

## **Compost Works Longer, Better**

*The Avant Gardener, October 2008*

Scientists at the Texas AgriLife Research Center (17360 Colt Road, Dallas, TX 75252) tested the use of dairy manure compost on lawn grass, annuals, perennials and woody ornamentals. Applications of 0.5", 1" and 2" were made to upper 2" to 4" of a silty clay soil.

They report that for the following five seasons, with no more fertilizer applied, the organic matter content of the compost-amended soil remained higher and also contained more phosphorus, iron, potassium, sulfur and zinc than untreated soil. They concluded that "after five growing seasons, with no additional fertilization, 0.5" to 1" application of dairy manure compost is sufficient to provide continued fertility to landscape plants."

In tests at the University Laval in Quebec, unaerated compost teas made with cow or sheep manure were the most effective of several teas tested in reducing mycelial growth of the four most common soil borne tomato pathogens.

And at the University of Agriculture (Falsabad, Pakistan), compost enriched with soluble nitrogen (from urea) at two ounces of nitrogen per pound of compost, plus the natural growth promoter L-tryptophan at 0.00016 ounces per pound of compost, increased corn yields 21% above corn given higher rates of nitrogen applied alone.