

Got Dry Hydrophobic Bark ? Maybe an Answer !!!!

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Recently, I talked with Neil Goldberg, from BioSafe Systems Company about their new fungicide / disinfectant product, ZeroTol. I was calling based on a tip from Sean Delaney (SunGro Bark, McCormick, South Carolina). Sean, who works with bark everyday and for lots of years was familiar with the hydrophobic slime mold problem but told me ZeroTol is worth a try to eliminate the slime mold and reduce the hydrophobic problem.

ZeroTol is a disinfectant and a fungicide that is labeled for use as a foliar spray, potting media drench, water treatment disinfectant and for general surface disinfection of production areas. According to promotional literature, ZeroTol is a sporicide, algicide and a powerful oxidant that denatures enzymes and proteins common to simple celled organisms. ZeroTol is promoted as not adversely effecting ground water, biodegradable and organic approved. With all of these good qualities, it apparently is safe for over the top spray application and is labeled as a foliar spray.

My purpose for promoting this product in this article is that it may solve a huge problem encountered by many nurseries over the last several years and again this spring, I must say that I personally have not used ZeroTol, but if it can provide hope in a hopeless situation, then I am for telling people about it.

ZeroTol can be applied over bark inventories or containers contaminated with the Ostracoderma slime mold. Sean Delaney suggested that ZeroTol could be sprayed over inventories and pots rather than using high volumes of product as a drench. In the conversation with Neil Goldberg, a ratio of 1:100 or 1.25 OZ of ZeroTol per gallon of water would be the appropriate rate of application.

ZeroTol is sold in 2.5 gallon containers as well as in 30 gallon and 55 gallon drums. The suggested retail price for 2.5 gallons is \$108, \$1070 for the 30 gallon drum and \$1885 for the 55 gallon drum. By my calculations a 2.5 gallon container of ZeroTol would make up to 256 gallons of final spray volume at 1.25 fluid ounces per gallon of water. That cost is about \$2.37 per gallon of spray. This seems expensive but if you have ever had the hydrophobic bark problem, you become desperate quickly!! Also, did I mention that this problem with 10,000 newly potted liners only happens on Friday afternoons????!!

I am not sure how many pots or how many square feet of an inventory pile a gallon of solution will spray. This will undoubtedly take some experimentation. It is assumed that after spraying, washing the active ingredient through the pot or down into the inventory pile would be appropriate.

Contact information for BioSafe Systems is as follows:

BioSafe Systems

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ZeroTol is sold through several distributors. In North Carolina, Southern Ag, Wetzel and BWI sell ZeroTol. Another Southeastern distributor is Progress Growers in Georgia.

My enthusiasm in this article is sparked by the idea of what good fortune this could be if this product will alleviate this nuisance organism in nursery potting inventories.

However, as always, keeping pine bark inventories moist and turning piles a few days before use if they have been undisturbed for a few weeks at the nursery avoids both anaerobic problems and this dry bark slime mold. Wetting pine bark when it arrives at the nursery will reduce many problems at potting. Moist potting components such as pine bark and peat moss create much better physical properties if both components are thoroughly moistened before mixing. If they are mixed dry they set up like concrete and sand.

Maybe you will never need to use ZeroTol to solve this problem, however, I hope if you do have a hydrophobic slime mold bark problem, this will work for you. I am really interested. Please let me know how it works for you.