

Biochar Use In Viticulture

Report prepared by :



Biochar has been successfully used in viticulture to boost productivity through improved plant and soil health without negative effects to the grape or wine flavor. There is a large body of research supporting the application of biochar in viticulture specifically, as well as in soils and compost generally.

With biochar matched appropriately to the soils at establishment, growers have seen a 2 to 3 harvest payback on their investment. The increasing need for improved water management is one of the prime benefits seen in vineyards, and that need is expected to intensify as a changing climate affects water availability further. An additional benefit to an investment in biochar is its longevity—measured in decades to millennia—which also opens the potential for economic benefit from the developing carbon credit markets.

Biochar is the product of heating organic feedstocks¹ in a low oxygen environment, a process called pyrolysis. Biochar's primary characteristic is its large surface area, which allows it to address these grape grower's needs:

- Increase water retention
- Increase soil carbon
- Nutrient release leveling
- Soil structure management
- Soil biota improvement
- Soil contamination mitigation
- Pruning and marc disposal (by serving as a feedstock for biochar production)

From the growers' experiences provided in the full report², you can see there have been significant successes using biochar in vineyards. The clearest benefit of biochar is its water holding capacity, but the nutrient leveling effects and increased soil carbon (SOM) are also demonstrated in grower's increased productivity. While the soil characteristics were not identified by most growers, it's a critical factor when considering biochar enhancement, whether in the soil or as compost/mulch.

¹Feedstocks range from woody to grassy, bones, manure, livestock litters, and other inputs to create specialized chars.

²[Dovetail Report: Biochar Use in Viticulture](#)

THIRD HARVEST REPORT, OASIS VINEYARD FIELD TRIAL WITH BIOCHAR AND COMPOST - <https://pacificbiochar.com/vineyard-field-trial-with-biochar-and-compost-3rd-harvest-report/>

Meta-analysis review, Schmidt et al, 2021 - <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gcbb.12889>

Biochar Use in Viticulture: Project Team

- ▶ Kathleen Draper, Chair, *International Biochar Initiative*
- ▶ Harry Groot, *Dovetail Partners*
- ▶ Ashley McFarland, *Dovetail Partners*
- ▶ Tom Miles, Chair, *US Biochar Initiative*



The work upon which this presentation is based is funded through a grant awarded by the US Forest Service Wood Education Resource Center's Wood Innovation Grant 20-DG-11083150-011



Project Overview

- ▶ The project explored the potential for using biochar in three applications:
 - Viticulture, Livestock and Poultry, and Stormwater Management.
- ▶ The process used was to:
 - Interview experienced users
 - Review relevant published scientific research
 - Analyze needs of users and other market data
 - Provide educational outreach
 - Reports
 - Webinars



Report Highlights

- ▶ Biochar has been successfully used in viticulture to boost productivity through improved plant and soil health without negative effects to the grape or wine flavor.
- ▶ There is a large body of research supporting the application of biochar in viticulture specifically, as well as in soils and compost generally.
- ▶ There are many suppliers of biochar in the major grape growing regions of the US.



Today's Speakers

- ▶ **Kathleen Draper**–Finger Lakes Biochar (NY), Co–Author of *Burn–Using Fire to Cool the Earth*, IBI Chair, USBI Board member
- ▶ **Josiah Hunt**–Pacific Biochar Benefit Corp., USBI Board member
- ▶ **Doug Beck**–Monterey Pacific Inc.





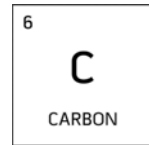
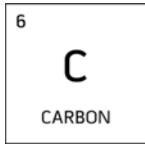
Practical Application of Biochar in Vineyards

Doug Beck

Monterey Pacific Inc.

Josiah Hunt

Pacific Biochar Benefit Co.



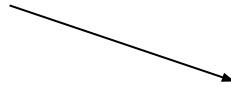
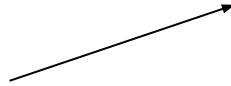
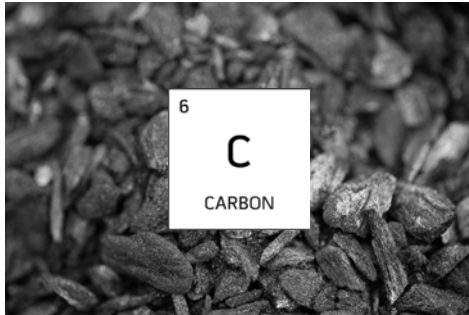








“When the carbon is worth more in the ground than it is in the furnace...”





\$



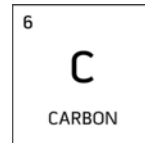
Farmland
Improvement,
Potting Media, etc.



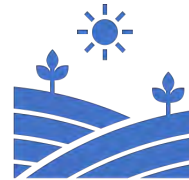
\$



\$



Carbon Dioxide
Removal,
Voluntary Markets

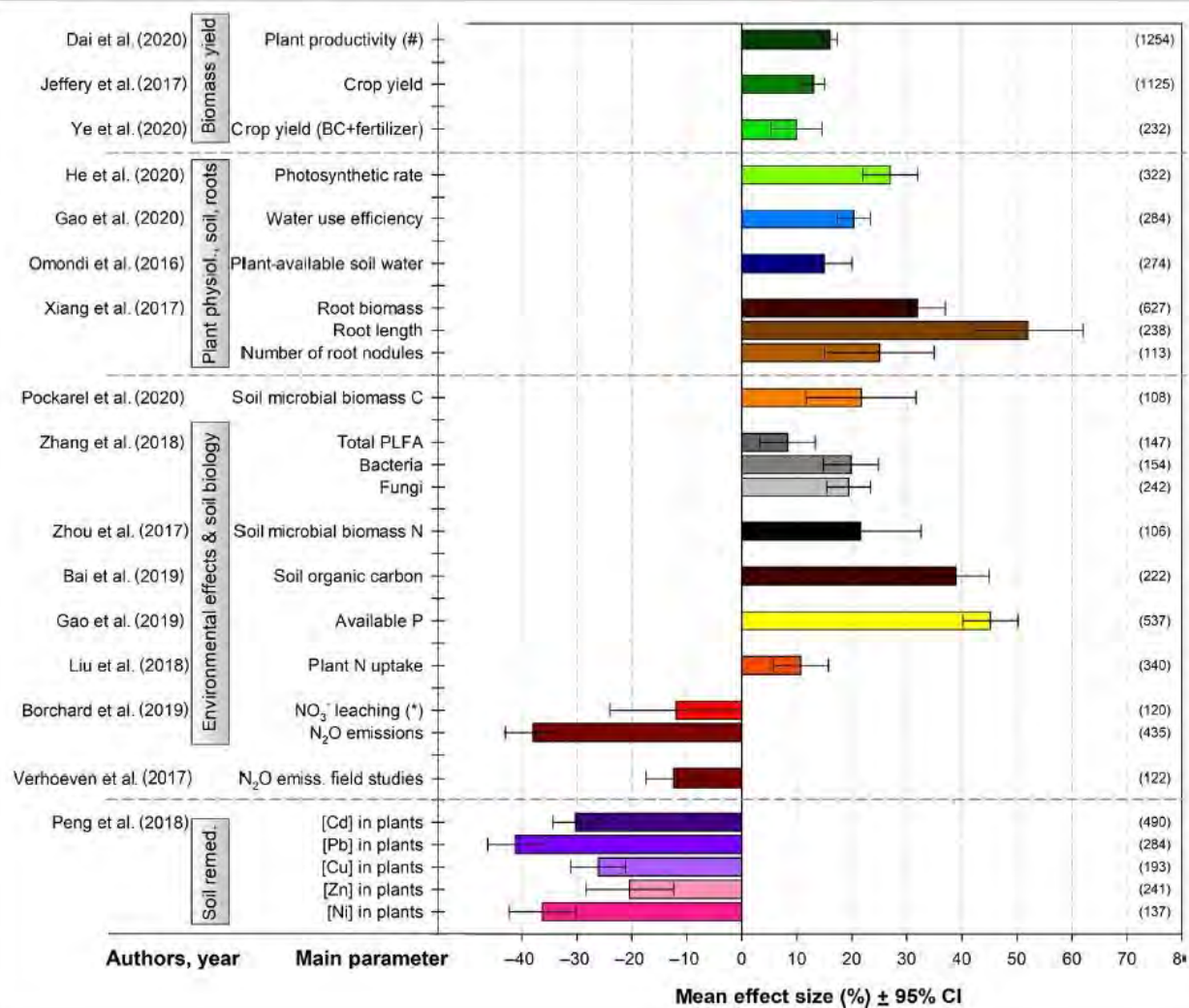


Farmland
Improvement,
Potting Media, etc.

Biochar in agriculture – A systematic review of 26 global meta-analyses

Hans-Peter Schmidt¹ | Claudia Kammann² | Nikolas Hagemann^{3,4} | Jens Leifeld⁴ | Thomas D. Bucheli⁴ | Miguel Angel Sánchez Monedero⁵ | Maria Luz Cayuela⁵

FIGURE 2 Selected parameters with highest agronomic relevance that were investigated in the 26 reviewed meta-analyses. The mean overall effect size (% change) and 95% confidence intervals are given as reported in the original studies. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of pairwise comparisons used for that specific parameter





Burn to generate electricity?

Pyrolize to biochar,
and bury?





Oasis Vineyard Biochar Trial

California Dept. of Water Resources, University of California - Riverside,
Sonoma Ecology Center, Monterey Pacific Inc, & Pacific Biochar





Oasis Vineyard Trial 2017-2020

Treatments:

All treatments applied at depth down planting row (delved) in random pattern (4 replicates) across 8 acre trial area with standard annual fertilizer applications across all blocks

- Control - 0 tons/acre compost, 0 tons/acre biochar
- Compost 15 - 15 tons/acre compost
- Biochar 10 - 10 tons/acre biochar
- Compost + Biochar - 15 tons/acre compost, 10 tons/acre biochar



%OM Calculations for Vineyard Treatments

Cultivated Area_ Soil Volume and Weight

Cu ft / vine	vine / acre	cu ft / acre	cu yd / acre	soil density g/cm	soil density ton/cy	tons soil/acre
25	1089	27225	1008	1.3	1.10	1104.64

Biochar Application Rate_ Ton/acre Input, %OM Output

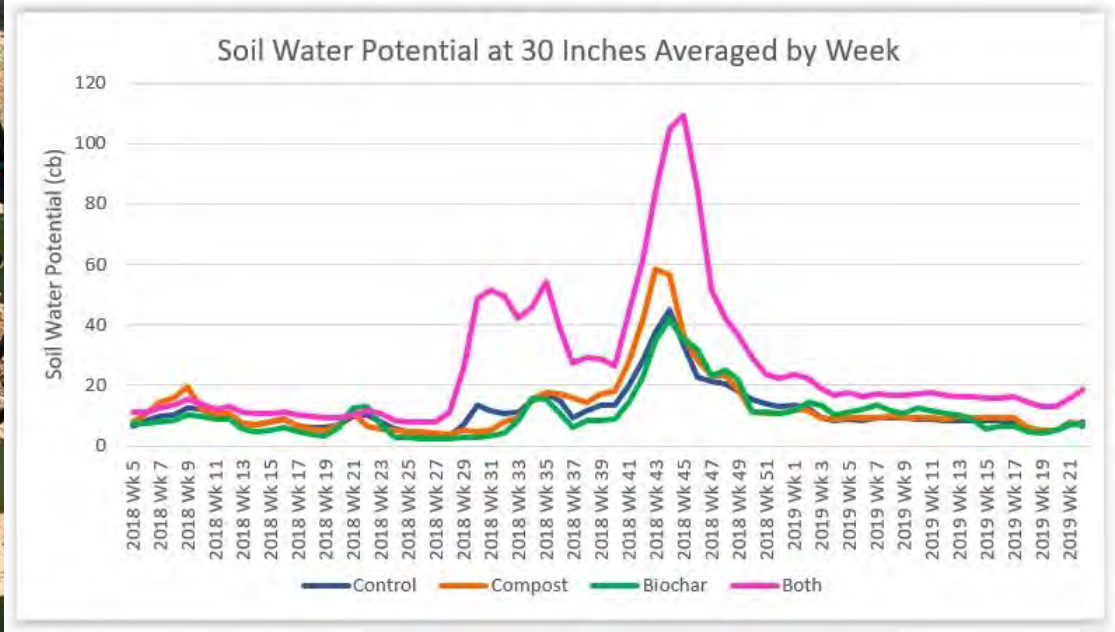
	biochar applied (wet ton)	biochar moisture %	biochar applied (dry ton)	biochar OM content	tons OM applied	% SOM achieved
Biochar	10.00	38%	6.18	74.50%	4.60	0.42%



Compost Application Rate_ Ton/acre Input, %OM Output

	compost applied (wet ton)	compost moisture %	compost applied (dry ton)	compost OM content	tons OM applied	% SOM achieved
Compost	15.00	49%	7.70	42.50%	3.27	0.30%





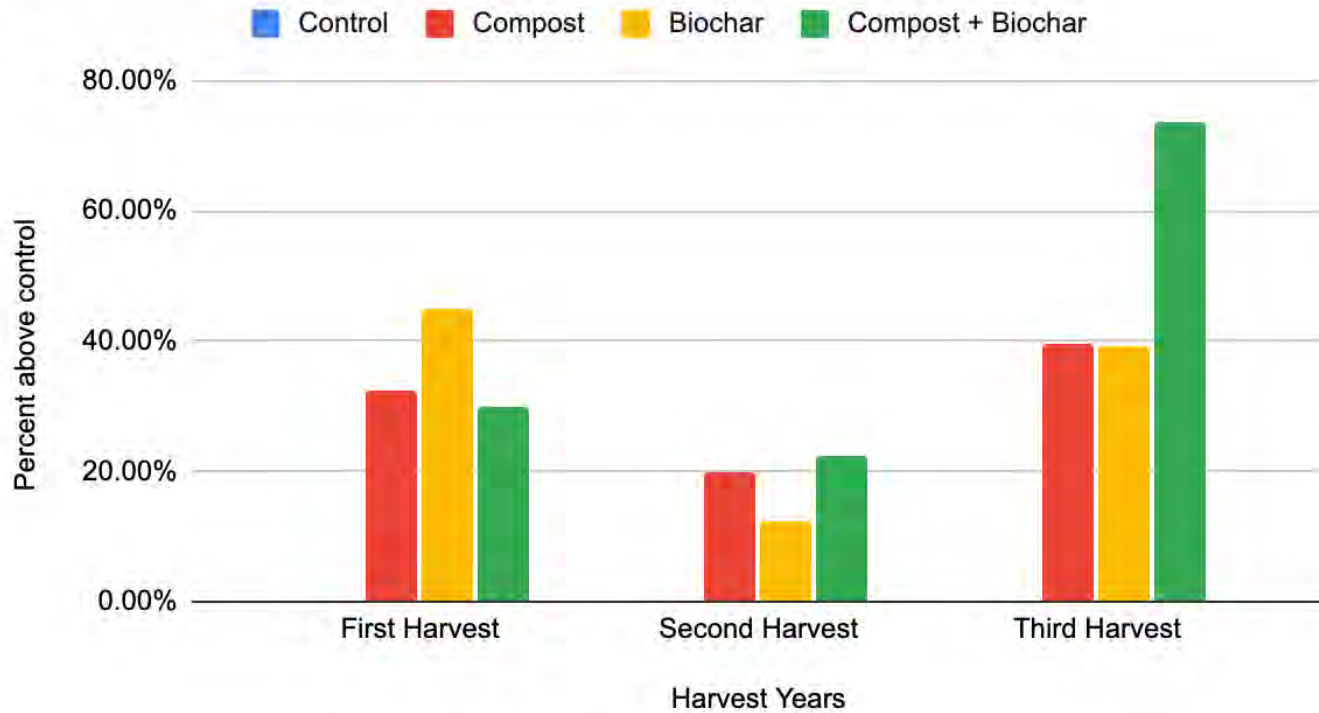
Harvest 2019 3rd Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb
R1	2.78	26.40	0.31
R2 Control	3.73	28.70	0.27
R3	2.82	23.10	0.25
R4	2.42	26.30	0.31
Control Average	2.94	26.13	0.29
R1	4.04	30.60	0.27
R2 Compost	3.30	27.10	0.25
R3	4.20	33.20	0.26
R4	4.02	27.60	0.30
Compost Average	3.89	29.63	0.27
R1	3.94	28.50	0.29
R2 Biochar	4.90	39.60	0.26
R3	3.63	27.30	0.28
R4	4.55	33.30	0.28
Biochar Average	4.26	32.18	0.28
R1	3.78	26.80	0.29
R2 Compost + Biochar	3.58	24.40	0.30
R3	3.83	36.90	0.21
R4	4.08	31.50	0.27
Compost-Bio Average	3.82	29.90	0.27

Harvest 2020 4th Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb
R1	9.22	54.60	0.31
R2 Control	10.12	53.95	0.34
R3	8.66	46.60	0.34
R4	8.00	41.85	0.35
Control Average	9.00	49.25	0.34
R1	10.37	55.25	0.34
R2 Compost	10.72	54.30	0.36
R3	11.39	62.60	0.33
R4	10.68	54.45	0.36
Compost Average	10.79	56.65	0.35
R1	10.71	57.00	0.34
R2 Biochar	10.79	57.40	0.35
R3	10.72	58.50	0.34
R4	8.27	45.55	0.33
Biochar Average	10.12	54.61	0.34
R1	11.21	58.80	0.35
R2 Compost + Biochar	10.23	55.15	0.34
R3	13.09	65.10	0.37
R4	9.57	49.85	0.35
Compost-Bio Average	11.02	57.23	0.35

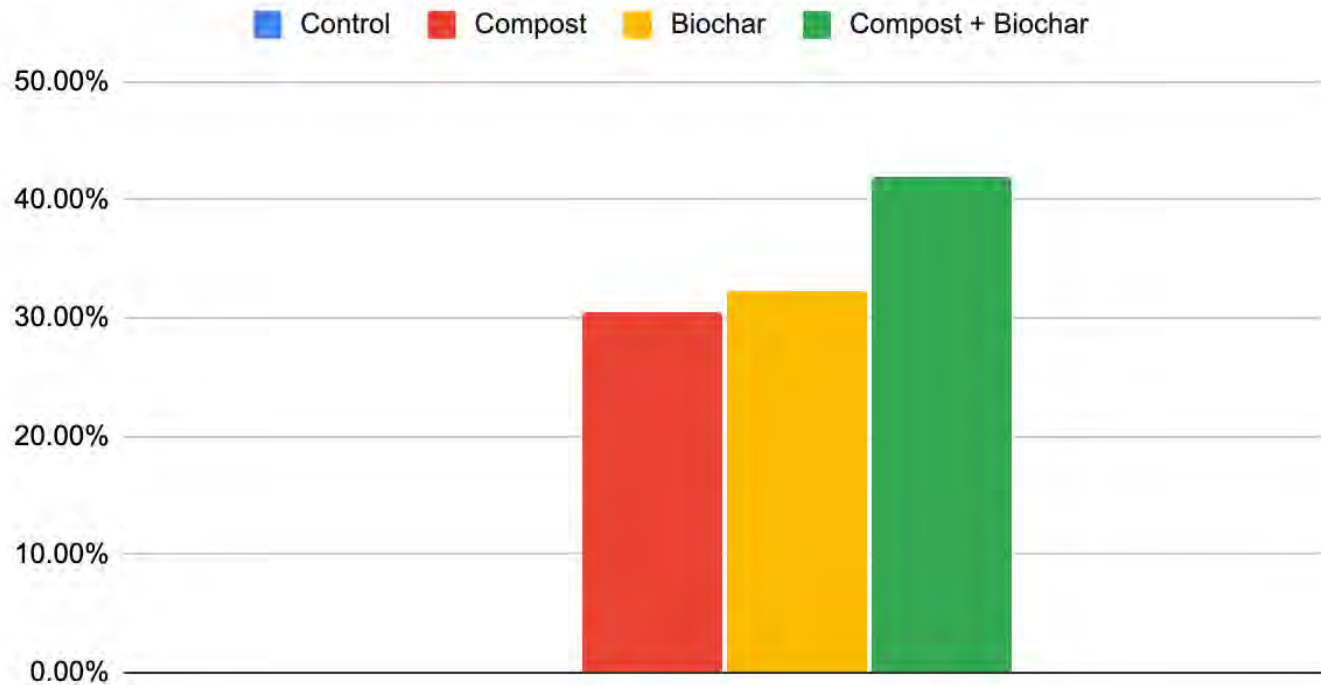
Harvest 2020 4th Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb
R1	9.22	54.60	0.31
R2 Control	10.12	53.95	0.34
R3	8.66	46.60	0.34
R4	8.00	41.85	0.35
Control Average	9.00	49.25	0.34
R1	10.37	55.25	0.34
R2 Compost	10.72	54.30	0.36
R3	11.39	62.60	0.33
R4	10.68	54.45	0.36
Compost Average	10.79	56.65	0.35
R1	10.71	57.00	0.34
R2 Biochar	10.79	57.40	0.35
R3	10.72	58.50	0.34
R4	8.27	45.55	0.33
Biochar Average	10.12	54.61	0.34
R1	11.21	58.80	0.35
R2 Compost + Biochar	10.23	55.15	0.34
R3	13.09	65.10	0.37
R4	9.57	49.85	0.35
Compost-Bio Average	11.02	57.23	0.35

Harvest 2021 5th Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb
R1	2.897	25.40	0.21
R2 Control	3.376	30.25	0.20
R3	4.438	56.15	0.15
R4	4.62	48.60	0.17
Control Average	3.833	40.10	0.18
R1	4.397	33.40	0.24
R2 Compost	3.762	37.20	0.19
R3	6.044	49.65	0.22
R4	7.193	65.85	0.20
Compost Average	5.349	46.53	0.21
R1	4.108	32.30	0.23
R2 Biochar	5.418	45.40	0.22
R3	6.161	52.95	0.21
R4	5.685	50.05	0.21
Biochar Average	5.343	45.18	0.22
R1	4.775	36.50	0.24
R2 Compost + Biochar	6.382	41.00	0.29
R3	7.914	63.80	0.23
R4	7.533	68.30	0.20
Compost-Bio Average	6.651	52.40	0.24

Yield, Percent Above Control, 3 Harvests



Yield, Percent Above Control, 3 yr Average



Compost Analysis

Nutrients	Dry wt.	As Rcvd.	units	Stability Indicator:	Respirometry	Biologically Available C
Total Nitrogen:	1.5	0.79	%	CO2 Evolution		
Ammonia (NH ₄ -N):	18	9.1	mg/kg	mg CO ₂ -C/g OM/day	0.73	1.0
Nitrate (NO ₃ -N):	450	230	mg/kg	mg CO ₂ -C/g TS/day	0.31	0.44
Org. Nitrogen (Org.-N):	1.5	0.77	%	<i>Stability Rating</i>	<i>very stable</i>	<i>very stable</i>
Phosphorus (as P ₂ O ₅):	3.7	1.9	%	Maturity Indicator: Cucumber Bioassay		
Phosphorus (P):	16000	8300	mg/kg	Compost:Vermiculite(v:v)	1:2	
Potassium (as K ₂ O):	7.9	4.1	%	Emergence (%)	93	
Potassium (K):	66000	34000	mg/kg	Seedling Vigor (%)	109	
Calcium (Ca):	27	14	%	<i>Description of Plants</i>	<i>healthy</i>	
Magnesium (Mg):	2.7	1.4	%	Pathogens	Results	Units
Sulfate (SO ₄ -S):	4000	2000	mg/kg	Fecal Coliform	8.5	MPN/g
Boron (Total B):	110	58	mg/kg	Salmonella	< 3	MPN/4g
Moisture:	0	48.7	%			Rating
Sodium (Na):	1.6	0.83	%			<i>pass</i>
Chloride (Cl):	0.83	0.43	%			<i>pass</i>
pH Value:	NA	7.59	unit			
Bulk Density :	21	41	lb/cu ft			
Carbonates (CaCO ₃):	130	66	lb/ton			
Conductivity (EC5):	13	NA	mmhos/cm			
Organic Matter:	42.5	21.8	%	Inerts	% by weight	
Organic Carbon:	22.0	11.0	%	Plastic	< 0.5	
Ash:	57.5	29.5	%	Glass	< 0.5	
C/N Ratio	14	14	ratio	Metal	< 0.5	
AgIndex	5	5	ratio	Sharps	ND	

P per ton Compost at 8,300 ppm is about 17 lb/ton
 =255 lb P per 15 tons compost or **0.26 lb/vine**

K per ton Compost at 34,000 ppm is about 68 lb/ton or
 =1,020 lb K per 15 tons compost or **1 lb/vine**

Biochar Analysis

International BioChar Initiative (IBI) Laboratory Tests for Certification Program

	Dry Basis Unless Stated: Range	Units	Method
Moisture (time of analysis)	38.2	% wet wt.	ASTM D1762-84 (105c)
Bulk Density	10.6	lb/cu ft	
Organic Carbon	68.0	% of total dry mass	Dry Combust-ASTM D 4373
Hydrogen/Carbon (H:C)	0.30 0.7 Max	Molar Ratio	H dry combustion/C(above)
Total Ash	25.5	% of total dry mass	ASTM D-1762-84
Total Nitrogen	0.69	% of total dry mass	Dry Combustion

Basic Soil Enhancement Properties

Total (K)	19554 mg/kg	E
Total (P)	2738 mg/kg	E
Ammonia (NH4-N)	13.4 mg/kg	A
Nitrate (NO3-N)	10.2 mg/kg	A
Organic (Org-N)	6856 mg/kg	Calc.

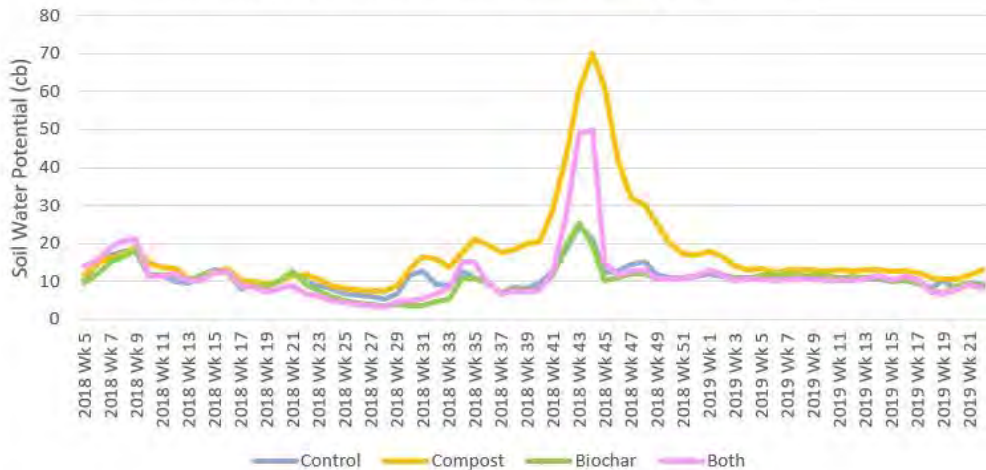
P per ton Biochar at 2,738 ppm dry weight is about 3 lbs per ton as delivered

=33 lb P per 10 tons biochar or **0.03 lb/vine**

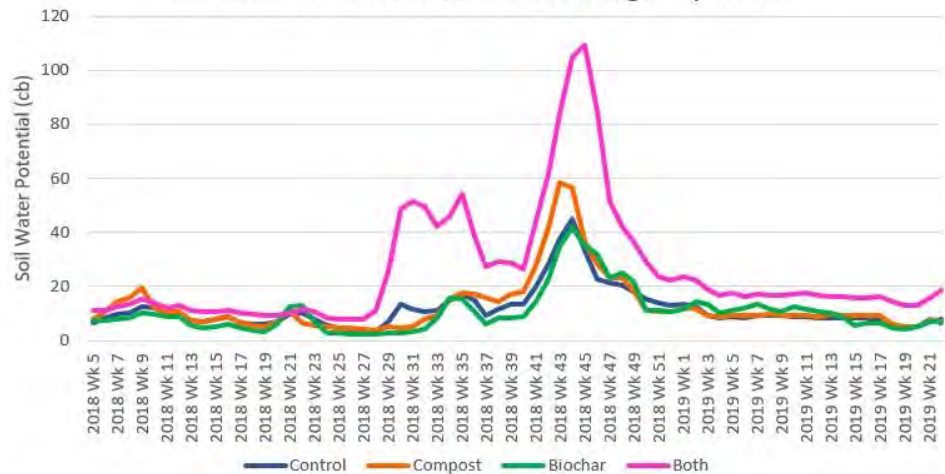
K per ton Biochar at 19,554 ppm dry weight is about 23 lb/ton as delivered

=230 lb K per 10 tons biochar or **0.24 lb/vine**

Soil Water Potential at 18 Inches Averaged by Week



Soil Water Potential at 30 Inches Averaged by Week



4th Leaf Grape Quality

Titratable Acidity			
AVERAGES	mg/L	% difference	ST DEV
Control	6.425	0.00%	0.26
Compost	6.375	-0.78%	0.29
Biochar	6.375	-0.78%	0.33
Com+Biochar	6.25	-2.72%	0.24
pH			
AVERAGES	pH	% difference	ST DEV
Control	3.3925	0.00%	0.08
Compost	3.4125	0.59%	0.09
Biochar	3.4275	1.03%	0.12
Com+Biochar	3.4575	1.92%	0.09
Brix			
AVERAGES	brix	% difference	ST DEV
Control	23.875	0.00%	1.01
Compost	23.35	-2.20%	0.47
Biochar	24.25	1.57%	0.99
Com+Biochar	23.75	-0.52%	0.87

Harvest 2020 4th Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb
R1	9.22	54.60	0.31
R2 Control	10.12	53.95	0.34
R3	8.66	46.60	0.34
R4	8.00	41.85	0.35
Control Average	9.00	49.25	0.34
R1	10.37	55.25	0.34
R2 Compost	10.72	54.30	0.36
R3	11.39	62.60	0.33
R4	10.68	54.45	0.36
Compost Average	10.79	56.65	0.35
R1	10.71	57.00	0.34
R2 Biochar	10.79	57.40	0.35
R3	10.72	58.50	0.34
R4	8.27	45.55	0.33
Biochar Average	10.12	54.61	0.34
R1	11.21	58.80	0.35
R2 Compost + Biochar	10.23	55.15	0.34
R3	13.09	65.10	0.37
R4	9.57	49.85	0.35
Compost-Bio Average	11.02	57.23	0.35

4th Leaf Berry Size

Berry Weight

AVERAGES	g/berry	% difference	ST DEV
Control	1.3675	0.00%	0.02
Compost	1.33	-2.74%	0.05
Biochar	1.3925	1.83%	0.05
Com+Biochar	1.3575	-0.73%	0.02

Berry Volume

AVERAGES	ml/berry	% difference	ST DEV
Control	1.1475	0.00%	0.04
Compost	1.185	3.27%	0.07
Biochar	1.24*	8.06%	0.08
Com+Biochar	1.15	0.22%	0.03

Sugar per Berry

AVERAGES	mg/berry	% difference	ST DEV
Control	271.5	0.00%	12.48
Compost	273	0.55%	16.15
Biochar	298.5*	9.94%	12.79
Com+Biochar	270.5	-0.37%	16.82

Harvest 2020 4th Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb	
R1	9.22	54.60	0.31	
R2	Control	10.12	53.95	0.34
R3		8.66	46.60	0.34
R4		8.00	41.85	0.35
Control Average			9.00 49.25 0.34	
R1	Compost	10.37	55.25	0.34
R2		10.72	54.30	0.36
R3		11.39	62.60	0.33
R4		10.68	54.45	0.36
Compost Average			10.79 56.65 0.35	
R1	Biochar	10.71	57.00	0.34
R2		10.79	57.40	0.35
R3		10.72	58.50	0.34
R4		8.27	45.55	0.33
Biochar Average			10.12 54.61 0.34	
R1	Compost + Biochar	11.21	58.80	0.35
R2		10.23	55.15	0.34
R3		13.09	65.10	0.37
R4		9.57	49.85	0.35
Compost-Bio Average			11.02 57.23 0.35	

4th Leaf Grape Color?

Polymeric Anthocyanins

AVERAGES	mg/L	% difference	ST DEV
Control	6.25	0.00%	0.9574
Compost	6.00	-4.00%	0.0000
Biochar	6.50	4.00%	0.5774
Com+Biochar	5.75	-8.00%	0.5000

Tannin

AVERAGES	mg/L	% difference	ST DEV
Control	207.50	0.00%	18.9473
Compost	200.25	-3.49%	18.9978
Biochar	211.75	2.05%	22.3961
Com+Biochar	201.00	-3.13%	20.4124

Total Anthocyanins

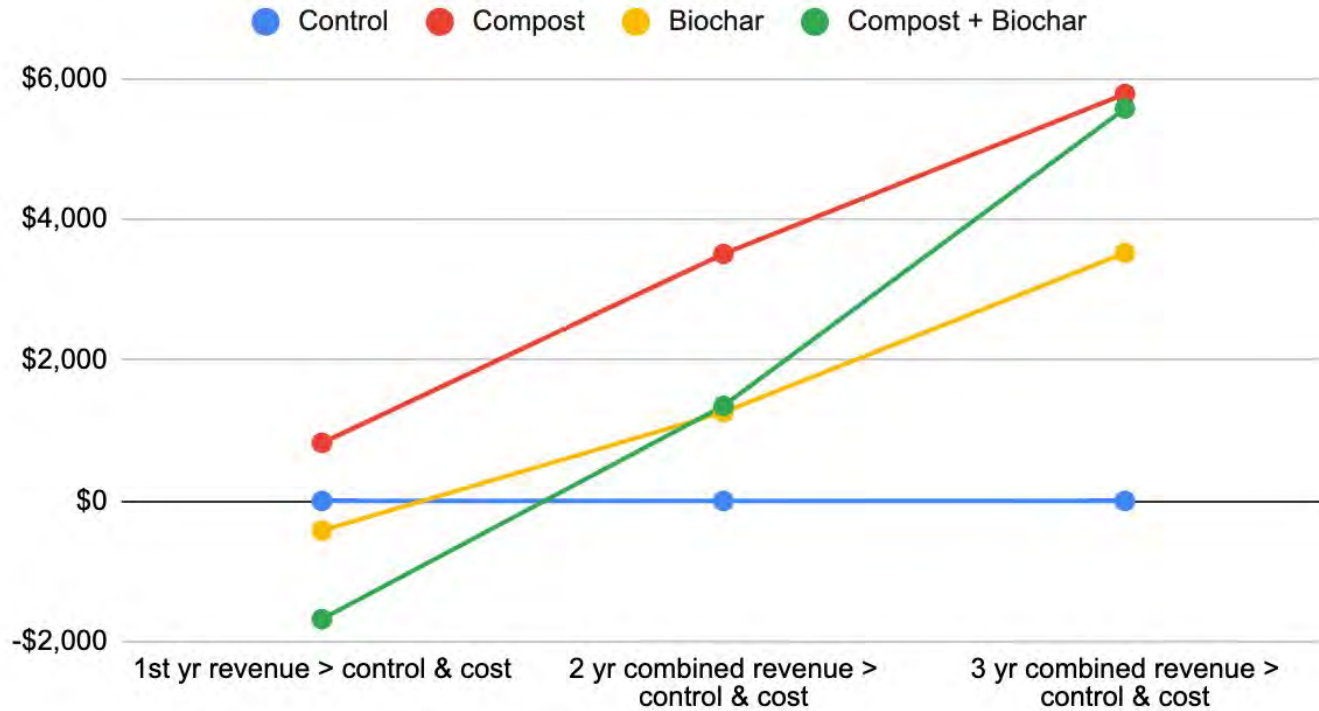
AVERAGES	mg/L	% difference	ST DEV
Control	627.50	0.00%	63.1057
Compost	628.50	0.16%	15.3514
Biochar	659.75	5.14%	49.5202
Com+Biochar	642.50	2.39%	60.7317

Harvest 2020 4th Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb
R1	9.22	54.60	0.31
R2 Control	10.12	53.95	0.34
R3	8.66	46.60	0.34
R4	8.00	41.85	0.35
Control Average	9.00	49.25	0.34
R1	10.37	55.25	0.34
R2 Compost	10.72	54.30	0.36
R3	11.39	62.60	0.33
R4	10.68	54.45	0.36
Compost Average	10.79	56.65	0.35
R1	10.71	57.00	0.34
R2 Biochar	10.79	57.40	0.35
R3	10.72	58.50	0.34
R4	8.27	45.55	0.33
Biochar Average	10.12	54.61	0.34
R1	11.21	58.80	0.35
R2 Compost + Biochar	10.23	55.15	0.34
R3	13.09	65.10	0.37
R4	9.57	49.85	0.35
Compost-Bio Average	11.02	57.23	0.35

Economic Return Assessment on Biochar-Only Application

- Yield Increase 3rd Leaf
 - 2019 +biochar=1.3 ton/acre increase
 - Grape price \$1500/ton
 - Additional revenue/acre = **\$1,950**
- Yield Increase 4th Leaf
 - 2020 +biochar = 1.1 ton/acre increase
 - Grape price \$1500/ton
 - Additional revenue/acre = **\$1,650**
 - No further amendments cost
- Yield Increase 5th Leaf
 - 2021 +biochar = 1.5 ton/acre increase
 - Grape price \$1500/ton
 - Additional Revenue = **\$2,250**
- Biochar cost
 - 10 ton/acre
 - Biochar cost \$240 per ton
 - Cost/acre = **\$2,400**
- Return on Investment
 - Additional revenue \$5,850/ac first 3 producing years, **\$3450 above cost**
 - Assume additional per year of 0.5 t/ac over no amendments, \$5,250 extra/ac over the next 7 years
 - Potentially added **\$8,700** income/ac over 10 yrs harvesting

Additional revenue above cost for inputs



Harvest 2020 4th Leaf	Yield	Cluster #	Cluster lb
R1	9.22	54.60	0.31
R2 Control	10.12	53.95	0.34
R3	8.66	46.60	0.34
R4	8.00	41.85	0.35
Control Average	9.00	49.25	0.34
R1	10.37	55.25	0.34
R2 Compost	10.72	54.30	0.36
R3	11.39	62.60	0.33
R4	10.68	54.45	0.36
Compost Average	10.79	56.65	0.35
R1	10.71	57.00	0.34
R2 Biochar	10.79	57.40	0.35
R3	10.72	58.50	0.34
R4	8.27	45.55	0.33
Biochar Average	10.12	54.61	0.34
R1	11.21	58.80	0.35
R2 Compost + Biochar	10.23	55.15	0.34
R3	13.09	65.10	0.37
R4	9.57	49.85	0.35
Compost-Bio Average	11.02	57.23	0.35



Biochar and Composting

CO-COMPOSTING, BLENDING, & AGING

- Compost is improved
 - Odor control (i.e. ammonia)
 - GHG emission reduction (i.e. CH_4 , N_2O , etc.)
 - Reduced nutrient loss, especially N
 - Increased microbial activity & diversity
 - Maturity and stability superior
- Biochar is improved
 - Complexed surface becomes more functional
 - Microbial colonization
 - Nutrient loading
 - Better plant growth response



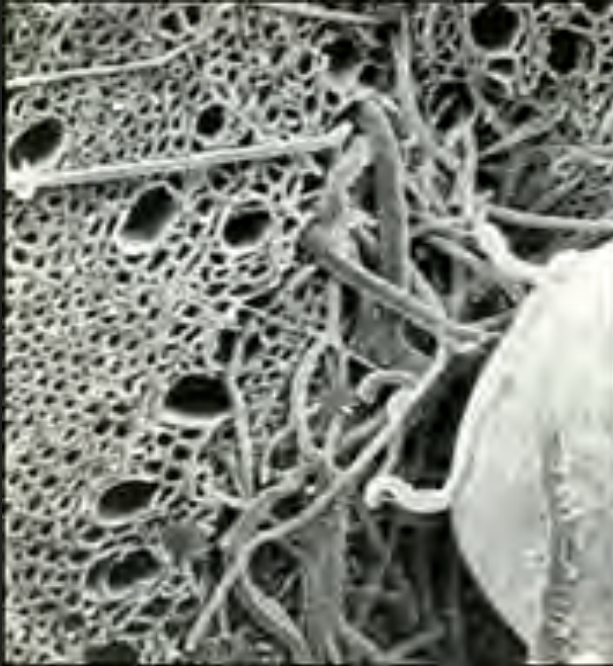
Biochar and Soil Biology

MICROBIAL HABITAT & ROOTS

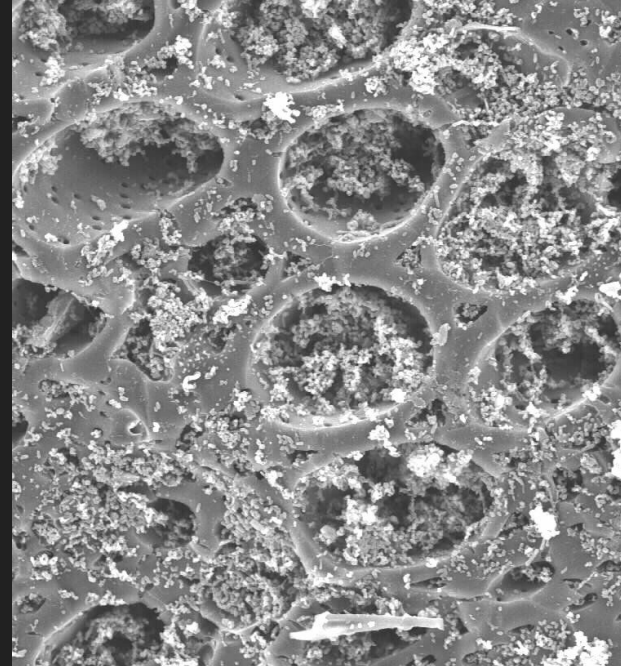
- Air, water and nutrients are retained in pores and on surfaces
- Organic coating forms on surfaces over time (i.e. biochar “aging”)
- Efficient electron transfer reactions
- Studies consistently demonstrate enhanced biological activity and diversity in soils using biochar



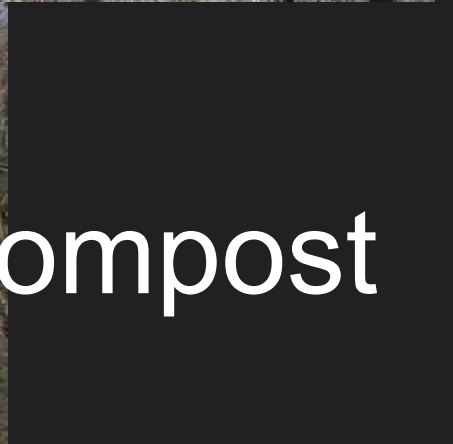
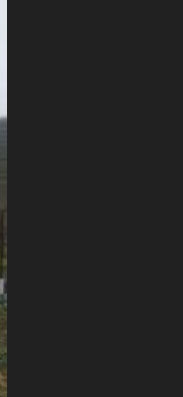
Scanning Electron Microscope Photos of Biochar



Mycorrhizal spore extending hyphae into biochar particle. Photo courtesy of Ogawa [8]



Surface complexing during composting. Photo courtesy of Yoshizawa [9]



Biochar ??

Compost

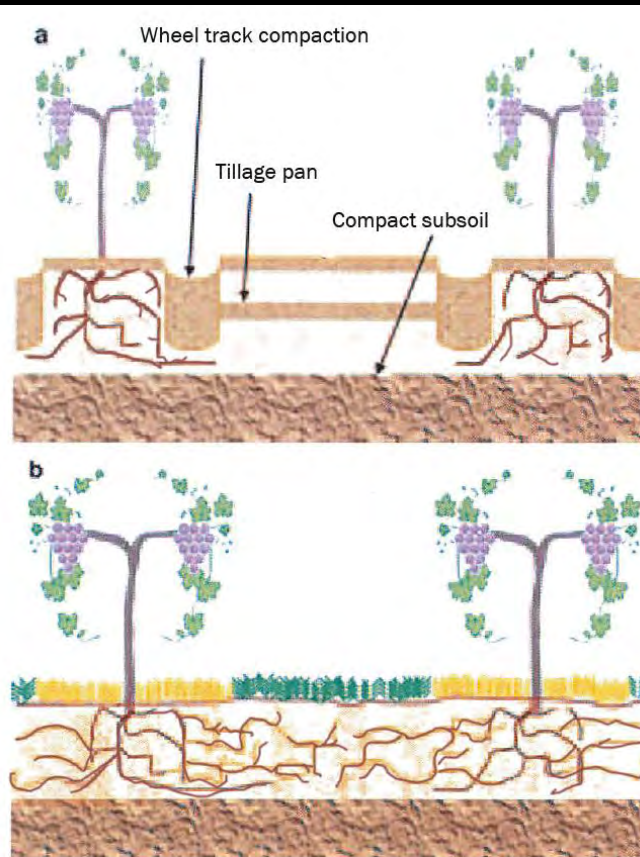
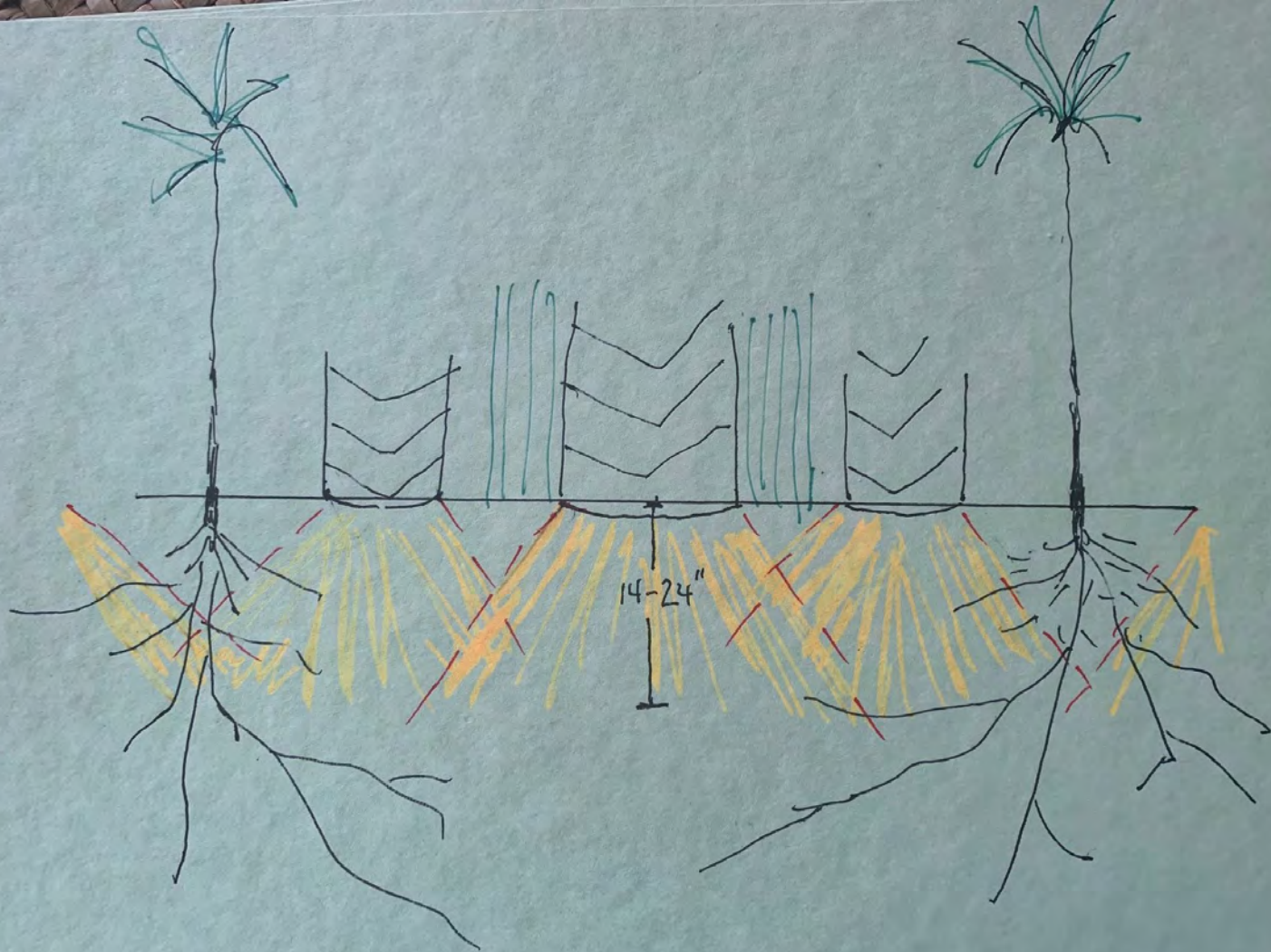


Fig. 10. Schematic cross sectional views of two vine rows showing (a) the most common elements of soil compaction in vineyards and illustrating restricted lateral vine root growth associated with wheel traffic compaction (b) amelioration of wheel, midrow and under-vine crusts and tillage pan compaction showing possible expansion of the vine root system. The under-vine cover crop is represented as being controlled by herbicide application during the growing season.

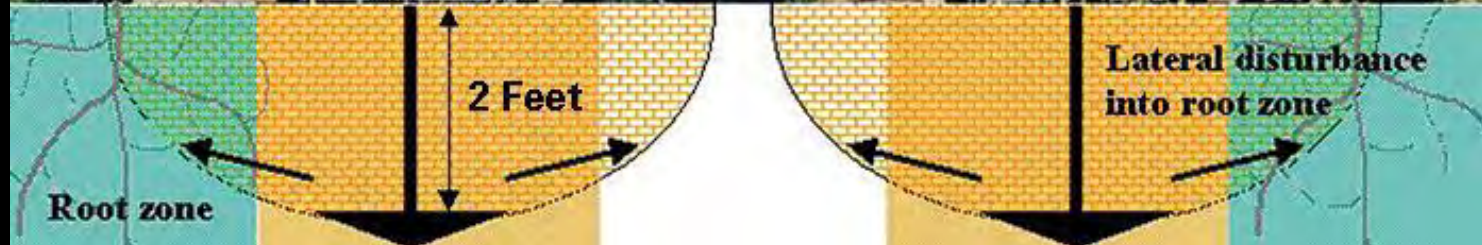












Nitrogen Management

Soil Health

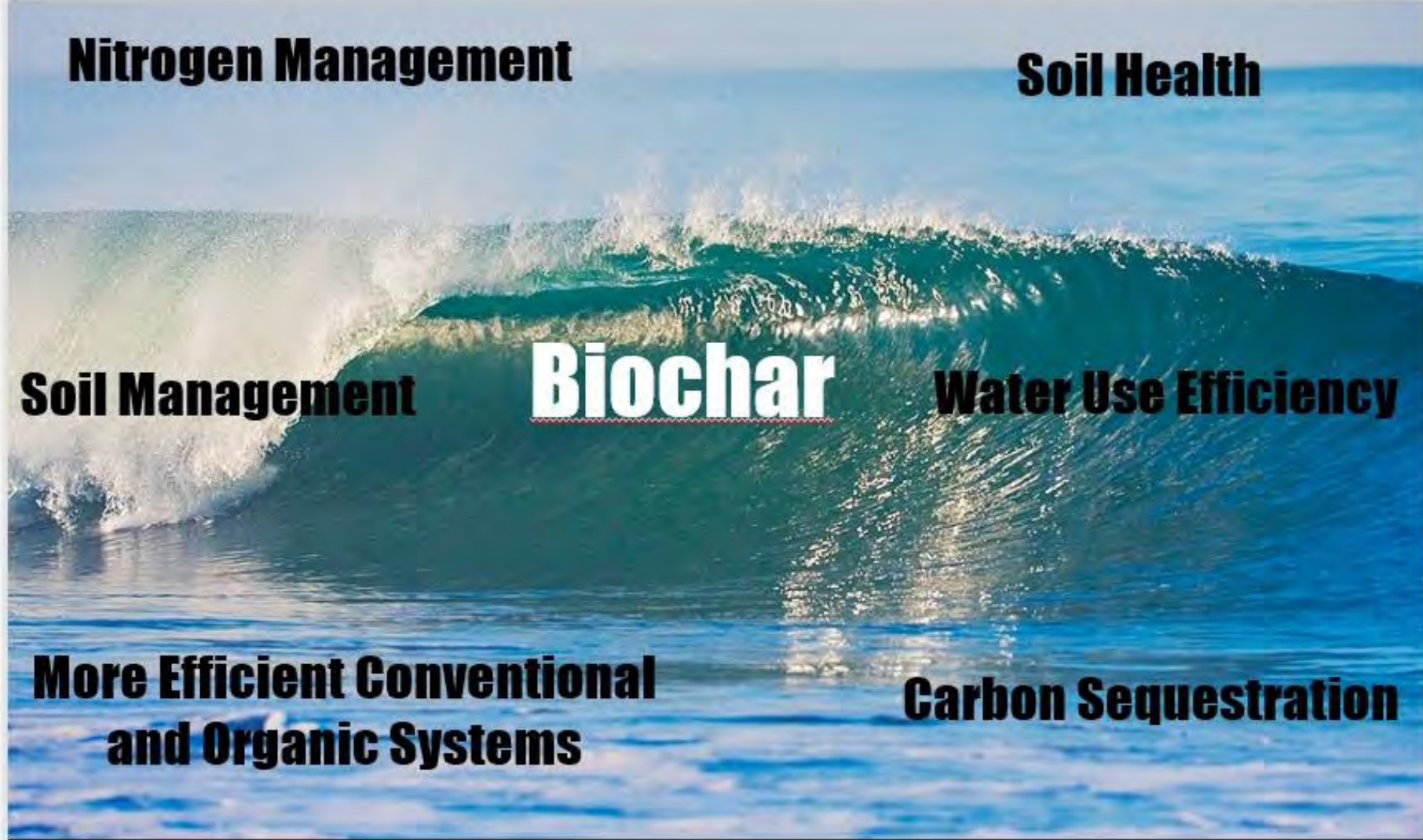
Soil Management

Biochar

Water Use Efficiency

**More Efficient Conventional
and Organic Systems**

Carbon Sequestration





Resources

- ▶ Webinar recording link will be posted at Dovetail, USBI, and IBI
- ▶ *Biochar Use in Viticulture* full report:
www.dovetailinc.org/portfoliodetail.php?id=61688a6830537
For (www.dovetailinc.org) Click *Reports* tab for the full library
- ▶ USBI–(biochar-us.org) broad array of US resources including biochar suppliers www.usbi.org
- ▶ International Biochar Initiative–(biochar-international.org) links to biochar related research, analytical resources, educational material, and links to international biochar networks.