

Experiment Part 1

How good is compost?

Everyone knows that gardens and fields need to get fed, but does it matter what compost they get? Does it affect the flavor, the amount they produce, the health of the plants?

We (Todd and Daniel) decided to experiment. In the greenhouse, we are growing Italian and Lemon Basil in three types of fertilized soil: chopped up leaf matter, organic duck manure, and chemical manure.

Keep following to find out the secrets of healthy soil.

Here's some of the baby basil from a few weeks ago getting ready to be planted in their soon-to-be real homes.

Experiment Part 2

We're excited to have gotten part of the grant money for our compost experiment—real important while we wait for the selling to start!

We planted basil in small trays first so we could find which ones grew well. Then we transplanted them to the buckets where they'll stay.

Daniel and his daughter made the signs to make sure the experiment goes well by labeling what basil is lemon, what has duck manure, and so on.

So far, we aren't sure which basil will turn out the most. What do you think?

- A. Leaf matter
- B. Duck manure
- C. Chemical fertilizer

Here's part 3 of the experiment. Pictures are just from Italian basil this time.

Basil sure grows well in the green house!

What's your favorite way to use basil? Any family recipes for pesto?

A little more on the basis for the experiment. Every plant is in soil filled with leaf matter--chopped up leaves and little sticks. Duck manure or chemical fertilizer was added to their plots. So far, it looks like each part of the experiment is growing equally well.

In case you're curious, the littlest plants are small simply because they were planted later. Don't put all your eggs (or basil) in one basket--at least not at the same time!

Guess how many pounds of leaves Todd had dumped on his field last year.

(Hint: It's way more than a ton!) Leave your guess in the comments.

Here's episode 4 of the basil experiment. Really curious to taste the varieties and see which has the most. Still hard to tell any difference right now just by looking.

Here's the latest in our experiment. These are the stats with the line up of what has been picked.

Sweet basil

3rd place duck manure - 8 oz

2nd place chemical fertilizer - 12 oz

1st place leaf matter - 13.5 oz

Lemon basil

3rd place leaf matter - 3.79 oz

2nd place duck manure - 5.77 oz

1st place chemical fertilizer - 5.8 oz

Hmmm. Is leaf matter alone the best for both?

This post doesn't show which had the biggest harvest, though. Customers chose which variety they wanted, so maybe this was more of a popularity contest? The final weigh in is on the way. Stay tuned for that!

Here are the final results of our basil experiment!

Drum roll, please.

After harvesting nearly 4 bushels of basil, we found that...

Sweet basil

3rd place, with duck manure—53.03 oz

2nd place, only leaf matter—76.04 oz

1st place, with chemical fertilizer—82.87 oz

Lemon basil

3rd place, with duck manure—18.4 oz

2nd place, with chemical fertilizer—18.6 oz

1st place, only leaf matter—29.99 oz

So, what does this mean? Apparently, duck manure is not best for every crop. Plus, some varieties of crops do better with chemical fertilizer, but not all varieties. We're going to confirm this experiment with another round throughout summer. Until then, let's enjoy some pesto!