



## **Compost Tea at The Morris Arboretum**

Green Fund Grant Fall 2011  
Completed Spring 2011  
Amount \$12,015

### **Project Overview**

The Morris Arboretum of The University of Pennsylvania implemented a project to determine the efficacy of compost tea as a fertilizer and alternative to pesticides in the one-acre Rose Garden. Organic matter such as grass clippings, leaves, weeds, saw dust, wood chips, and herbaceous materials from the Arboretum are used as the building blocks of the compost tea system. By using compost tea as part of an Integrated Pest Management Program, the Arboretum has been able to eliminate the use of synthetic chemicals in the Rose Garden, as well as increase beneficial insect populations and soil organisms. Since the implementation of this project, the Rose Garden has seen an improvement in the overall health of the garden, as well as increased interest from visitors and other public gardens about the chemical free approach.

Various audiences benefit directly from the implementation of this project. For example, educational opportunities on the organic method of landscape management are available for visitors, students, staff, faculty, municipalities, and interested organizations. Additionally, visitors can learn about composting their own green waste and the benefits that it can have in home gardens. This project also draws connections to the recently completed Platinum level LEED-certified Horticulture Center sustainability mission, positioning the Arboretum and the University as a leader in sustainability.

*Morris Arboretum's website - [Here](#)*

### **Lessons Learned**

The compost tea system is not without complications as the process develops and improves. However, the Arboretum continues to gain support from professionals locally and nationally as word spreads about the non-chemical approach.

As a leader in sustainable initiatives, The Morris Arboretum



seeks to set the standard for a sustainable landscape management program that can be implemented throughout the entire University of Pennsylvania campus. The lessons learned from this ongoing project are transferable to other areas of the Arboretum and can be used as an educational tool for University landscape management practices.

## Press

*Philadelphia Inquirer* – [Read More](#)

*The Daily Pennsylvanian* – [Read More](#)

## Photos



*Compost Tea being applied*



*Insects are welcomed back into the garden*