biostimulant product. We are experiencing growth worldwide with expansion into Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Ukraine. U.S. and Canadian sales are also up dramatically. We are highly motivated to pursue our goal of a worldwide presence in the realm of agricultural biostimulants.

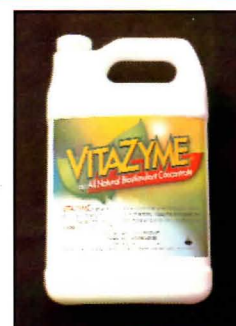
Vitazyme is also highly effective in horticultural growing, and we have

well over 600 independent studies in both agriculture and horticulture to document the amazing results you can expect.

We all must stay motivated and keep our people motivated if we are to survive and prosper. Keep an eye out for that new product or unique opportunity that can carry you to the next level.

See you at the trade shows!

Scott ■







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## The Great Importance of Morale

Napoleon once observed, "An Army's effectiveness depends on its size, training, experience, and morale ... and morale is worth more than all the other factors combined."

It's the same in every organization. No matter how capable the people, when morale sags so does performance. It is not hard to spot low morale. The zest goes out of a man's work. Loss of interest and enthusiasm shows in less effort and poorer results.

A man can get disenchanted with his job for any number of reasons. Trying to find out why takes a willingness to talk and listen to him, to observe what bothers him, and to read between the lines of what he says and does. It's the only way to intelligently decide what, if anything, you can do about it.

Good pay is important to morale, but it's only part of the story. The most vital thing is the knowledge that one's boss cares about him as a person, not just as a means of turning out work. When you know that your boss is genuinely interested in you, your feelings, your problems, and your ambitions, good attitudes come naturally.

People want to be appreciated. They like to know that what they do is significant, that they are an important part of a team effort. Most of them would like increased challenges and responsibility, a chance to be *more* important. They would like to see some hope for a brighter future.

*Bits and Pieces, June, 1972.*

**Please contact Vital Earth Resources for more information!**

**1-800-245-7645      [www.vitalearth.com](http://www.vitalearth.com)**

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