

The Vital Earth News

RESOURCES

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Southwest Fertilizer in Houston

A Gardener's Paradise, by Mike Alexander

Southwest Fertilizer, in Houston, Texas, is a gardener's paradise. Southwest was started by Jim Martin almost 60 years ago. Bob Patterson, who has worked there over 20 years, bought the store four years ago. Bob says they have been selling Carl Pool products since forever.

Southwest Fertilizer has evolved over the years. Nowadays they sell to the urban farmer, landscaper, and everyday gardener. Bob has developed a one stop shop with all kinds of fertilizers, chemicals, equipment, and a large service center. He stocks many brands of fertilizer, but Carl Pool is his favorite. Bob says Carl Pool products have the best quality, and the water solubles have an outstanding trace element package. He says Colorscapes is superior to the Nelson fertilizer product. Colorscapes, with a better price point, makes it very cost

effective for Bob's large landscape contractors.

Bob gives talks in the area to the Rose, Plumeria, and other garden clubs. At these presentations he always gives out Carl Pool samples. Bob states once you try Carl Pool fertilizer you will use nothing else. A few years ago he began selling Vitazyme. Nowadays he recommends it for hydro-mulching, lawn sodding, and tree plantings. Bob says Vitazyme reduces plant stress and helps them respond to Carl Pool fertilizers quicker.

Southwest stocks over 30 Carl Pool products from A to Z, African violet to zinc chelate. He says that the Carl

Pool Root Activator is great plant insurance. All of his employees recommend it for all plantings. Home gardeners buy the gallon size, while



commercial customers go for the 2 1/2 gallon. Bob has trained his people to recommend Carl Pool products to every customer, and instructs them

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Personal from the President

by Scott Hammer

We have so much to be thankful for. The year 2011 was wonderful for Vital Earth with exceptional worldwide growth, particularly in our Vitazyme division (Agriculture). Spring 2012 has been strong for both soils and Carl Pool fertilizers, with bag soil sales up substantially.

Carl Pool will launch a new prod-

uct this fall called BioBlast. It will be a retail oriented liquid plant food in a pump bottle loaded with bio based plant boosters as well as NPK. We will give it eye catching "pop" and promote it vigorously.

Vitazyme sales have been boosted recently by increased sales to Vietnam, Canada, Ukraine, and California. We expect registration in

Russia by late summer with orders already pending.

Indonesian registration and our initial Indonesian container order was processed in June. We received



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Build Optimum Soil Fertility for Growing Superb Plants!

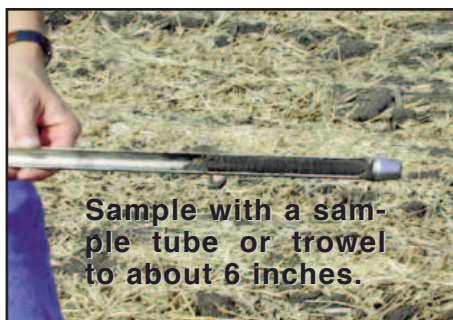
By Paul W. Syltie, Ph.D.

As a soil fertility specialist I am well aware of the need to build and maintain the soil's ability to grow lush, healthy, and beautiful plants, be they flowers, grasses, shrubs, trees, or agricultural crops. That desire is in most, if not all of us, but the doing can take different forms.

Some growers have developed a formula—often secret—for fertilization through trial and error that they swear by. Some have copied the success of others, and still others have developed a fine-tuned system of sampling and analysis, coupled with expert recommendations, that gives consistent and excellent results.

I will not criticize any pathway to growing great crops for a grower, especially those based on organic amendments, since these materials tend to release what a plant needs when it needs it. We ought to step a bit further towards a system that incorporates the best of all worlds: science plus the art of organics. The two are not at all in conflict, but actually support one another.

Please take a few minutes and see if these thoughts might help you do an even better job in your growing system. Remember that no amount of fertilization is a substitute for maintaining a high organic matter level and active microbial population in the soil. ■



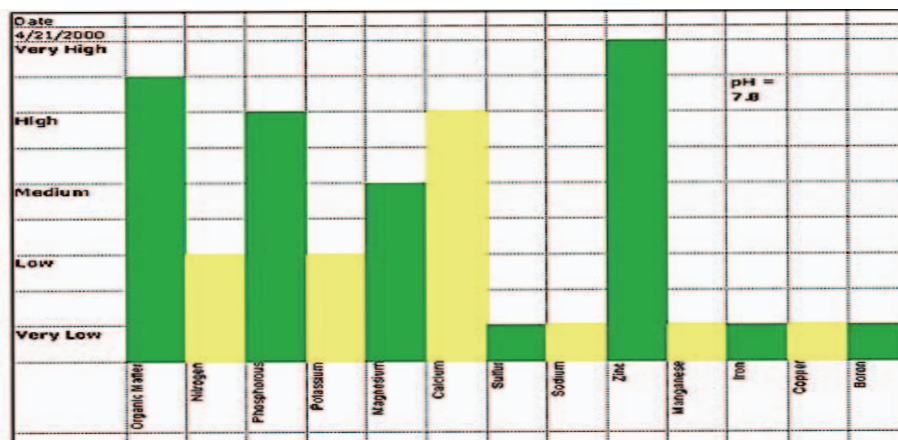
1. Determine the unique needs of the plants you are growing.

Some plants are high nitrogen users, such as many grasses, beans, and root crops. A 150 bu/acre corn crop requires 235 lb/acre of nitrogen (N), while a 60 bu/acre soybean crop needs about 230 lb/acre of N. However, the beans obtain most of their N from Rhizobium nodules. Legumes and many trees need high levels of zinc and other micronutrients. A fertility advisor takes these matters into account.

3. Obtain expert consultation for amending the soil to give you the lush, beautiful, and productive plants you want.

You will not want to use high N applications when trying to coax pansies and other flowers to bloom at their finest, but instead high levels of phosphorus, micronutrients, and ammonium that will trigger a fruiting response. On the other hand, a 200 bu/acre corn crop will need perhaps 150 lb/acre of N, or somewhat less if Vitazyme is used.

Your test results may look like this, or may simply be numbers.



2. Sample the soil or growth media and send it to a respected soil testing laboratory.

Your method of sampling is critical, so do it right. Sample a uniform soil area taking at least 10 subsamples to make a composite. The key here is to be able to convert the nutrient values obtained by the lab into actual fertilizer types and rates to apply to the soil. Different labs will generate different numbers, so work consistently with a lab that gives reliable numbers that can be interpreted by an expert soil fertility consultant.

4. Use the best possible fertility inputs that you can.

These may not be the cheapest, but in the long run you and your plants will be happier for it. Avoid using potassium chloride, and instead use sulfate forms. Use organic amendments when you can since they are truly “complete” fertilizers, having all of the elements needed for growth. They are released in the amounts and rates needed for optimum plant growth. Note that foliar applications of water-soluble fertilizers are much more available for uptake than soil applications.

Owasso Christmas Tree and Berry Farm

by Wynn Skelton

Brent Jacobs of Owasso Tree Farm, Owasso, Oklahoma, has been around growing operations much of his life. His parents, Bill and Paula Jacobs, have been growing



Christmas trees for roughly 30 years. With the addition of blueberries and blackberries, this “Mom and Pop” Christmas tree operation grew into

something large and diverse.

Brent has worked hand-in-hand with his parents for the last 17 years, developing a thriving business of growing shade trees in grow bags. With the economic downturn of recent years, Brent realized he needed to innovate, create a niche, and supply a product that would keep customers returning regularly. He noticed that in the economic downturn, while tree sales slumped, there still was high demand for berries and fruit. He decided to focus on blueberries.

Growing plants in-soil would require two to three years, so to speed the process he switched to above-ground grow bags. Now he needed to find the right planting mix suitable for blueberries, and discovered Vital Earth’s Azalea Mix with medium aged pine bark, long-fiber and chunky peat moss,

and Carl Pool’s Micropak fertilizer. It is very acidic, ideal for Brent’s needs.

Brent experimented by bumping up two-year-old blueberry plants from 4x4 pots to 15 gallon grow bags filled with Azalea Mix. The results were phenomenal! Plants reached three to four feet the second year.

The unique combination of felt grow bags and acidic Azalea Mix cre-



ated the perfect environment for blueberry growth. Brent was pleasantly surprised that he had to water each
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YC Nursery – Serving the Needs of North Texas Landscapers for Over 30 Years

by Clint Doherty

YC Nursery in Dallas, Texas, has been serving and supplying the needs of landscape contractors since 1981. In 1981, Foster Yancy and Brad Camp were home builders, and decided to grow their own color for their home building needs. Over time the nursery grew, and now sells annual color, perennials, tropicals, specialty custom plants, and custom color containers. They have five growing locations, the Dallas and Prosper locations primari-

ly involved in sales.

YC Nursery has been using Vital



Earth soils and mulches since 2009. Sales Manager Melanie Meszaros says that she carried different brands,

but “The feedback we received from our customers showed that they liked Vital Earth’s soils much better.” She added, “The compost is always finished, and the shredded hardwood mulch is consistent.” That is when YC decided to make a change and started carrying Vital Earth products. They carry Peat Replacer, Premium Potting Soil, Select Blend Compost, Azalea Planting Mix, Topdress/Topsoil, Ready Rose Mix, and Shredded Hardwood Mulch. Vital Earth also
Please go to YC Nursery, page 4 .

Earthsafe Products from Carl Pool



- ◆ **HERB FOOD and TOMATO/VEGETABLE** for prime responses with garden crops
- ◆ **ALFALFA MEAL** for a nitrogen boost on all crops
- ◆ **VITAZYME** for growth stimulation and enhanced nutrient uptake for all crops

Personal Guatemalan registration in early spring, where applications have been made on a variety of tropical crops.

We see horticultural markets improving for 2012/2013, and certainly better weather will be a posi-

tive factor in Texas. We look for a gradual improvement for growers in the coming year. Retailers have definitely fared better during our current “recovery”, and we look ahead to better days for everyone in the horticultural industry.

On balance, we have a lot to be thankful for; counting our blessings should be a daily task. I look forward to visiting with as many as possible at the numerous summer and fall trade shows. Have a prosperous year and a future full of possibilities. ■

Southwest that Carl Pool has better products at competitive prices with the bonus of a great trace mineral package. The new push for organics has not hurt Southwest fertilizer sales.

They stock lots of Earthsafe products to fill that niche. Southwest is the destination spot for not only the professional landscaper, but for the novice gardener. Southwest and Carl Pool is a combination that is destined

to last another 60 years. When you are in Houston for the Texan’s football game or catching the Astros, cruise down Bissonnet and give old Bob a hard time! ■

Owasso plant with only 1.5 gallon every other day. The felt grow bag allowed excess water to flow out, while the peat moss in the Azalea Mix increased the moisture holding capacity. To his amazement, he did not need to water the larger or fruit producing plants more often than the new plants.

From the beginning, Brent also used Vital Earth’s biostimulant Vitazyme, applying it monthly. As the blueberries leafed, he used Vitazyme foliar every two weeks in conjunction with an 8-10-10 fertilizer.

Is it working? The production so far is excellent. Brent is happy with berry quality, size, and appearance as Vitazyme increases nutrient uptake

and stimulates vigorous root growth. Results this spring have been so successful that Brent has planted 600 more blueberry plants!

He has found his niche! Brent’s long-range goal is having 2000 plants. We wish you the best, Brent Jacobs! Thank you for letting Vital Earth help you succeed in this unique venture. ■

YC Nursery makes a custom “YC Nursery Mix” that YC sells for bed preparation and containers. Melanie says that she really appreciates that she needs to order only a minimum of eight pallets, because there are

times when she needs only that amount; other companies require a commitment to a full truckload.

YC Nursery also carries Carl Pool Colorscaapes. Melanie likes it because it is a great color fertilizer that is less expensive than other

brands. The next time you are in the Dallas area, stop by and say “Hello” to Melanie and all of the friendly, helpful staff at YC Nursery! ■

Please contact Vital Earth Resources for more information!
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