



Living Earth

Use & Handling Instructions



This concentrated compost inoculant will support the establishment of a healthy and vibrant soil food web.

DIRECT APPLICATION

The Living Earth can be used as a growing medium, spread onto soils at any desired rate, or used as a soil substitute. Mix in native soil, approximately one-third by volume, to provide additional material from which microbes can extract macro- and micronutrients necessary for plant growth.

EXTRACT — *as a soil drench or spray*

The Living Earth can also be used to create a liquid extract that contains a rich and diverse community of soil microbes, especially fungi. The extracts are especially useful for inoculating large areas with beneficial soil microbial communities and can be used as a drench or a spray.

Preparing the Extract:

To prepare the extract, add 2-3 heaping handfuls of Living Earth to 5 gallons of water and stir the mixture. The goal is to dislodge as many microbes as possible from the organic matter. Dr. Johnson uses a hand drill with a large paddle-blade mixer for 4-5 minutes. You can also stir with a stick, being careful not to stir too vigorously.

Soil drench:

You are now ready to drench the soil around your trees or plants. Simply pour the water (now full of microorganisms) around the desired plant. Leftover organic matter still has microorganisms that can be poured onto the ground next to your plant. After pouring the extract, water it into the soil with a garden hose or sprinkler to ensure the microbes have filtered down into the soil. Apply a mulch topping (if possible) around the application area, to protect the microbes.

Spray:

After mixing the compost and water solution, strain the mixture through a paint screen, such as a 5-gallon mesh bag (400+ micron mesh) from your local hardware store, into another container. Once strained, the extract can be sprayed onto plant leaves or soil using a sprayer or sprinkler. After spraying, water it into the soil with a garden hose or sprinkler to help the microbes filter down. On large acreages, applying the extract directly into the furrow during planting can be very effective, as it places microbes right beside germinating seeds. Using the spray method, application rates of 2-10 pounds per acre have shown success.

SEED COATING

Beneficial microbes from mature compost can also be directly applied to seeds before planting. To inoculate seeds, make a slurry with the following ingredients:

- About ½ cup of a milk/molasses mixture (8 parts milk to 1 part molasses)
- About a liter (or quart) of compost
- Water (amount varies – add the water while stirring until the compost slurry has a viscosity similar to pancake batter)

Seeds can be dropped directly into the slurry-filled bucket, mixed until fully coated, and then planted in the ground. It's messy, but effective!

For large batches, pour one quart of the slurry into a cement mixer with 50 pounds of seed and tumble the mixture until the seeds are thoroughly coated. The coating process takes about 1-2 minutes, after which the seed can be air-dried by spreading it on a tarp in the shade and occasionally raking to expose wet areas. Drying the seeds is necessary so they flow easily through the planter.

STORAGE & HANDLING

To ensure optimal preservation of Living Earth, keep the soil moist and in contact with air. Remember, you are caring for living organisms, and they should not dry out or be exposed to direct sunlight. Once they are applied, excessive disturbance of the soil, such as tillage, chemical fertilizers, or pesticides, can limit their effectiveness.

Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
P.O. Box 1536
Silver City, NM 88062
Director@ugwa.org
575-956-3301
www.ugwa.org
