



QUESTION & ANSWERS

1) Can you prepare specialty soil or mulch blends?

Yes – We do this all the time for many of our customers. We have prepared specialty items from cactus or blueberry soil mixes to custom blends of mulch and compost. Many of our regular product items started this way.

2) Can you order or will you carry items not on your product price sheets?

YES – We are always willing to do special orders for our customers. As a business we have access to many products that are often hard to find. Many of the products we stock are also available in different sizes or quantities. For example the 1/4 inch crushed basalt rock is available in over 8 different sizes in addition to 1/4 inch. We do not stock it but we have access to over 100 colors of crushed marble to use in special projects.

3) Does NWR have compost for making compost teas?

YES – We have several types of compost that can be used for making compost teas. These range from bacterial dominated to highly fungal dominated composts or blends of both.

Due to the popularity and success with compost teas we have produced a very special super high quality compost blend (bagged only) just for making compost teas.

We also carry vermi-compost (worm castings), humates, kelp meal, molasses and many more of the ingredients used to make the best quality teas. Also we carry the latest edition of the “Compost Tea Brewing Manual” by Elaine Ingham, PhD.

This spring 2006 we will be selling 5 gallon size home compost tea brewing kits in addition to selling compost tea by the gallon (or 200 gallons) for our customers.

4) Why does NWR bagged products have holes in the bags?



The products we sell like our composts, mulches and soils are biologically alive! These good microbes require air (oxygen) to breathe just like we do, hence the holes let air in. If there were no holes the good microbes would suffocate (die) and pathogens would grow in the material instead. It costs more to have holes punched into the bags but we believe our customers deserve the best.

5) How does buying compost compare to buying microbial inoculants and isn't good compost much cheaper than buying microbial inoculants?

YES – Good compost will have tens of thousands of *species* of beneficial bacteria, fungus, protozoa, good nematodes and much more while the best inoculants will only have a couple dozen species. Microbiologists estimate that good compost will have billions if not trillions of microbes per pound. As to price good quality inoculants will cost \$18-\$40 for a 20 pound bag. This is equivalent to over \$1,000 per cubic yard. Compost is an extremely good value!

6) What is the difference between mulch and compost?

They are both composed of organic matter and microbes. Compost is more decomposed as compared to mulch. Compost is typically mixed into a soil while mulch is placed on top of the soil.

7) Why do I need both mulch and compost?

Compost and mulch do different things in nature and provide different benefits. Compost tends to be more balanced as to microbial populations, have higher nutrient benefits, and is more stable in the soil. Mulch contains more fungus than bacterial, has more carbon (energy) to create soil structure, and it protects the soil below.

If we look at a forest we see very healthy and productive eco-systems without disease or pest problems. If we look at the forest floor we see the soil covered with 1-2" of dark brown-black crumbly stuff (i.e. compost) and on top of that we coarser brownish material (i.e. mulch).



8) What is the difference between organic and synthetic?

There are a lot of different definitions in different industries but in horticulture:

Organic - means from nature or natural, no artificial chemical additives, no hazardous waste, no dangerous genetic engineering, follows biblical standards, etc.

Synthetic - means man-made or artificial, often made from petroleum or toxic chemicals, may be hazardous waste, chemical pesticides or fungicides, chemical salts, things that do not occur naturally, etc.

9) Why do you have so many types of sand? I thought sand was sand.

Even sand comes in many types and sizes, each with its own set of properties. For example let's look at "Bank Sand" which is inexpensive and is dredged from a river or stream. The same set of geologic properties that allows the sand to settle and collect also allows millions of weed seeds to settle and collect. This is why we do not sell or use bank sand at NWR and only use "Washed Sand" in our products.

"Washed Sand or Mortar sand" has been through a centrifuge or other equipment to wash away the clay particles and other contaminants to clean the sand for use in construction. The same washing process removes the weed seeds leaving a very clean white sand that is great for use in horticulture as it is weed free. We carry this type sand in 4 different sizes from fine to very coarse for different uses.

"Green Sand" is the minerals that are left behind when sea water evaporates. It is from a type rock formation known as glauconite. The rocks are crushed and the mineral rich sand is separated from the rock portion.

"Granite Sand" is finely crushed granite which contains many minerals and is paramagnetic hence it helps plants grow better.

As one can see there are many types of sand hence we carry a wide range to meet the needs



of our customers.

10) How does your topsoil differ from other companies?

Without knowing which company and seeing and testing the soil it is hard to answer that question. Since Texas does not have labeling laws for this area there are many types of products sold as topsoil.

A common practice in the Houston area is that some companies scrape up old wore out soil from area rice fields that is contaminated with agricultural chemicals and is so bad that can only weeds can grow and then sell it as topsoil. This is done since it is very cheap to purchase and profitable to sell but very bad for their customers.

Other vendors may use the left over treated soil from bioremediation sites and sell it as topsoil to get rid of it. Other vendors may blend industrial waste into the soil to make it look darker and richer.

At NWR we only sell topsoil that comes from virgin land (never farmed or contaminated). We have this soil in several different grades. For example for one grade we will add lots of wood chips to the topsoil and compost it for a year or more. The heat from the composting kills any weed seeds or pathogens that might have originally been present. As the wood chips decompose they add valuable humus to the soil. After composting we screen the enhanced topsoil to remove any remaining clods or wood chips ensuring a beautiful uniform product that is great for gardeners. This extra processing gives our customers real value for the money they spend on topsoil.