Biochar Production Technologies USDA ARS-AFT-USBI Practical Biochar Implementation



November 29, 2023

Tom Miles Executive Director US Biochar Initiative





American Farmland Trust US Biochar Initiative USDA Agricultural Research Service



American Farmland Trust SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US





Concerns about the high cost of growing media, recent supply chain issues, and unavas about the windommetal inspats of per but how sporred interest in alternative media for the horticultural and fur finduatries. Biochar offset the petitali of a natural, local, and sataliables sporred alternative to peat and other common growing ingredients including thom as in the period set of the set of the sporred survival Center of the set of

Fact Sheets



Online Producers Directory



Equipment & Technology Development

ABOUT USBI Established 2009

USBI is a not-for-profit organization promoting the sustainable production and use of biochar through research, policy, technology & doing it!

Networking – Education - Demonstration

Activities:

North America Conferences, Workshops, Demos, Fact Sheets, Newsletter, Website, Provider Directory, Social Media, Biochar Advocacy, Referrals, Forestry Partner, Technical Advisory Team, Research, Outreach & Education, biochar.groups.io



for Forestry and Communities

Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies



In-field Workshops



Trade shows & Conferences



biochar-us.org/biochar-crop-application-guidelines

2024 North American Biochar Conference

FEBRUARY 12-15, 2024

SAFE Convention Center Sacramento, California, USA







REGISTER NOW

https://www.biocharconference.com/





Right source

Selecting the best biochar for your crop

Right place

Applying biochar to the soils that need it



Right rate

Applying the right amount

Right time

Identifying when to apply

US BIOCHAR INITIATIVE

BIOCHAR GUIDELINES FOR AGRICULTURE APPLICATIONS

Practical insights for applying biochar to annual and perennial crops



A sustainable soil amendment that:¹⁴

BIOCHAR-US.ORG

- builds soil organic carbon and soil health
- increases crop yields and soil moisture
- improves nutrient retention
- boosts microbial activity
- alleviates compaction
- reduces soil acidity
- sequesters carbon





Biochar 2024 Feb 12-15, 2024 Sacramento, California

Biochar Production Technologies: Topics

Tars CH

Introduction **Feedstocks Pyrolysis Biochar Products Biochars Biochar based Technologies: Place Based** Mobile, Portable **Stationary Systems** Small Medium Large **Transportation and Handling**

Small bulk Bags Bulk





















Right Biochar Source

➢Sources

- Local Biochar/Feedstock
- Available
- Waste
- > Feedstocks
- Wood
- Ag Pits, Nuts, Shells
- Litters
- Manures
- Straw, Stalks

- ➤Quality
 - Analysis
 - Needs

> Process

- Feedstock
- Temperature
- Residence Time

> Objectives

- Filtration
- Infiltration, Aggregation
- Water retention

Right source

Selecting the best biochar for your crop

- Nutrient Use
- Organic matter
- pH
- Carbon
- Soil Health



What is biochar?

- Biochar is the solid product from pyrolysis of biomass
- High in C ~ 60-80% C
- Highly porous, low bulk density
- Highly aromatic
- Highly recalcitrant in soil
- A versatile soil amendment and environmental material
- Produced via pyrolysis: heating without oxygen







What is **pyrolysis**?

- Pyrolysis is the conversion of biomass through heating at moderate temperatures (350-900°C) and in the absence of oxygen
- Pyrolysis of biomass produces
 - Gases: H₂, CH₄, CO, CO₂, etc.
 - Bio-oil
 - Biochar





Heat Converts Solids to Gas Leaving Char

Pyro-lysis: from pyro (fire) and lysis (separation)









Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies

Biochar properties: Process conditions (Peak temperature) 752°F

• As temperature increases

➢Biochar yield decreases

➢ Fixed carbon increases

➤Surface area increases

► Ash content increases





Processes Determine Biochar's Persistence



Using Organic geochemistry and petrology methodologies determine that biochar:

- With increasing temp., carbon increase, H/C & O/C decrease
- At 500°C+ 97% TOC is almost infinitely geochemically stable lasting 1000 years or longer
- Limited semi persistent • carbon (SPC) has been found to last 50 to 100 years.

(1) Schmidt HP, Abiven S, Hageman N, Meyer zu Drewer J: Permanence of soil applied biochar. An executive summary for Global Biochar Carbon Sink certification, the Biochar Journal 2022, Arbaz, Switzerland, www.biochar-journal.org/en/ct/109, pp 69-74

(2) Peterson, H.I., Lassen, L., Rudra, A., Nguyen, L.X., Do, P.T.M., Sanei, H.: Carbon stability and morphotype composition of biochars from feedstock in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, International Journal of Coal Geology, April 4, 2023, 104233.



Process Conditions Alter Biochar Properties

To enhance biochar yield:

Lower temperatures

≻Higher pressures

➤Longer vapour residence

time

➢Slower heating rate

➤Larger particle size



Temperature effects on Black Locust (Robinia pseudacacia L)

J. Lehmann Front Ecol Environ 2007; 5(7): 381–387



What Biochar Qualities Do You Need?

Biochars are fine-grained, highly porous charcoals that help soils retain nutrients and water. International Biochar Initiative



Collins 2009

Mycorrhizal fungal hyphae growing from spore base invade large charcoal pores Ogawa 2004

redox potential, eH Chew et al. 2020 bit.ly/30TQnIB



Biochar Physical Properties

Highly porous; surface area up to 500 m^2/g

Three distinct pore types:

External pores: Dependent on particle size

Macropores: Dependent on feedstock

• 10-100 μm range for wood biochars

Micropores: Dependent on production

- 1-10 nm range = 10-100 water molecules!
- Majority of surface area with high potential sorption





Biochars Can Have Different Properties Properties depend on feedstock and production process



Top Row Scale

Bottom Row Scale



Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies

Conceptual scheme for the effects of biochar application on the soil physical, chemical, and microbial properties and greenhouse gas emissions in forest ecosystems WHC water holding capacity, SOC soil organic carbon, CEC cation exchange capacity



Li et al. 2018. Effects of biochar application in forest ecosystems on soil properties and greenhouse gas emissions: a review. *Journal of Soils and Sediments 18*: 546–563.





Biochar Benefits from 26 Reviewed Meta-Analyses (Schmidt et. al. 2021)





Design Biochars to Fit the Needs

- Increase retention of chemicals, minerals
- Enhance immobilization of contaminants and reduce their bioavailability
- Increase mycorrhizal fungal activity
- Reduce GHG emissions (CH₄ and N₂O)
- Reduce acidity
- Reduce irrigation





Biochars Are Made for Different Uses



Soil Health: Agriculture, Retail Garden, Landscape, Turf, Trees, Orchards, Vineyards, **Horticulture**

- Biochar, Compost, Composted biochar (5%-20% biochar) Animal bedding, litter, feed trials
- Biochar-Based Fertilizers (15%-25% biochar)
- Biotic Soil Amendments (biochar + organics+ minerals and biologicals) Granulated and liquid products for seeding, foliar sprays (extracts) Micro/nano carbons, nanofertilizers











Environment, Remediation, Erosion Control

Revegetation, Biosolids, Urban Soils, Erosion Control, Wetlands, Odor, Waste, Remediation Persistent Herbicides (USCC), PFOS/PFAS

Water quality Stormwater filtration, water treatment

- functionalized chars, 3d aerogels, antibiotics





Wildfire fuel reduction, Reforestation, Range Improvement Growing media for nursery and out planting Revegetation, Reclamation of mines and degraded land

Carbon, Renewable Energy Offsets, and Non-Soil Products

Carbon markets, building products, odor control, batteries





Biochars are Processed for Different Forms and Qualities for Different Uses: Size, Densify, Bag, Liquify









Granulated Biochar Seedballs Aid Aerial Seeding for Green Carbon Cover in Africa, Australia and America





Seedballs Kenya seedballskenya.com

Airseed Technologies

airseedtech.com



Biochars are <u>Ingredients</u> in Agriculture, Retail Garden, Horticulture, Turf, Tree, and Landscape Applications



Rexius/OpusGrows, US www.opusgrows.com



Carbon Gold, UK www.carbongold.com



G&B Organics Eden Valley Blend Potting Soil with **BiocharMax**[™] www.kellogggarden.com Ingredients in Green Frontier Compost

> Yard Waste Food Waste **Biochar*** Loess Clay



× C

*16% biochar by finished volume

Harvest Quest Fungal Inoculant

Azomite Mineral Supplement

Wood Vinegar

Missouri Organic Recycling www.missouriorganic.com/compost

Others: America Biochar Company, Biochar Supreme, Sustane Organic + Biochar, Mirimichi Green CarbonizPn Turf Enhancer, Lesco, Wakefield Biochar Soil Conditioner . . .







Adding biochar can enhance the 🔞 composting process:

- Reduces odor
- Reduces ammonia loss
- Increases nitrogen retention
- Accelerates the composting process
- Enhances the beneficial biological populations in compost !







Biochar + Manure = "Biochar Is A Farmer's Best Friend" No Smoke. Healthy Crops. Healthy Animals. Happy Farmers.

Sr. Miriam Paulette with biochar from flame cap pit at the Carmelite Monastery in Zomba, Malawi.

Metal cover to quench char.

Training to make biochar in flame cap pit kiln. No smoke.





Kenya: Trainer Everline with bumper sorghum crop.

Biochar + Manure

Everline's corn with biochar + manure

VS

Her poor harvest with commercial fertilizer.









BiocharLife

Warm Heart Worldwide Malawi

warmheartworldwide.org/biochar-africa

Warm Heart Worldwide, Kenya

2021 During pandemic 7500 smallholders trained by other biochar users.



Animals Inoculate, Distribute, and Mix Biochars in Soil, Improve Forage, Animal Health, Soil Health

- Deer, elk, cattle, pigs, chickens, goats, sheep feed on char which improves health and increases egg, milk, and meat production. Enriched biochar is passed out in the dung.
- Dung Beetles mix and inoculate biochars into soil, improving forage quality and production.
- Worms ingest biochar to form inoculated micro and nanocarbons



Photo: Sr. Miriam Paulette







Analyze Biochar Quality Comply with Environmental and Soil Requirements

SOFTWOOD BIOCHAR 01

12/8/2022

XXXXX-01

Date Received

Lab ID. Number:

Sample ID:

Physical

Chemical

Environmental

General PropertiesResultUnitsMethodProximate AnalysisResultUnitsMoisture (as received)65.5% wet wt.ABulk Density6.6lb/cu ft (dry)Carbon87.5%BHydrogen/Carbon87.5%BNitrogenN0.72%Electrical Conductivity0.985dS/mCSulfurS0.02%Carbonates (as-CaCO3)7.3% CaCO3I00.0%TotalEutrical Conductivity0.985dS/mCAshAsh4.6%Carbonates (as-CaCO3)7.2% CaCO3JEPA 503 MetalsResultUnitsMRLSurface Area Correlation451m²/gGCadmiumCdNDmg/kg0.45< 0.5 - 1 mm17.4%FCobaltCo1.4mg/kg0.45< 1 - 2 mm32.9%FMercuryHgNDmg/kg0.01< 2 - 4 mm34.5%FMolybdenum Mo0.48mg/kg0.45< 4 - 8 mm0.0%FSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSelenium9.0016 - 25 mm0.0%FSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSeleniumSelenium	Method B B Calc A Method H H
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> 50 mm 0.0 % F Sodium Na 553 mg/kg 451	Е
Primary Nutrients Result Units Method Chlorine Cl 442 mg/kg 20	D
Nitrogen N 0.72 % E Aluminum Al 901 mg/kg 45.1	Е
Phosphorus P 0.07 % E Trace Nutrients Result Units MRL	Method
Potassium K 0.74 % B Copper Cu 7.8 mg/kg 0.45	н
Secondary Nutrients Result Units Method Zinc Zn 13.6 mg/kg 0.90	Н
Calcium Ca 7410 mg/kg E Iron Fe 1307 mg/kg 22.5	Е
Magnesium Mg 972 mg/kg E Manganese Mn 190 mg/kg 0.45	н
Sulfur S 211 mg/kg E Boron B 18.9 mg/kg 4.5	

USBI Factsheet:

Interpreting Biochar Analysis

Coming Soon!

* "ND" stands for "not detected" which means the result is below the Method Reporting Limit (MRL).

Method A ASTM D1762-84 B Dry Combustion - LECO C TMECC (2001) 4.10 & 4.11, 1:20 dilution D 1:20 dilution, Ion Chromatography E EPA3050B/EPA 6010 F ASTM D 2862 Granular G Surface area correlation based on 'Analytical Options for Biochar Adsorption...' (McLaughlin et al, 2012) H EPA3050B/EPA 6020 I AOAC 955.01 J ASTM D 4373 K EPA 7471

Pacific Biochar



Biochar Qualities Help Determine Appropriate Use



IBI Classification Tool https://biochar-international.org/resources/biochar-classification-tool/ibi-biochar-classification-tool-main-page/



Standards, Guidelines, Specifications, Certifications

IBI Certification

Safe for use in soil - Non toxic Stable (Carbon enriched for lost C) $\geq 10\%, \geq 30\%, \geq 60\%$ Carbon H:C ratio <0.7 (stability) Sustainable Carbon smart

European Biochar Standards, Certificate (2015)

World Biochar Certificate (2023)

(Basis for carbon dioxide removal credits, feeding biochar, soil and non soil uses)

Australia New Zealand Biochar Industry Group (ANZBIG)

AAPFCO Association of American Plant Food Control Officials biochar definition (2016)

OMRI Organic Materials Review Institute

International Biochar Initiative

Std. Ver 2.0 Biochar-international.org











Biochars are Produced in Mobile, Modular, and Industrial Systems



"Ring of Fire" Wilsonbiochar.com



CharBoss airburners.com



Carbonator 6050 tigercat.com



ARTIchar artichar.com



Pyreg 500-6000 Pyreg.de



Biomacon Biomacon.com



ICM Inc icminc.com



Place Based Biochar: Simple Kilns for Hand Piles









Wood 5.6 CY/kiln 2 CY biochar in 4-5 hours 1-2 people wilsonbiochar.com

Ring of Fire Kiln®



Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies

Place Based Biochar: Portable High Efficiency Kilns









STANDARD" Model:

Height 4ft 2in
Volume
Top rim 35 ft3
Filled with char 30 ft3
Weight empty 1400 lb

1-3 CY/Day Air assist Flood quench Nutrient Rich liquid



KON TIKI TAS Terra Preta Developments Tasmania Australia www.terrapretadevelopments.com.au



Place Based Biochar: Curtain of air burns gases. Biochar withdrawn continuously through a grate.



Air Burners Inc.- USFS Cooperative Research and Development Agreement





Placed Based Biochar: Air Curtain Burners Recover Biochar and Energy



8 tons biomass/hr 80 t/day 2-4 ton/day biochar (16 CY)



airburners.com



Air Curtain Burner 100-1000 kWe



Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies

airburners.com

Mobile Carbonizers Recover Biochar from Forest Fuels and Urban Wood: Biochar Shipped in Bag or Bulk



Convert forest residues, land clearing wood to biochar for direct use on site or export.



Oregon 2020



FORESTERS CAN ALSO REMOVE FOREST FUELS USING PORTABLE WOOD GRINDING EQUIPMENT. THESE PRODUCE WOOD CHIPS THAT CAN BE LOADED INTO CHIP VANS FOR TRANSPORT TO NEARBY **BIOMASS POWERPLANTS, WHERE THEY ARE CONVERTED INTO** ENERGY AND BIOCHAR.

(Peterson 5710 horizontal grinder)

(excavator)

LEARN MORE AT

www.biochar-us.org 36

Slash Pile

RESTS AND Excess forest fuels can create energy and help build healthy soils

(chip van)



Small Scale Gasifiers: Combined Heat and Biochar



Phoenix Energy California 2 MWe + 600 lb/hr Biochar 2CY/h Eqtec.com gasifier phoenixenergy.net





<u>Qualterraag.com</u>

Molecular Plant Testing Clean Plant Propagation Biomass Processing & Carbon Regeneration







Biomass: 55 lb/hr

Biochar: 11 lb/hr

Heat: 170,000 Btuh Operation: ~12 hours

Start-Up Time: 20 – 40min

All Power Labs Chartainer 150 kWe+biochar (Under development) www.allpowerlabs.com



Charpallet 25



Turn Bi Electricit



USBI

Small Stationary Systems: Small Scale Gasification

Low Capacity

- 600-1200 lb/hr feedstock
- 150-300 lb/hr biochar
- 0.5-1 CY/hr

Simple Operation

Automated control

Heat Recovery

• Hot air or hot water





Integrated Modular Pyrolysis Systems: Heat and Biochar – BET, ARTiChar



BET



biomassenergytechniques.com











Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies

Small to Medium Scale European Systems

Examples for industrial eauipment producing Biochar









Biomacon





VOW

biochar-industry.com



Biochar Boilers: Combined Heat and Biochar Auen Pflege Dienst – Flaach

Reference Project ("Small")



- Customer: Auen Pflege Dienst AG (CH)
- Equipment: **Biomacon C400-I**
- Commissioning: **2019**
- Feedstock: Natural wood (forest and landscape management)
- Energy utilization: Feeding up to 400 kWth into the local district heating network and an own district heating network for industry
- Biochar production: up to **360 t/yr of Biochar**

biochar-industry.com



Small Scale Combined Heat and Biochar







1.7 MMBtuh (500 KW) + 100 lb/hr biochar

Biomacon.com



Char used in structured soil



Gasifier-Boiler 4 MMBtuh (1200 kW) + 125 lb/hr biochar



Pyrolyze Chipped Wood to Heat, Biochar, and Oil – VOW ASA/Biogreen Energy





Small Industrial Gasifiers Produce Heat and Biochar





Earthcare LLC earthcarellc.com 2 tph fuel 50 TPD 12 tpd Biochar

Wood, Manure, Litters, Gasification, Heat

Ecoremedy Fluid Lift Gasification ecoremedyllc.com

Wood, Manure, Digestate, Biosolids, Heat



6

Greenhouse Heating + Biochar (for Compost)







www.rainbowbeeeater.com.au



Green Sawdust Gasifier Chars Enhance Turf and Trees



KDS Systems Green Sawdust Gasifier heats Lumber Dry Kilns <u>www.kdskilns.com</u> 3-5 tph fuel input, .25-0.4 t/hr biochar

Biochar co-product refined for landscaping



Liquid or granular biotic soil amendment for golf and turf (LESCO CarbonPro lesco.com)



CarbonPro www.lesco.com/products/carbonpro Deeper stronger roots Improved greening Improved Soil and Seed Establishment Increased Nutrient Uptake and Efficiency Reduced Water Requirements Targeted Benefits



Rotary Kiln Heats Biomass in Rotating Drum Using Pyrolysis or Auxiliary Gas 48-144 t/d





Rotary Kiln Pyrolysis 48-144 t/d







Char Technologies chartechnologies.com

Sanju Crop Residue to Biochar Fertilizer Production Facility 2.5 mt/hr, gas+pyrogas







Combined Heat, Power and Biochar



the second s

biochar-industry.com





Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies

Wood Gasifier: Biochar, Steam and Power (7 MWe)







Waste Wood Heats Kansas Ethanol Plant ICMinc.com



Biochar From Staged Combustion: KMW

Operational Changes - Heating vs Producing Biochar



Combined Heat and Biochar Operation



5% stoichiometric air required

www.kmwenergy.com

Combined Heat and Biochar: KMW



Biomass Boilers Carry Biochars in Exhaust







Photo: Capital Press Freres Lumber

Source: Wellons, Inc. www.wellonsusa.com



96 Ag and Wood Biomass Plants Could Recover Biochar 27 Million Tons per year -> 3,200 MW

Туре	No.	MWe	MMTPY dry
Biomass Plants	159	5,583	45
Ag Waste	6	203	2
Wood	90	3,036	24
MSW	66	2,346	19
Industry			70

U.S. Biomass Power Plants biomassmagazine.com, EIA

Practical Implementation: Biochar Production Technologies

Using Biochar: Biochars are Delivered in Bulk

- 2 CY 400 lb dry
- > High carbon
- Low Volatiles
- Low Ash
- **>** Low Fines
- Good Flowability

Oregon Biochar Solutions www.chardirect.com

80 CY 8-10 t

From Factory to Use

Biochars are Delivered in Bulk Bags

Bulk bag - spout top and bottom

A step deck flatbed truck loaded with 19 pallets of 4 yards – 76 cubic yards of biochar on board. *Biochar Solutions LTD.* Bags at Distributor 2 pallets/ton

Technologies for Climate Resilience: Renewable Energy, Increase Soil Carbon, Remove CO2e

New climate friendly technologies

convert low-value wood waste to biochar reduce urban waste, wildfire risk and facilitate biochar applications.

Carbon Markets fund increased biochar production reduce costs

USDA and States create tools and opportunities to increase Soil Carbon and improve Water Quality and Soil Health Biochars and biochar amended products from wood residues help improve food and fiber production and climate resilience.

Thank you!

Tom Miles Executive Director US Biochar Initiative tom@biochar-us.org www.biochar-us.org

Connect

info@biochar-us.org https://biochar-us.org instagram.com/usbiochar youtube.com/@USBiocharInitiative linkedin.com/company/us-biochar-initiative twitter.com/usbiochar facebook.com/USbiochar biochar.groups.io

Learning Center & Fact Sheets

