

NEWS RELEASE

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ESPOMA CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOLLY-TONE® ORGANICALLY BALANCED PLANT FOOD

Premium plant food, specifically formulated for acid-loving plants,
feeds hollies, azaleas and rhododendrons

MILLVILLE, NJ ---- The Espoma Company, manufacturer of premium, organically balanced plant foods, announces the celebration of Holly-tone®'s 50th anniversary. Consisting of a complex blend of quality organic ingredients fortified with enriched minerals, Holly-tone is the first plant food to have been formulated specifically to provide safe, continuous feeding for acid-loving plants such as hollies, azaleas, rhododendrons and evergreens.

Espoma's founder, Herbert G. Sanders, a charter member of the Holly Society of America, pioneered the development of Holly-tone in 1949 because he recognized that although some plants prefer neutral soil, plants such as azaleas and rhododendrons thrive in a more acidic environment. "These plants are considered acid-loving because a critical nutrient, iron, is most available to them at a lower pH. Without iron, these plants will turn yellow and growth will be stunted," said Espoma Vice President Serge Brunner. "Sanders developed Holly-tone to keep soil at an optimum pH for acid-loving plants while providing them with all the major, minor, and trace nutrients they require."

Brunner added that unlike synthetic water-soluble fertilizers which provide a meal comparable to a fast food diet, Espoma's Holly-tone offers plants a healthy, balanced meal. "Holly-tone has been formulated to provide plants with a slow, steady feeding of all 15 nutrients which are essential to plant health -- a claim no other plant food can make," said Brunner.

In addition to the standard nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium nutrients (N-P-K) found in most plant foods, Holly-tone, like all Espoma Tone products, provides 12 additional vital trace elements and micronutrients such as iron, calcium and magnesium.

Holly-tone derives its 15 essential nutrients from a unique combination of the highest quality natural organic ingredients available including dehydrated manure, animal tankage, crab meal, cocoa meal, cottonseed meal, dried blood, sunflower meal, kelp, greensand, rock phosphate and sulfate of potash.

This balanced meal of complex organics creates a long-lasting reservoir of nutrients that feed plants safely and naturally. Brunner attributes this to two factors. "First, unlike most plant foods which derive

their nutrients from one or two simple ingredients, Holly-tone has a wide variety of ingredients which decompose and release their nutrients at different rates for a steady, continuous feeding,” said Brunner. “Second, the organics in Holly-tone break down slowly, relying on a combination of temperature, moisture and soil microbial activity to release their nutrients. This safe, natural process means that Holly-tone will not burn the plant or leach out of the soil.”

In addition, Holly-tone does more than feed the plant, it also enriches the soil. “In fact, Holly-tone actually improves the overall structure of the soil by adding humus and encouraging soil microbes -- another claim no other type of plant food can make,” remarked Brunner.

For best results, Brunner recommends feeding acid-loving plants with Holly-tone in the early spring and again in late fall. “Feeding acid-loving plants in the early spring will provide optimum growth and color throughout the growing season,” remarked Brunner. “However, don’t forget to feed them once again in the late fall to help harden off new growth, aid in root development, and enable the roots to store food for use in early spring.”

Available in a ready-to-use, granular formula, Holly-tone comes in 5, 10, 25, 35 and 50 lb. bags to meet the needs of a wide range of gardeners, and can be found at fine lawn and garden retail locations.

Since the 1929 introduction of its first organically balanced plant food, Espoma has led the industry with formulating complex blends of pure, natural ingredients to suit a whole range of different plants. Espoma offers 31 varieties of time-proven organic plant food products including Flower-tone™; Plant-tone®; Rose-tone®; Bulb-tone®; Tomato-tone®; Garden-tone®; Tree-tone®; Turf-tone® and Espoma Organic®.

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