

# Biodynamics In A Nutshell...

## BIODYNAMIC SPRAY PREPARATIONS

### Key concept

One of the physical differences with biodynamic agriculture is the use of specific homeopathic remedies called preparations. These are used to create long and short term beneficial effects to soil, plants, animals, humans and the environment.

### In a nutshell...

The article 'BD in a nutshell – what is biodynamic agriculture', I mentioned that one of the things that makes biodynamic practice unique is the use of preparations on the fields and in the compost. These preparations are specific homeopathic remedies which are applied as sprays. They help to enliven the soil and sensitise the compost to the subtle influences of the cosmos. In this article I will introduce two specific preparations, why they are used and how.

Biodynamic spray preparations are made in a cow horn. The horn is made from keratin which is the same material from which our fingernails are made of. This material is very strong and resistant to chemical attack. This quality of the horn encourages reflective properties for enhancing environmental forces. Due to its constitution it concentrates these forces. These in turn, work on the substances filled into the horn. The substances contribute their particular qualities to the preparation, and are amplified by the horn sheath.

Horn Manure \*500

“Manure is an expression of expansion forces in nature, it furthers growth and reproduction”.

This manure is used to stimulate soil vitality and encourage plants to connect with the specific growing conditions of their growing site. It also encourages deeper rooting systems, increased earthworm activity and a better retention of soil moisture. It is an ingredient in root dips (used in transplanting), in tree paste (to feed fruit trees) and can be used as a seed bath treatment.

How it is prepared

The Horn Manure preparation is made out of fresh cow dung that has been collected in autumn from fields with mature grass. The latter is particularly important because mature grass accommodates ingredients and forces from the vegetation period and not only from a short time span. This will be reflected in the manure through the perception of the cow. The cow horns are filled with manure and buried 30 to 40 cm deep in active soil in a way that no drain water can gather in them. They stay in the soil from the end of September to Easter. During this time fermentation takes place and all forces that act on the dung are reflected by the horn and through this are intensified. After Easter the horn is dug out of the soil and the preparation is taken out and kept in a cool and protected environment,

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preferably in an earthenware pot surrounded by peat to protect it from detrimental influences. It can be stored in the horns as well surrounded by peat and be taken out when going to be used.

One unit of horn manure is sufficient to treat approximately one acre. It needs to be dissolved in about 2-3 gallons (10-15 litres) of water, stirred vigorously for one hour using a hand or stick and sprayed out in droplets on to the garden or field. The exact proportion of preparation to water is not crucial and smaller amounts can be used. On larger areas the amount of preparation in relation to the amount of water can be reduced by up to a third.

When to use?

Horn Manure \*500 should be used in late afternoon or early evening; mild overcast days are preferable. Heavy rain, high winds and frosty weather should be avoided and during dry sunny spells spraying can be delayed until close to sunset for maximum potential. It can be applied to all areas. Wherever the earth is turned, grass is cut, grazed or harrowed we can apply 500. It also applies to when we sow or transplant. Spraying an area three times in succession, with the same stirring, has proved beneficial as have repeated applications during times of drought.

Horn Silica \*501

Horn Silica is used during the growing season to enhance the qualities of growth and maturation. It helps to stabilize and balance plant metabolism and also increases nutritive value. The keeping quality of vegetables is improved as is sugar and dry matter content. In contrast to Horn Manure which is applied generally to the soil, Horn Silica is used in a much more specific way to enhance the quality of crops at particular moments of their growth cycle. It is first applied when plants are growing strongly in their vegetative phase and then later when the crop begins to ripen. It enhances light qualities. The general rule is to spray when the part of the plant which will later be harvested (ie. swelling roots, fruits or cabbage heads etc) begins to form.

How it is prepared

The horn silica preparation is made out of quartz crystals ground to fine powder and moistened to a paste that is then filled into a cow horn and sealed with clay. The horn is given into the soil like the horn manure preparation, though not during the winter months but from Easter to the end of September. Dug out the preparation substance is taken out of the horn and stored in a clear glass in a light place, e.g on a window sill to allow the relation to light. This preparation carries already crystallizing winter qualities in its crystalline structure. Thus it is exposed to the summer qualities, contrary to winter forces, in order for the whole cycle of the year to be captured.

When to use:

Horn Silica \*501 should be used early in the morning, as close to the sunrise as possible when the dew is still lying on the ground. Where possible choose a day which is likely to be sunny, this helps the light influences to take full effect. However be aware that if sprayed too late in the day when the sun is already high there is a danger of burning the plants. It can be applied all year round according to particular plant requirements, especially in Spring. Where it is used to enhance the final stage of ripening it can also be applied in the afternoon especially on root crops. Only use 501 when 500 has already been applied.

Expansion and contraction forces in Biodynamic agriculture

Manure and Quartz as substances are in many ways polar opposites. Manure comes from the present, reflects the summer, expresses expansion forces, carries forces from the living realm, is soft, includes water and has a strong earthly relationship. Quartz is developed in the past, represents crystallizing

winter aspects, expresses contraction forces, is a dead mineral, is very hard, rejects water, and has a relationship to cosmic influences. With this in mind and the addition of the vortex stirring procedure we can come to the conclusion that the alchemical forces at work within the horns are brought to a higher vibrational state, and when applied to the Earth or atmosphere create long and short term beneficial effects to soil, plants, animals, humans and the environment.

### **About the author**

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Phil is inspired by ecological stewardship and the natural world. He is actively engaged in the South East working as a community coordinator for food security, is an instructor for Trackways in Lewes sharing bushcraft and nature awareness skills and techniques, and founded and runs the Earth Steward Apprenticeship for young adults.