

Mezzacello Zoo Brew Adventures 2023

A while back I was offered 25 cubic yards of ZooBrew Manure from our local zoo. I opted for 10 cubic yards. I'm glad I did!

Compost Update 2023 – Restocking the Bioreactor

Time to use the leaves I saved in 2022 to shred them and hold them in reserve through the spring and summer!

Martian Zero-Dirt Soil Update 2022

It's been a few years since I initiated the bioreactor and compost engine at Mezzacello. Time for a year two update.

How the Bioreactor Works

A simple schematic of the bioreactor as it was originally designed. How the sun, wind, air, water, chemicals and compost all interact.

Cardboard Journey Into Green

What do you do with all the cardboard one collects? Treat non-waxed boxes with DE, let it sit in the sun and rain and then mow it.

Bioreactor Compost Engine Update for 2022

A Spring 2022 update on the bioreactor/compost engine at Mezzacello. I am currently on my 2nd 1000L batch, this year.

Lesson: Lasagna Garden Basics

Students will explore compost and growing systems from a biological and chemical basis to understand life systems through a model.

Pop Up Compost Piles

At Mezzacello, the various ecosystems always need tending. When we know that a garden bed will need to sit fallow for a season because we either don't have time or money to get it done, I will intentionally plant nitrogen-fixing crops like clover or hairy vetch to promote nitrogen and moisture in the soil. The parterre gardens were finally ready to be planted. All of that clover, hairy vetch, dead leaves and twigs needed to be collected. Call it guerrilla composting if you will. But it's a great way to amass one cubic meter of biomass quickly.

To all exterior perspectives, this seems preplanned. What the general public doesn't know is that this strategy started because Rick is too lazy to haul all of his waste to the compost bins on the western edge of the gardens. So I just started collecting wastes in the right balance. I intentionally placed and distribute the dead leaves and twigs in the bed with an approximation of the amount of greenery that I am most likely to harvest and commensurate brown materials and manure waiting to be mixed in. I needed to balance out the greens with browns. It's not the prettiest way to do this, but it really works well in a pinch. All my neighbors and friends know that we are building Mezzacello as we go. I have systems. I document those systems and modify them as I go along to maximize learning from failure and success. I have found this pop up compost to be really useful.

All I have to do is collect it, mix it, and move it back to the compost bins and it's ready to go. If I harvest it in the right season, I'll mix in some more manure, mulch, added greens, and peat moss and voila! Instant lasagna garden! Of course Rick bought 64 boxwoods for the parterre so the lasagna garden isn't happening this summer, but there is another

garden ecosystem that can use this bounty.

Compost, Soil Enrichment, and Garden Infrastructure

In place composting like you see in nature on the forest floor. A lasagna garden. That is this lesson.