

Troubleshooting

Compiled by Stephanie Bartel during SARE research project. This checklist contains useful notes to bring into the field when first working with compost tea. A basic understanding/introduction to the brewing process is necessary to acquire before using this checklist.

- o 14th-20th hour is when tea machines will usually go anaerobic. So measure oxygen and check fungi during this period.
- o Tiny/fine bubbles seem to be detrimental to fungi. Don't use any diffusers or airstones.
- o If you don't see benefits a couple of days after applying the tea, play detective. What was wrong with the brew or application method?
- o Mycorrhizal needs to be put next to roots. Adding it to compost usually dilutes it too much.
- o VAM overload can kill tomato plants
- o If you brew too long, microbes may use up all their food and then go back to sleep = not active enough for foliar feed
- o If you have visible hyphae in the compost and then don't get hyphae in the tea, something happened to kill them during the brewing cycle.
- o Brewer must be kept white-glove clean, inside tank and all pipes. Clean with pressure washer.
- o Fresh burlap sometimes is treated with preservatives that will kill microbes (Don't use!).
- o If fungi and protozoa are lost after the brew, the tea maybe went anaerobic. Check the brew periodically to find out when the aerobic microbes have reached optimum numbers. Test at 12, 18, 20, 24, 36, 42, 48 hours, for example.