

“ALPACA BEANS”

USES FOR ALPACA MANURE

Warren County Camelid Club Education Activity
(revised February 2022)

ALPACA MANURE

The Alpaca is a pseudo-ruminant animal with three digestive compartments (stomachs). Alpacas efficiently convert grass and hay to energy very quickly, eating far less (as a percentage of its body weight) than other farm animals. Because of this, the resulting alpaca manure is lower in organic matter than manure from other livestock. Therefore, it does not “burn” plants when “green,” so it does not need to be “aged” before use. A herd of alpacas consolidates waste in one or two spots in the pasture, in a few community manure piles. This also helps in controlling the spread of parasites and making it easier to collect and compost their fertilizer. On average, an alpaca produces a little over 1 pound of beans per day. One alpaca produces about 400 pounds of beans per year. And a herd of 12 alpacas produces over 2½ tons of beans per year!

Alpaca manure improves soil texture and has good water holding capacity. Alpaca manure is shaped in small pellets, called “beans,” and are easy to spread. Aged alpaca manure is light, dry, and odor-free. “Alpaca beans” can be applied directly onto plants, used to make a liquid fertilizer called “alpaca tea,” or dried and pulverized into a powder. Using alpaca manure gives the satisfaction of knowing you're using a natural, renewable resource while sustaining organic gardening practices.

Commercial fertilizer labels refer to the percent by weight of three major nutrients needed by plants for the most efficient growth: Nitrogen (N), Phosphate (P), and Potash (K). This is called the “guaranteed analysis.” Most garden fertilizer is labeled “10-10-10” or “12-12-12.” In comparison, alpaca manure would be rated approximately “2-1-2.”

South American native peoples use alpaca manure for fuel. Many alpaca farms sell bagged “alpaca beans” online for anywhere from \$5.00 to \$20.00.

COMPOSTING

Composting is an aerobic process in which microorganisms decompose organic materials, such as alpaca manure, yard trimmings, sawdust, hay, straw, and food scraps. The process reduces moisture and volume and results in a rich, stable, soil-like product that can be used as a soil amendment.

www.therockpile.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/OhioStateFact-Composting.pdf

ALPACA TEA

Formula: 1 cup of dried alpaca beans per 1 gallon of water

Method: Place alpaca beans into the toe of a used nylon stocking. Tie the open end. Soak the beans in the water for at least 48 hours. Remove the stocking and use the beans for plant mulch. Spray the “brown liquid tea” liberally from a hose end sprayer or from a watering can on seedlings, fruit trees, gardens, lawns, and house plants.

Project: scoop out 1 cup of alpaca beans. Place in a plastic baggie. Take it home and follow the above directions to make a liquid fertilizer that you can use on your parents’ house plants. Always wash your hands after handling alpaca manure.

DRIED ALPACA MANURE