



Quick Facts: Humic Substances

1. Why so many variances in product analysis and concentration?

Currently, there are several analytical methods for quantifying humic substances, each capable of producing a unique set of results. To date, none of the current methods has been declared “the” standard. To alleviate user confusion, the International Humic Substance Society (IHSS) proposed to standardize procedures and recommended a thorough analytical method. However, thorough analysis often results in lower numbers, so it has yet to be adopted by most humic suppliers and/or state agencies. When using humic substances it is best to run small tests (bioassays) on fast growing plants, like radishes, to see which product will perform best.

2. I've heard about fulvic acid. Why can't I find it in some states?

Because of the lack of standardized analytical quantification, some states, including Oregon and California, do not recognize fulvic acid as its own substance and instead refer to the entire collection of these substances (fulvic, ulmic and others) under the humic acid umbrella. Humic acid is brown to black in color while pure fulvic acid is yellow to golden. (see Properties of Humic Substances)

3. Why use Humic Substances?

Humic substances are an important part of the natural soil system. While many studies are available showing benefits, currently the only claim that is acceptable in Oregon and California is “may increase the uptake of nutrients.”

4. Where can I find more information on humic substances?

Properties of Humic Substances @ <http://www.ar.wroc.pl/~weber/kwasy2.htm>
IHSS Website @ <http://ihss.gatech.edu/ihss2/>

