



gray water irrigation

Posted by [Leroy A White](#)

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[Leroy A White](#)

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November 13, 2012 05:17PM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 6

I wish to share observations on tree growth, fruit production and tree health of gray-water-irrigated fruit trees in zone 5 (with heavy clay soils type Wooster and/or Clinton). So-called "gray water" consists of the soapy component of most household's effluent. In our case, the soaps are Tide's *free & gentle* laundry soap (most of the time) and Ivory's bar soap (no phosphate).

Tree varieties inside our gray water drainage system, which consists of a sediment tank, distribution box and 40 ft. of drainage tile with gravel above and below (20 ft. x 20 ft. in area), are:

1. Two Red Haven peaches, S.D., four years old.
2. Two Crisp apples, STD., four years old.
3. One Bartlett pear, STD., four years old.
4. One Contender peach, STD., four years old.

Comparison trees outside the drainage area:

1. Yellow Delicious apple, STD., four years old.
2. Bosch pear, STD., four years old (relocated).

Sizes of trunks (circumference about 1" above graft) – peaches 14-1/4" and 16", apples 13- 3/4", pear 11-1/2" in the drainage area. Those located outside the drainage area are an apple 10" in circumference and a pear at 8-1/4". It appears that all trees inside the gray water drainage area benefit from a constant, underground water source (the roots appear to "find" the water source well beyond the drip line).

Production – With one year's of the "holistic spray regime" applied, a spring freeze and frost killed most fruit tree blossoms and ruined any comparison of last year's huge peach crop. What apples we did produce did not appear to benefit.

Health – The pear tree inside the drainage area experienced a complete black leaf drop, however, it recovered foliage by end of the growing season. On the peaches, one Red Haven showed a 2/3's drop in peach leaf curl.

Chemistry (this is where I really need help) – Our well water tested at approximately at 7.5 pH. At the end of the drainage tile, about 2 ft. below ground, the pH was approximately 7.8 which, considering the soap being added, was expected. I believe that this reservoir of water needs to have a pH in the range of 6.0 to 6.5 in clay soil. With the addition of 2# of Aluminum Sulfate, Anhydrous in a 5 gallon container, my testing will begin to lower the pH.

Are there any questions or suggestions? Are there any others who are looking into this type of fruit production and/or rapid tree growth? For comparison purposes, what circumference are your four year old trees?

Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 03/18/2013 02:19AM by Michael Phillips.

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[Leroy A White](#)

[Re: using fulvic acids](#)

November 15, 2012 08:19PM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 6

The gray water system as described previously could be an ideal delivery system for certain hydroponic chemicals, namely, the application of fulvic acid into the root zone. Everything I have read about fulvic acid at [hydroponics.com](#) gives me "chills" & a WOW! factor. Could this be "The Miracle Molecule" used in a foliar application to replace other recommended components with neem oil? This will be worth testing in the spring.

I'm also intrigued by the higher concentration of fulvic acids offered by [www.manicbotanix.com](#). It appears that a new by-product from black liquor of the wood pulping industry is 80-85% fulvic acid compared to less than 7% fulvic acid in a "leonardite" coal-based product.

[Berry Ridge Gardens](#)

Zone 5 in Ohio

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 03/02/2013 05:38PM by Michael Phillips.

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