

The buzz about Myke™

by Carla Allen

“Have you tried Myke™ yet?” Tim Tregunno, owner of Halifax Seed asked me last fall during a phone conversation. “No, I haven’t, but I’ve been hearing a lot about it,” I replied. Tregunno sent me a few samples to try, but as it was late in the season, I decided to wait until spring to try this new growth supplement. Mycorise™ (Myke™) is the registered name for Premier Horticulture and Premier Tech’s new product which contains beneficial fungi called mycorrhizae. The theory behind the introduction of these tiny symbiotic organisms to your gardens is certainly appealing.

Good, healthy, undisturbed soil often already contains mycorrhizal fungi; however, common garden practices like tilling and fertilizing can reduce the activity of this fungi in the area. Weed growth, erosion and the loss of topsoil may also reduce the beneficial effects of mycorrhizal.

This specialized fungi colonizes plant roots and develops far-reaching fungal filaments, called hyphae, that act as extensions of the roots. The host plant is able to develop a much larger root system, sometimes 100 times in length, with up to 2000 times more surface area. This translates into more room for water and nutrients to be absorbed. The fungi help to break down organic material and release powerful chemicals. These help dissolve nutrients and are normally more difficult for the plant to extract. They also assist in developing a soil community that supports friendly bacteria, nematodes and earthworms. The fungi, in turn, receive a steady source of nourishment from the host. Scientists have found that excretions of specific antibiotics manufactured by mycorrhizal fungi destroy some disease organisms and the densely woven hyphae acts as a physical barrier

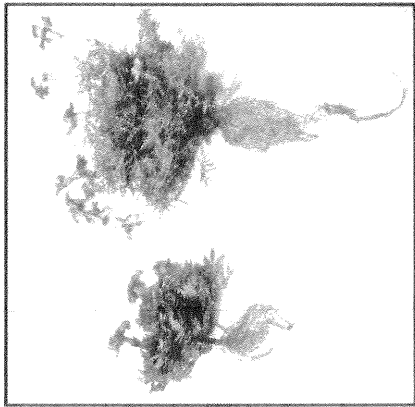
rier against root diseases. These filaments also act to promote aeration and drainage. Premier Horticulture has been including mycorrhizae in several of their professional potting mixes over the last five years. This year gardeners will have the option of purchasing mycorrhizae inoculant in 425g tubs. Several different formulations (trees, flowers and vegetables) are available. When I inspected the appearance of one of my tubs it looked very similar to a sample of good soil—dark brown and crumbly. Instructions for use call for 1 Tb of Myke™ in a 4” hole. Best results are obtained by having roots directly in contact with Myke™.

Premier Horticulture reports that, in some cases, professional growers have almost doubled the amount of peppers, strawberries, asparagus, carrots and potatoes harvested by using mycorrhizae. Tests have also shown that soils enriched with this fungi encouraged geraniums to bloom 25% earlier, Boston ferns to produce 50% more cuttings, magnolia trees to grow 2/3 larger, Jeff Ball, a well known garden expert, said “Mycorise™ is a plant ally that establishes a true symbiotic relationship with the plant. Plants seem to jump right out of the garden.”

My attempt to contact a grower in the Atlantic provinces that has tried Myke™ unearthed Virgil Shewchuk, owner of Herbit Farms in Brown’s Flat near Saint John, NB. Over the past few months, he’s been using

it on approximately 50 tomato plants with great results. “Excellent Dynamite stuff. I noticed a difference,” he told me.

Bob Osborne, owner of Corn Hill Nursery in New Brunswick, has some samples which he will probably be trying this spring. When I contacted Carol Goodwin, the Associate Professor for Department of Environmental Sciences at the NSAC in Truro, NS, my curiosity about the product was all she needed to decide to try it out herself this summer. We’ll be letting you know about our results with Myke™ a little later this year.



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