

Humus Tea Brewing

Well, my first experiment with humus tea brewing ended yesterday around 5pm - 29 hours after starting the brewing process. As I mentioned earlier, I took a half-gallon jar, rigged up an aerator out of Walmart 1/4" soaker-hose and tee-connectors and connected that to my 10-30 gallon aquarium pump. The resulting setup can be seen here:

<http://www.mjv.com/images/first-aerator.jpg>

Into the 1/2 gallon brewer I placed cleared tapwater (bubbled overnight to get rid of chlorine) up half-way. Then I put in a cup of redworm castings. I have to say - it's the first time I dug into my worm-bin, and even though I tried to go down deep where I assumed less food would be and less worms would be - those worms are *everywhere*! Big ones, small ones, babies and tons of little egg cases - most hatched already. So, I picked out the worms as best as I could and sacrificed the tiny ones because it would have been impossible to get them all. Actually, I think most survived the process - the water was aerated sufficiently and used right away. Anyway - 1 cup of castings went into the drink, then I took 1/8th cup of molasses, mixed it well with enough cleared water to fill the brewer and poured that in and plugged in the aerator.

Bubbles - a lot. Sufficient for this brewer. I'm gonna test it on a one gallon brewer I've got just about ready and see if it's still sufficient. You want a profuse amount of bubbling.

Caveats - lotsa bubbles also means lotsa...bubbles. Which tended to build up a bit. It wasn't enough to overflow, but it was close. Furthermore, the aerator didn't want to stay flat on the bottom, which led to a small part that didn't get aerated and settled out some. Not good. So, I used a paint-stirrer stick to push it down periodically, and I stirred it often.

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24 hours went by and it smelled great. I wanted to push it a bit to see - targeting 30 hours. I smelled a faint fishy smell at 29 hours and figured I'd pushed it far enough - the stuff on the bottom was starting to go anaerobic.

Okay, feeling smart, I took a little plastic pot, put it in the mouth of an empty jar and plopped in a coffee filter. I wanted some stuff clear enough to go through a spray bottle. Well...it worked sorta. It filtered through awfully slow. No nylons available, so I took what I had, diluted it with more cleared water and went happily spraying away, making a grand mess of drips on the floor that had the wife glaring at me. The rest I poured into my ever-present half-full watering can, mixed it to dilute it and went around giving all the plants a treat. I could have diluted it much further, but it was a test after all.

Things I learned -

1. With the proportions I used - 24 hours is good enough.
2. I need to find a way to anchor the aerator to the bottom.
3. I've redesigned the aerator of the 1 gallon jar to keep the hoses out of the way when I stir.
4. I need to have more cleared water handy to dilute to.
5. Find a more suitable filtering method than coffee filters.
6. Put a cap or something on the brewing-jar so the bursting bubbles don't spray everything with brew...

So, all in all, very educational. This was a bacterially rich mixture. Sometime later I'm gonna let some molasses soak into the castings and sit for a bit before putting into the brewer to get fuzzy with fungus then do the brewing thing to get a fungally rich mixture. Both have benefits. Once the experimentation is done, I hope to be treating my plants to this once a week at least. Hmmm, that would mean I'd have to start up a few more wormbins... :) I'm hunting for more powerful aerators too - soon I hope to graduate to 5 gallon buckets and even large outdoors trashcans... Oh - and you want to use this stuff right

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away. Don't let it sit or it'll go anearobic...

Cheers,

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