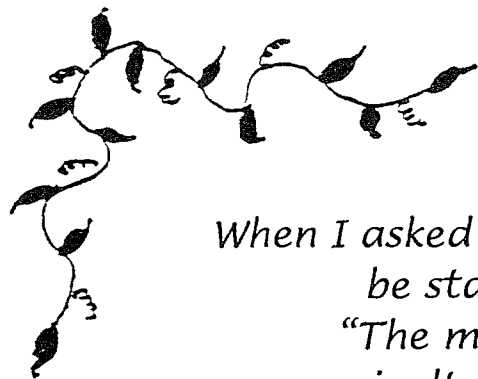




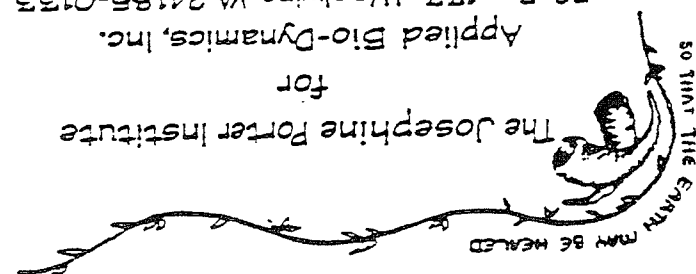
When I asked [Rudolf Steiner] whether the new methods should be started on an experimental basis, he replied:
“The most important thing is make the benefits of our agricultural preparations available to the largest possible areas over the entire Earth, so that the Earth may be healed and the nutritive quality of its produce improved in every respect. That should be our first objective. The experiments can come later.”

E.E. Pfeiffer, “New Directions in Agriculture,”
in *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture*, p. 260

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc.
P.O. Box 133, Woolwine, VA 24185-0133

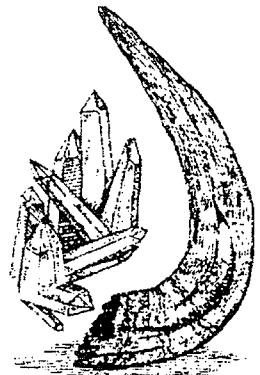
The Josephine Porter Institute
for



SPRING 1999

Applied BIODYNAMICS®

Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Woolwine, Virginia



ISSUE No. 26



Ehrenfried E. Pfeiffer, M.D. (Hon.)
(Feb. 19, 1899 - Nov. 30, 1961)

[Dr. Steiner] had been speaking of the need for a deepening of esoteric life, and in this connection mentioned certain faults typically found in spiritual movements. I then asked, “How can it happen that the spiritual impulse, and especially the inner schooling, for which you are constantly providing stimulus and guidance bear so little fruit? Why do the people concerned give so little evidence of spiritual experience, in spite of all their efforts? Why, worst of all, is the will for action, for the carrying out of these spiritual impulses, so weak?” I was particularly anxious to get an answer to the question as to how one could build a bridge to active participation and the carrying out of spiritual intentions without being pulled off the right path by personal ambition, illusions and petty jealousies; for these were the negative qualities Rudolf Steiner had named as the main inner hindrances. Then came the surprising and thought-provoking answer: “This is a problem of nutrition. Nutrition as it is today does not supply the strength necessary for manifesting the spirit in physical life. A bridge can no longer be built from thinking to will and action. Food plants no longer contain the forces people need for this.”

(From E.E. Pfeiffer’s memoir, “New Directions in Agriculture,” reprinted in *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture*, pp. 260-61.)

FROM THE EDITOR

With this issue, in the 100th anniversary year of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer’s birth, we spend a little time remembering Dr. Pfeiffer through the eyes of his colleague and supporter Walter Stuber, and we also report on how Pfeiffer’s work lives on at JPI. This threshold year also brings with it concerns about our society’s over-dependence on computers. How we at JPI are preparing for the “millennium bug,” and how you also might prepare, is the topic of another article. Finally, lest anyone forget, we pay our respects to one of our indispensable preparation plants, the innocent dandelion.

Malcolm Ian Gardner

UPCOMING PREP-MAKING SEMINARS AT JPI

June 24-27, 1999: Part I, focusing on horn silica, yarrow and nettle (#501, #502 & #504), with springtime aspects of other preps if time permits. Fee \$300 (includes four midday and three evening meals); \$50 non-refundable deposit.

October 20-24, 1999: Part II, including an on-farm cow slaughter and harvest of prep sheaths, focusing on horn manure, chamomile, oak bark and dandelion (#500, #503, #505 & #506), with other preps as time permits. Fee \$400 (includes five midday and four evening meals); \$50 deposit (non-refundable after Sept. 20).

These seminars are intended for serious practitioners who seek the self-sufficiency and independence of producing their own biodynamic preparations. They represent a unique opportunity for immersion in biodynamic preparations-making at a level not available elsewhere.

Accommodations: two nearby bed & breakfast establishments, or primitive camping on JPI premises. Please be prepared for fair or foul weather and for a very full schedule of intensive preparation-making activity.

Registration: phone or fax JPI at 1-540-930-2463. Space is limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

MISSION

The Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics Inc. (JPI), was founded to produce quality biodynamic agricultural preparations based on the spiritual-scientific research of Rudolf Steiner.

It serves as a living memorial to Josephine Porter, a pioneer for this work in America.

The mission of JPI also includes education and research in biodynamic agriculture.

JPI undertakes these tasks so that the Earth may be healed.

Board of Directors

Lee McWhorter (Luray, VA), President
Jim Marquardt (Winchester, VA), Vice-President
Hugh Courtney (Woolwine, VA), Treasurer
Corry Watts (Horse Branch, KY), Secretary
Elizabeth Courtney (Woolwine, VA)
Sara Tufts (Mebane, NC)

NEW ATTRA PUBLICATION ON BIODYNAMICS

Readers should be aware of an excellent new introduction to biodynamics entitled, “Biodynamic Farming and Compost Preparation.” This 20-page publication was prepared by Steve Diver as part of the Alternative Farming Systems series from ATTRA (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas), a USDA-funded information center on sustainable agriculture at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. It is written sympathetically and accurately and gives a sober overview of both the practice and the philosophy of biodynamics in relation to conventional and alternative agricultural approaches. With its many references and web-links it is a valuable resource to give to any serious inquirer or even to keep for one’s own use. As with all of ATTRA’s publications, this one is *free*, but it must be ordered directly from ATTRA: P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702; or by phone, 1-800-346-9140 (8:30am-4:30pm M-Th, 8:30-12:30 F, CST). It is also available on-line at <http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/biodynamic.html>.

THANK YOU FOR THE DANDELIONS!

- Sharon Carson, *Delmar, Delaware*
- Betsy Cashen & Chris Stearn, *Hillsville, Virginia*
- Christy Korrow, *Burkesville, Kentucky*
- Barbara Martin, *Austin, Texas*
- Van McKay & Andrea Goodrum, *Woolwine, Virginia*
- Lee McWhorter, *Luray, Virginia*
- Susan Peterson, *Huntley, Virginia*
- Patricia Smith, *Newport, Virginia*
- Sara & Tracy Tufts, *Mebane, North Carolina*

Biodynamic Preparations Legend

BD #500 — Horn Manure	} Compost Preparations
BD #501 — Horn Silica	
BD #502 — Yarrow	
BD #503 — Chamomile	
BD #504 — Stinging Nettle	
BD #505 — Oak Bark	
BD #506 — Dandelion	
BD #507 — Valerian	
BD #508 — Horsetail (<i>Equisetum arvense</i>)	

APPLIED BIODYNAMICS®

Applied Biodynamics is published three times a year by the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc. (JPI). The subscription price of \$30 per year helps support JPI research and development. Back issues are \$5 each.

No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher. Permission to reprint articles or artwork contained in this newsletter may be requested from:

The Editor, *Applied Biodynamics*
P.O. Box 133
Woolwine, Virginia 24185, U.S.A.
(phone/fax: 1-540-930-2463)

© 1999 The Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc.

Bringing a Garden to Life
by Carol Williams*

Reviewed by Jenni Muir

Bringing a Garden to Life is a delightful journey of the sense into the planning and making of a garden. Everything is explained from organic matter, composting and double-digging, to cover crops and the growing of vegetables and medicinal herbs. Also covered are watering, weeding, and transplanting as well as seeds, tools and understanding the biodynamic preparations and their uses.

What really sets the book apart, however, is the rare ability of Carol Williams, the author, to touch the soul of the reader. She shares in an unhurried manner her innermost thoughts as she plans and works in her garden. She shares her deep understanding of enlivening the soil and of working with seeds. She emphasizes the importance of observation and the almost magical effects a gardener can experience during his or her daily gardening chores. Her respect for Nature is so beautifully presented. She calls you to become a part of the conscious forming of the garden, to reunite with Nature so that the garden really speaks to you. She speaks of developing a sense of the soil as one works in it ... like anything alive, it is always changing and telling a story.

Being a biodynamic gardener myself, I was moved and touched by Carol’s spiritual side, which comes through everything she writes. This is a side of biodynamics that needs to be shared more. It is difficult to teach the spiritual side of gardening; it needs to be both shared and experienced. Her book brings the wonderful world of Nature right into your lap. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and it left me with a renewed sense of being—a healing. Whether you are a seasoned farmer, or a soon-to-be-gardener, this book is a “must read”! ❖

* *Bringing a Garden to Life* by Carol Williams (Bantam Books, New York 1998), 273 pp. ISBN 0-553-09680-X Hardback \$22.95 (available from JPI).

Y2K Preparedness continued from p. 9

bring ether forces into the earth?”³ He continues with the answer: “Every time this is done, a little piece of the earth is transformed! Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, who went about with elemental beings as if they were his playmates, indicates how these beings change when human beings work into the earth. These beings are helped in their development by people’s work with the earth.”⁴ What an absolutely ennobling task we can accomplish in our use of the biodynamic preparations! We not only help heal the earth, and *transform* it; we further the *development* of the elemental beings. No wonder Rudolf Steiner was so concerned that the biodynamic preparations be used as quickly and as widely as possible in the Earth! Even though it appears to be dreadfully late, let us not despair, but rather undertake to do all we can to see that the preparations are used in their healing task up to and well beyond the Y2K deadline. ❖

3. Ibid., p. 66.
4. Ibid., p. 66.

Efficient Dandelion Picking continued from p. 11

pick most flowers on a Saturday because it is a flower day or because that is when you will have time. Start the mini-picks on Thursday even if only for ten or fifteen minutes. That way, Saturday’s picking will be so much more enjoyable and rewarding.

Picking late in the morning decreases required work time. I discovered if I started to pick early (9am), I would have to pick the same area two or three times because more blossoms opened as the day’s light and warmth progressed. Since I can only pick comfortably for about thirty minutes, I wait until 10:30 to 11:00 to start. This way, I can pick twice as many flowers in the same length of time, with less bending over, and still get most of the flowers that have opened before noon. I start the day’s picking in areas that have been sunny the longest, scheduling shaded areas for last as their flowers will be slower to open.

Efficient dandelion picking can be valuable even if your back doesn’t hurt. The experience is made more enjoyable and perhaps even possible if your time is very limited.

These observations were made in northeast Pennsylvania in a cool spring. The farm was located in a valley, approximately 500 ft. above sea level, with frequent nighttime, heavy fog and dew lasting late into morning. Picking times might be different in a hot, dry climate, different altitude or weather conditions.

Additional Notes

- I like to wait until dew is off before I pick because the flowers dry better.
- Containers: I prefer picking into a paper bag with the top edge rolled down.
- We dried the flowers by spreading them on newspaper laid on the floor of a hot attic. However, a better support for the flowers is fiberglass screening raised at least several inches from the floor, allowing more thorough air flow. Four pounds of fresh dandelion blossoms dry to about one pound.
- Even the best picked dandelions can turn to a gray and unusable fluff if not properly dried. Spreading them out to dry immediately after picking gives best results. Blossom color and likely its quality also are better if drying occurs quickly. One summer, just as the blossoms were almost dry, it rained and the blossoms absorbed enough moisture from the air to become rubbery again. This sequence repeated itself several times. During that time I forgot to check blossom status, and when I finally did so they had turned to fluff.
- We have several varieties of dandelions. The tall ones, 1-2 feet tall, are easiest to pick. But, even the shorter ones will grow tall in rich, moist, uncompacted soil. Scatter seeds where you want to pick.
- After we sold the animals on the farm, the dandelion population in the pastured fields decreased greatly, while the neighbors’ lawns had many dandelions even without any cows or goats. The decrease on our land occurred because the grass and weeds were no longer being mowed or grazed and thus grew tall enough to crowd and shade out the dandelions. Dandelions like sun. ❖

Book Reviews

Healing Plants: Insights Through Spiritual Science, vol. 1, by Wilhelm Pelikan*

Reviewed by Malcolm Ian Gardner

Finally! This classic work, which was first published in German in 1958 and is presently in its 5th edition, is now widely available in English. In the 1960's and '70's translations of single chapters of this book appeared in the *British Homeopathic Journal* and were reprinted in various anthroposophical journals, but for some inexplicable reason it took a couple more decades for the work to appear as a stand-alone book.

The author, Wilhelm Pelikan (1893-1981), was trained as a chemist and, after meeting Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy

when he was in his twenties, devoted the rest of his life to the mysteries of substance in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms and to the transformation of these substances into remedies for human illnesses. He worked for over four decades for the anthroposophical pharmaceutical firm, Weleda, and during this time published numerous articles and several books, most prominently his book on metals—*The Secrets of Metals*—which has been in English since 1973 (JPI has a few copies left), and then his magnum opus, *Healing Plants*. This latter work started out as a single volume covering 16 major families of mostly European medicinal plants, but shortly afterward he added a second volume covering 30 further groups, and then in his eighties he added a third volume covering another 36 groups, many of them largely tropical. Only the first of these three volumes is now available in English, but what a treasure it is! Let us hope that the other volumes follow shortly.

In *Healing Plants*, vol. 1, Pelikan skillfully describes the ecological, morphological and biochemical processes characteristic of each of the following families and then gives succinct but incisive portraits of the major medicinal species in that family:

- The Mint Family (*Labiatae*)
- The Carrot Family (*Umbelliferae*)
- The Poppy Family (*Papaveraceae*)
- The Cress Family (*Cruciferae*)
- The Nightshade Family (*Solanaceae*)
- The Cactus Family (*Cactaceae*)
- The Fat Hen Family (*Chenopodiaceae*)
- The Buttercup Family (*Ranunculaceae*)
- The Rose Family (*Rosaceae*)
- The Daisy Family (*Compositae*)
- The Gentian Family (*Gentianaceae*)
- The Borage Family (*Boraginaceae*)
- The Pea Family (*Leguminosae*)
- The Bedstraw Family (*Rubiaceae*)
- The Spurge Family (*Euphorbiaceae*)
- The Lily Family (*Liliaceae*)

Pelikan also devotes one chapter to a brief survey of several carnivorous plant species. Here as elsewhere, he takes every opportunity to illustrate and amplify the general principles of anthroposophical medicine and pharmacology, which he had introduced in masterful fashion in the first three chapters of the book.

Not only does this book have substance, it is also written in a very lively and engaging style, and most of the families and species discussed are illustrated with beautiful woodcuts from the hand of Walther Roggenkamp. Since being published in the *British Homeopathic Journal*, the translation has been revised and made more accessible to the general reader, and Pelikan's style comes through quite well. On the other hand, the prefatory material by various authors is rather poorly organized and will confuse a first time reader. Also, a more thorough proofreading would have been nice. I found two misspellings, for example, just in the Table of Contents.

In sum, with this volume we have the beginning of a truly modern herbal, and not just another warmed up medieval herbal. For anyone interested in gaining insight into the spiritual side of the plant kingdom, this will be an essential book to have and to study. ❖

INTERVIEW WITH WALTER STUBER

By Nick Franceschelli (Harlemville, NY)

I caught up with Walter Stuber in his gracious and spacious home in the Berkshires of Massachusetts. Mr. Stuber has reached the remarkable age of one hundred and one. He is one of the few surviving associates of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, whose hundredth birthday would have been on February 19, 1999 (he died in 1961). Although Mr. Stuber has to make an effort to recall certain details of his collaboration with Pfeiffer, in the main he is still wonderfully lucid, has a sense of humor, and comes across in a modest and self-effacing manner. In 1953 Mr. Stuber founded the General Compost Corporation to market Pfeiffer's Biodynamic Compost Starter, which now the Josephine Porter Institute has been licensed to produce.

NF: When did you meet Pfeiffer? When was your first encounter with Pfeiffer?

WS: When he was in Spring Valley. It goes back to about 1943. That's when I knew him. And then I bought a farm in 1946 and I saw Dr. Winkler. You know him? He was a close friend of mine. So I went to him. I saw him in fact every week in New York and there we had lunch together. I told him I had just bought a farm and I didn't know anything about farming. I was a mechanical engineer and had never lived in the country.

NF: That was in Chester, New York?

WS: It was outside of Philadelphia, in Bucks County. It was in a nice location.

NF: So did Winkler put you in touch with Dr. Pfeiffer?

WS: He said, "Here's Dr. Pfeiffer. He just about escaped death. He has been very sick." And he said Pfeiffer felt that he had failed in life and was just down and out. He said, if you give him a job as a consultant on your farm, that will give him something to help bring him up again. Which I did. So I put him on a consultant fee for years. I mean, I think I paid him up to his death. It was not much but I paid him like a hundred dollars a month. Something like that. And Pfeiffer came, and he was active and he did good work from then on, as a matter of fact. And my attorney, he took an interest in him and took him to Europe. They traveled in Europe and went to different places that Pfeiffer was interested in. I forget what places. They were mostly in Germany but also in France, I think.

NF: What was the name of the attorney; do you remember?

WS: Doesn't come to me. This attorney, I've known from 1940, and I still know him. I still call him.

NF: Down in Philadelphia?

WS: Yes, he's still in Philadelphia. He had a high job in the city government. And he was very versatile. He knew everything and everybody. And he helped me a great deal

in making contacts and so on. His name is ... Andy Farnese.

NF: When you first met Dr. Pfeiffer, you say he was just recovering from a serious illness?

WS: Yes, he was near death already and he had really given up. You see, up to then he had not done anything outstanding and whatever he touched, nothing seemed to come of it. And he had been sick for quite a while. So giving him this job, that helped him. That really cemented our friendship too.

NF: How do you remember him? I mean, here, this is a great picture of Dr. Pfeiffer [see cover]. You say this is what he loved to do. You say he loved to sample soils to try to get to know what the grower was facing?

WS: Yes, yes.

NF: So how do you remember him? Do you remember him as a man who would get his hands down in the ground or ...

WS: Oh yes, he'd go down and dig in it. In that sense, he wasn't fussy about anything like that. He just went to it, whatever was needed. You see, now I remember something else. After he got well again he got interested in city composting and I took him to different places to see how different cities took care of their compost so he could come in with his own proposal. And

we went to many cities. I forget just where ... I think it was to San Francisco.

NF: In Oakland, I know it. In Oakland he had a big operation.

WS: Yes, he had a big operation in Oakland. So all this here, he did that with the basis, with my basis really in Golden Acres Farm.

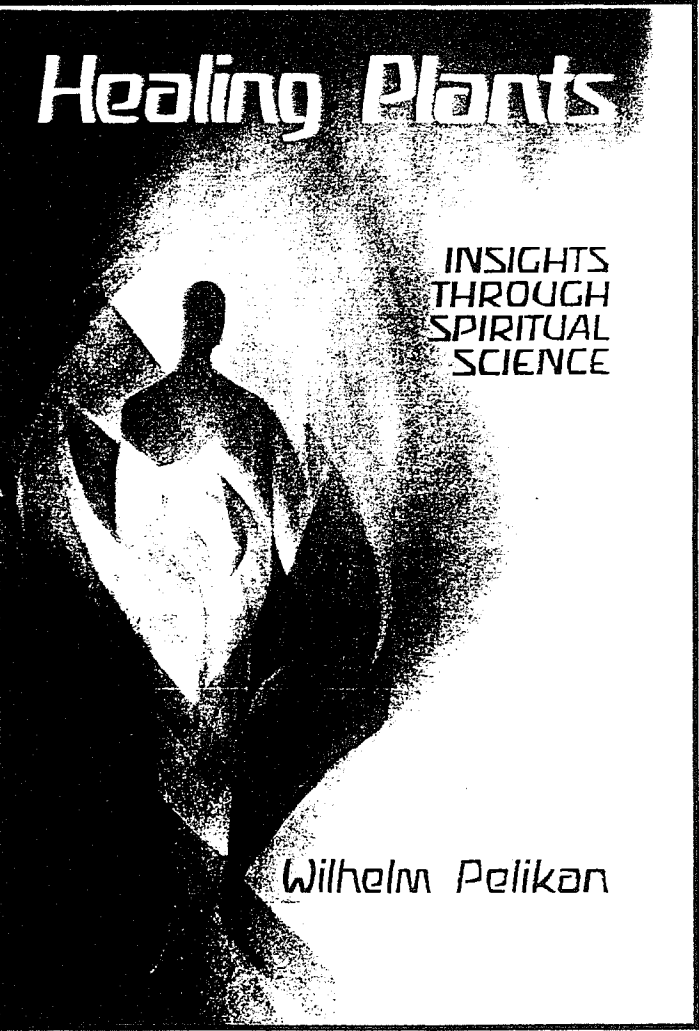
NF: Was that the name of your farm in Bucks County?

WS: Yes, Golden Acres Farm. In Newtown. I'm talking about, I would say, 1950. That's 50 years ago. Now in 50 years the city has grown out and my farm was finally sold and it's full of houses now.

NF: Did you know Ernst Fetzter in New Hope?



Walter Stuber, ca. 1955



* *Healing Plants: Insights Through Spiritual Science*, by Wilhelm Pelikan, translated by A.R. Meuss (Spring Valley, NY: Mercury Press 1997) 396 pp. ISBN 0-929979-64-8 Paperback \$28.50 (available from JPI).

WS: Oh surely.

NF: I know his farm got swallowed up by urban sprawl too.

WS: I knew Fetzer very well. ... Does that give you something?

NF: It gets me started but I have a few more questions, if I could, if you're not running out of steam.

WS: Wait a minute. Here's a funny one. You see, Pfeiffer came to Golden Acres Farm, oh, pretty much all the time and we took meals together there and I had a housekeeper and so on. I had a round table; I still have that table. Only it's not here. It's a round table, big, glass, it must be four feet in diameter. And we had a nice veranda there and we ate on the veranda. And he always liked to explain things. He was a great talker, for that matter. On anything. And here he is, he's talking, he's standing up—we hadn't sat down yet to eat—and he has his hand on that glass and he talks and talks and before you know it, he broke the glass!

NF: So you remember him as a very emphatic person?

WS: Oh yes!

NF: Did you ever go to any of his lectures?

WS: Oh yes. But he took over my place. I mean, the lectures were given on my place.

NF: Oh, really?

WS: Yes, I had a big hall. I had a building which I really built for a two-car garage. And then there was a building itself. So we would arrange the talks and people would come from all over to these talks.

You know, a funny one, was when we were eating—and he loved to drink beer ... we'd usually drink beer ... I had a young wife and we all sat together. He loved to sit together and talk. And he had many things to say. And one time he said, "I'm eating here so often and I'm here so often, let me for once clean the silverware." In other words, there must have been the question about whether my wife was going to do the silver that afternoon herself. So she probably said it was not necessary, but he insisted on it. And when he wanted to do something, he did it. So he went out to clean the silver and when he came out after awhile all the silver had turned black! And he said, "My God, my dear, I should have known better." He was balling himself out. He used some kind of an acid or something to clean the silver. He said, "My God, I should have known this would happen."

NF: With his training in chemistry.

WS: Exactly. He said, "I, of all people, I should have known." So that was a funny one.

NF: Did you visit him in his laboratory sometimes?

WS: Oh yes.

NF: Do you remember when he first started developing the Starter? Do you remember those times?

WS: Oh, yes. He developed it on my farm. You see, whatever he did ... he had the thoughts and so on, but it was all done on my farm.

NF: Do you know why, what prompted him to develop the Starter? Why do you think he came up with that idea?

WS: He didn't start out to develop a Starter. He started out to make ... to compost cow manure and so on; everything that accumulates on a farm. He developed that. But then, in doing so, he found that he had done something else to it that made it into a Starter. So it started out not with the

idea of the Starter. It started out just to help the farmer compost his offal.

NF: His organic wastes?

WS: Yes. That's how the Starter came about.

NF: How did he appear when he was well? I mean, how did he appear as a human being? Was he tall? Was he short?

WS: He was tall. He was strong and well-built. And he was always in good humor. He was a nice companion. But if he had an idea he wouldn't give up that idea. He stood up for it.

NF: So he was a man of strong will and strong ideas?

WS: Exactly.

NF: So when did he get the idea that maybe the Starter could be used by many different farms? I mean, at one point you said [before the tape started] that you started the General Composting Corporation. He must have thought, at one point, that this was something that would have wider application.

WS: That's right, yes.

NF: Was it in the 1950's that he thought of that?

WS: That's right.

NF: When you had the farm in Bucks County, did you have a farm manager to operate the farm or ...

WS: Oh yes. You see I had three farms really, these pictures give you an idea. The main farm was here, the farm that I lived on. That was the Orchard Farm. ... My farm was on the Doylestown Pike. Now my main farm was the dairy farm. And then I had another farm, and that became the poultry farm. ... Now, I didn't have everything. There was some private land right here that was sold out. But I owned everything here to here, and here ...

NF: So these two farms were kind of back to back here?

WS: Yes, that's right. So it was a nice walk from this farm to the other farm.

NF: So do you know how much land, more or less, you had with those three farms put together?

WS: I know this one was 180 acres. And this one was over 60, maybe 70, acres. And this one must have been about 130 acres. Now, add that up.

NF: 180 and 130 would be 310 ... it'd be almost 400 acres all together. Does that sound right?

WS: Yes.

NF: So that was quite a large farm for the 1950's.

WS: It was a very large farm. And when you ask if I had a manager, I had a number of managers. I had a manager for the poultry farm, one for the dairy farm and even one [tape unintelligible]. My farm was the Orchard Farm and that's where we grew vegetables. I had an apple orchard there too. And ... well, I was in a lot of things.

NF: And do you remember how many cows you were milking in that barn in those days?

WS: Probably between 55 and 60 cows and I think that the total herd of the milking cows was ...

NF: Probably over a hundred?

WS: Let me see. Not a hundred; it was somewhere around 80. In those days there was no ... when I started out there was no ... insemination

NF: There was no artificial insemination?

WS: I had two bulls. I also had two bulls in addition to that. I had a bull run. I had a big place where I did it.

EFFICIENT DANDELION PICKING OR HOW TO PICK WHEN YOUR BACK HURTS

By Abigail Porter (Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania)

I have always liked picking dandelions, enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells and accomplishing an important task at the same time. I appreciated it even more when I left the farm and my jewelry work took me inside for most of the day. It was good to be outside in the warm sun. I enjoyed the colors, the cool breeze caressing my skin, and the fragrance of approaching summer.

Several years ago, a lower back injury made picking dandelions a painful experience. Two hours of picking left me incapacitated for three days. I realized if I was going to pick at all, I would have to find a better way to pick, a faster way with less bending over.

How could I stay relatively pain-free by picking only 15-20 at a time (45 minutes was the outer tolerance limit), yet pick the same quantity of flowers as in earlier years? I discovered three primary keys to efficient, pain-free picking: (1) learn to "see" only the appropriate blossoms, (2) pick on consecutive days, (3) pick late in the morning.

While observing a friend who helped me pick, I noticed that it took her much longer to decide which blossoms to pick than to actually pick them. So the first key is to learn to "see" only the appropriate blossoms so one is not distracted by unsuitable flowers. To do this one must first study the differences between flowers in various stages of openness.

With a practice of touching and looking, a blossom's successive growth stages become readily apparent. By placing the index finger and middle finger under the blossom head (my preferred way of picking), the thumb is free to brush across the top of the flower to feel its texture. On the first day of opening there is a tight, relatively hard button of darker colored petals in the blossom's center (a bullseye). The flower is somewhat flat. On the

second day the button is softer, paler in color, much less distinctly formed. The blossom is more open with a convex surface. On the third day the color is more uniform, all the petals are very soft, and the blossom shape is more like an umbrella. Once the look and feel of first-day blossoms are memorized, one is drawn only to them, as iron to a magnet. Now it is easy to quickly select only the perfect flowers for picking.

I pick only the first-day flowers as they are the easiest to see and usually dry well. Second day or older flowers may turn to unusable gray fluff as they dry. First day flowers that open late in the afternoon will frequently have many first-day characteristics on their second day. These qualify as first-day blossoms if the button is still distinct. Their second day is their first morning in the sun.

Efficient dandelion picking requires picking on consecutive days. Picking stimulates more buds to open more quickly. On the first day blossoms may be few and far between. Lots of bending (ouch!) with little to show for the effort. The second day is more productive. By the third or fourth day of picking, I am usually rewarded with an abundance of beautiful, pickable blossoms. There are so many perfect blossoms that I progress on hands and knees from patch to patch, picking with all fingers, quickly and easily filling both hands.

If you are unable to schedule consecutive morning picking, then at least on days one and two, pick and discard old blossoms in the afternoon or whenever time allows. These blossoms can fertilize the ground or your compost pile. The morning of the third day will be great picking. For example, you might plan to



Photo © Patricia Smith

Continued on page 13

THE INNOCENT DANDELION—A MESSENGER FROM HEAVEN

By Malcolm Ian Gardner

One of the joys of reading Rudolf Steiner’s work—in the original or well translated—is the freshness of his words. He never indulges in platitudes or trite phrases; he never seems to make idle comments. Every word seems to count, if only we take the time to count it. So it is with the words Steiner used to describe the dandelion to the farmers at Koberwitz:

The innocent, yellow dandelion is a great asset because it mediates between the fine homeopathic distribution of silica in the cosmos, and the silica that is actually used throughout the whole region. The dandelion is really a kind of messenger from heaven.¹

Let us consider what an unusual plant the dandelion really is. Unlike most other plants, its true stem *never* elongates—the plant always remains in the compressed rosette stage. It is always like a first-year biennial plant—it never bolts. Its main direction of growth is downward. It sends up flower stalks, but these do not have any leaves along them and thus are not true stems. These pale, unbranched flower stalks are amazingly smooth and soft, and if one cuts them one finds they exude a milky sap. If one looks closely at the bright yellow flower one finds that this too is a kind of “rosette.” Each “petal” of this flower is actually the corolla of an individual flower, and the whole head is actually a community of flowers, all arranged in such a way that a greater whole is formed. Bees and other insects love to visit these flowers for their nectar and pollen, but if one takes measures to keep them away, one discovers that the flowers nevertheless go on to form a perfect “puffball.” But this is not because the flowers have fertilized themselves; no, scientists have discovered the unusual fact that the dandelion is a species that can produce seeds without fertilization. This phenomenon is called agamospermy, or more generally, parthenogenesis (virginal birth). Slowly one begins to grasp the significance of Steiner’s choice of the adjective “innocent.”

And then one realizes—what could be more innocent than a child? The dandelion is like a child! The perennial youthfulness, the tender flower stalks, the milky sap, the cheerful yellow flower heads and puffballs that children so love, it all bespeaks a child-like innocence.

This innocence, however, is an *achieved* innocence. Dandelions are not primitive, relatively formless plants like, let us say, the algae (seaweeds); but neither, on the other hand, are they over-formed “egotistical” plants like the orchids. The dandelion belongs to the sunflower family (Compositae), which, as is evident in the structure of their composite flower-heads, has achieved a very high level of “social organization.” In this sense, the dandelion might be characterized as an “innocent society.” In its prominent, downward-striving taproot one may even recognize the *power of self-restraint* manifest not only at the level of the individual but at the community level as well.

This ability to restrain its self-expression has also allowed the dandelion to develop another child-like quality, namely, a *delicate sensitivity to its environment*. A child is not fully conscious of its sense-impressions, but for this very reason these impressions work all the more strongly on the child’s

body, shaping its internal organs or eliciting unconscious imitative behavior.² In a similar way, a dandelion plant closely “imitates” its environment. The basic leaf-outline of a dandelion, for example, is incredibly variable; in shady, moist habitats the leaves can be almost like elongated water drops, while in high mountain areas they can be extremely jagged and “craggy.” The dandelion flower-head is even more sensitive; it opens on sunny days, but stays half-closed on cloudy days or whenever the sun is obscured for a time.

With Steiner’s help we can recognize that this sensitivity, in the dandelion as well as the child, is based on the selfless transparency of *silica*.³ But whereas a child gets this silica from its mother’s milk, the dandelion draws it from the cosmos (compare the quotation at the beginning of this article). The power to do this, however, cannot come from silica itself; it must come from another element, namely, *potassium*. Potassium is in some ways more powerful than calcium, but it is not “greedy” like calcium and actually has much more of an affinity with silicon (the potassium feldspars, i.e., potassium aluminum silicates, are some of the commonest minerals on earth). With the help of potassium, the dandelion is able to bring the fine, cosmic silica down to the earth, and thus we see why Steiner calls the dandelion a “messenger from heaven.” Furthermore, there is little doubt that the silica so received is concentrated, functionally if not materially, in the dandelion flower-heads, i.e., in the part that Steiner indicates should be used to convey the dandelion’s special power to the manure, and hence to the soil and the future crops. These crops, he suggests, will then be able to *sense* what they need from their wide environment and thus also be able to *attract* it to themselves.⁴ This may well seem quite incredible, but might it not explain the dandelion’s own success in being able to grow anywhere and everywhere?

Like a newborn child, the dandelion too is a “messenger from heaven.” With the dandelion, however, it is a case of an achieved birth—a re-birth—or as St. Matthew put it in his Gospel (18:3): “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” ❖

1. *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture*, (Kimberton 1993) (translation slightly revised), p. 103.
2. “The whole life of the child up to his seventh year is a continuous imitation of what takes place in his environment. ... the child is entirely sense-organ. His blood is driven through his body in a far livelier way than in later life.” (Steiner, Aug. 16, 1922, *Spiritual Ground of Education* [Blauvelt, NY 1989].)
3. “What we have in the eye or in another sense organ is, functionally, the same as that which takes place in the outer world in quartz [= silica].” (Steiner, Nov. 16, 1923, *Anthroposophische Menschenkenntnis und Medizin* [Dornach 1971] [extract translated by MIG].) See also *Spiritual Foundations*, p. 60: “silica is generalized outer sensing, lime is generalized outer desire.”
4. *Spiritual Foundations*, p. 104.

NF: Where you bred the cows?

WS: Yes, but outside this dairy farm I had arranged a platform about ... close to 100 by 100, a concrete platform, with a concrete way to the exit of the dairy farm. And I had a continuous chain type of barn cleaner and ...

NF: And you had this manure come out on a pad?

WS: ... The pad was about 60 or 80 feet away from it, but it was so that there was a concrete connection to that pad and I had ... what is it called? ... I’m 101 years old ... it’s hard for me to remember everything, even the names ... I had ... a manure spreader.

NF: Yes!

WS: And then I took the manure spreader out on this platform and that was where they injected the Compost Starter and you turned it until it was finished compost.

NF: How would you turn it? Do you remember? Would you just shovel it over or did you have a special machine?

WS: A front end loader on the tractor. We just lifted it and that worked out very well.

NF: And at that point you added the Starter, at that point when you turned it or ...

WS: The moment we took a load of that stuff out, we put some Starter in. We had loads of Compost Starter. I still have some left.

NF: So these 400 acres were all farmed with Pfeiffer’s Biodynamic Compost Starter?

WS: This went on for many, many years ... and to see this land being developed into houses.

NF: Must have been painful.

WS: It’s painful for me to even think of it.

NF: I know. It’s a shock when you see all that good work being paved over with asphalt and houses.

WS: And all the money I spent on that.

NF: And what kind of work were you doing at this time? What kind of engineering? You said mechanical engineer. Were you working for yourself or were you working for another outfit or ...

WS: You see, I came over here as a mechanical engineer and somehow I was fortunate enough to get together with people who had a product that they wanted to make and didn’t know how to do it. So they bumped into me and within three months I got a job with them. In other words, when I first came over I couldn’t even speak English and I’m born in America.

NF: Is that a fact? I’ve got to hear that story!

WS: I was born in northern New Jersey.

NF: No kidding?

WS: And my parents lived there and when I was about seven years old they went back to Germany. You see, originally my father, with another good friend of his, went to America, and that good friend couldn’t make it, or didn’t like it and so went back to Stuttgart. My father got a good job with Westinghouse. He had a wonderful job, but this friend in Stuttgart kept pestering him, “Why don’t you come back.” So my father came back ... when I was six or seven years old. And then I had to enter the second class already or something like that. ... Now, how did we get onto this?

NF: Well, I was just curious to hear how you got back to America and became a mechanical engineer ...

WS: Oh yes. And then I came back to America and then these fellas, a father and a son, they wanted to do something. I said, “What the hell are you doing? It’s all wrong. You’ve got to do it this way.” And then I solved all their problems. ... When I came over I couldn’t even speak English so the job I got was a job in a business store. In the back—this was downtown Philadelphia—in the back there was a repair shop where you could change a battery or get your car washed and so on and I worked there for \$20 a week. That was the only job I could get. And while I was working there, these other people, they had a little place where they made things for this particular place where I was hired. In other words, in those days the cars didn’t come with the finished headlights or so. You had to buy them. Or you had to leave your bumpers, which were all black, and then they were nickel-plated. And so, here I was taking off bumpers to be nickel-plated and headlights to be plated and this is what these other people did. [break in tape] And they wanted to do this process and I said, “that’s not the way to do it.” They were father and son—the father had the money and the son was the salesman—and they finally made a proposition saying that I would be the engineer. They also had an old engineer there who was about 80 years old and I could see the way they ran the place, that it wouldn’t work ... so they bought this man out. He was ready to retire anyhow.

NF: So they took you in as a partner?

WS: They took me in as a partner at that time and then ... you see, I went back to America in 1923 ... and at Easter 1924 I started with these two people and we finally wound up ... at one time we had 1100 employees. We used so much lumber. ... I was the one who bought for the company; I bought a sawmill out in Eugene, Oregon. And then we opened a place in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, because our place was too small to do all the things we were doing. There alone we had, I think, about 800 employees. And then instead of wood we finally used steel. We used the finest steel, which would be 11/1000 [of an inch] thick. We bought a steel mill and bought cold rolled steel, about 1/32 of an inch thick, which is rather cheap. And we rolled that down to 11/1000 of an inch and made blinds out of it.

NF: So you were in manufacturing then?

WS: I was a manufacturer, you see. In other words, I was the engineer with these two other men. And I built everything and I arranged everything. We supplied the automobile industry in Detroit with many things.

NF: Different components?

WS: Yes. And we also ... you see, these were the dire times in our history, in 1930. Everything was very cheap and, for instance, a curtain roller in those days costs 25 or 30 cents. And I brought one on the market that sold for 10 cents. That’s how I bought that sawmill and we put everything together. We sold it for around 6 cents and then it was sold for 10 cents and ...

NF: You mean it was marked up to 10 cents by the retailer?

WS: Yes.

NF: Just parenthetically, how did you come to know Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy? I mean, at one point, you must have become interested. If you knew Franz Winkler

and you knew Fetzter and Pfeiffer, how did you meet Steiner in there somewhere? Or was that through your parents?

WS: It was 1931, either 1930 or 1931. My brother had died the year before. And the Protestant, the Lutheran pastor who took care of everything, became a friend of mine. At that time I started to have questions about what happens to somebody when they die, what happens after death. And he said, “Well, Walter, I can’t tell you that. I know only what everybody else knows.” But he was likable and he was entertaining and I had him [working for me] on and off and he came to dinner and so on. And then one time he called me from his downtown office. He had a church there and he said, “Walter, I’ve got the man you’re looking for. He’s right here. He had dinner with us. He’s going to sing tonight at the Metropolitan Opera.” He was a Metropolitan Opera tenor. Bruno Correll was his name. And so I hot-footed it downtown. And then I brought him to my place and he liked it so much that he stayed there for half a year. And in that half a year, at the beginning of that half a year even, he told me about Anthroposophy. And I saw the logic ... you see, as an engineer, I go by logic. And logically this was the most convincing thing that I had ever looked at. I bought it right away.

NF: Did Pfeiffer ever talk to you at all about his work with Rudolf Steiner? Did he ever talk about his experiences, personal experiences, with Rudolf Steiner? It doesn’t matter if you don’t remember everything.

WS: He did, you see. In other words, he was then only about 18 or 19 years old when he met Rudolf Steiner, and

Rudolf Steiner guided him into Anthroposophy. Pfeiffer knew him well, but in that sense he was a beginner. He was not the way you would remember him.

NF: As a mature person?

WS: That’s right.

NF: I heard that he did some work with the stage lighting at the Goetheanum [the anthroposophical center in Switzerland].

WS: That’s what he did, yes. That’s what they still remember him for. He must have done a wonderful job on the stage lighting. He did that very well.

NF: He must have been a man of many talents.

WS: Yes. He had ideas and imagination and no matter what problem came up he at least knew something about how to approach it.

NF: So, if you look back now ... of course, it’s a long time ago, but what do you remember most about him? How do you remember him? If you think of Dr. Pfeiffer and you look back, maybe he was sitting at your dinner table or visiting your farm, how do you remember him?

WS: Well, he was a very pleasant personality.

NF: So, really easy to get along with and likable human being?

WS: Yes. Only when he had his set ideas, then ... well, I give in a great deal, but there are certain things that I won’t budge on either, and so we got together on that one time. But that was just in passing.

NF: Well, I have to be respectful both of your time and your age. But it’s really been wonderful to get a little glimpse, a little window into the life of somebody who’s so important to the biodynamic work, even today. ❖

JPI AT THE THRESHOLD

By Hugh J. Courtney

While the world is poised on the threshold of a potential Y2K debacle (see page 8), JPI also stands at a threshold, although not so much in terms of the year 2000 or the new millennium, which begins, technically, as of January 1, 2001. Rather, JPI faces a dramatic new level of activity in terms of both the production of the biodynamic preparations, as well as the production of the Pfeiffer BD Compost Starter and BD Field Spray. In Autumn of 1998, for instance, we put down some 8,000 cow horns for various forms of BD#500. The year before, some 5,000 cow horns were buried. This Spring, the level of demand for BD#500 threatens to exhaust our supply from the 5,000 cow horns put down in 1997. At the present rate of increase in orders for BD#500, the 8,000 horns put down in the Fall of 1998 will likely not be sufficient to meet the demand through the Spring of the year 2000. This is in spite of the hundreds of cow horns we have shipped to various BD practitioners all over the country, so that farmers and gardeners could make their own BD#500. This coming Fall, in order to meet the anticipated need for BD#500 in the first year of the new century, 2001, I am estimating that we would need to bury

20,000 cow horns. For a variety of reasons, this will be a most difficult task to complete. As noted elsewhere, we need funds for the purchase of an additional substantial supply of cow horns, thus we are appealing for donations for that specific purpose. Secondly, the labor required to put down 20,000 cow horns does not presently seem possible with the staff hours available to devote to this task. Even a combination of staff and volunteer hours for this amount of labor does not seem possible. It is therefore more and more urgent that individual biodynamic practitioners undertake the making of their own BD#500. From my point of view, it seems that it is more important for us here at JPI to concentrate on maintaining an abundant supply of the more difficult to make compost preparations rather than spending enormous blocks of time in making a preparation which the individual practitioner could handle quite readily provided he or she has a supply of good quality cow horns. Therefore, I would strongly urge that as many people as possible undertake to make their own BD#500. There may well come a time when our supply of BD#500, in particular, no longer is sufficient to meet the demand. For those who do not

In addition to making available cow horns and the BC kit, JPI also conducts two very intensive preparation making seminars in late June and in mid-October each year. In the past, we have been under subscribed for these seminars, even though we maintain the attendance limit at a maximum of 12 people. We hope that will not be the case for 1999. Elsewhere in this issue you will find more detailed information on these seminars.

From the beginning of biodynamics, the ideal has been for each individual farmer to make all the preparations for the farm. The reality, however, has been that either groups of farmers join cooperatively to make preparations, or an individual takes on the task of making substantial quantities of preparations for subsequent distribution to farmers and gardeners. It often happens that when the preparations making is undertaken by a group, there is, neither collectively nor by an individual member of the group, an overall consciousness of the totality of the various preparations. As a result, it often happens that one or more preparations slip through the crack, so to speak. Thus, either a preparation does not get made; gets made haphazardly or indifferently, and ends up of very poor quality; or, frequently, its burial site cannot be found again. Because the necessary overall consciousness of the preparations is presently carried more effectively by an individual than by a group, the quality of preparations produced is often substantially better when such individual oversight is involved. Those using preparations produced in such circumstances are getting the hoped for results. The next step, however, is for the user to begin to develop the same conscious relationship to all of the preparations as a totality. If the practitioner begins by making BD#500, BD#501, and the Biodynamic Compound (BC) preparation, and maintains a conscious focus on doing all three of these tasks conscientiously, we believe that this approach is, for many, a much more manageable possibility than attempting to provide for making all of the preparations at once. Those who wish to do so will receive from JPI whatever help we can provide, and the seminars mentioned above are a major avenue for such help.

If enough people take on this challenge of making their own BD#500, #501, and BC, the whole Y2K scenario could turn out to be a blessing in disguise for the biodynamic impulse in this country. If Y2K turns out to be the devastating event some are predicting, then the more people in a position to grow food biodynamically with their own preparations, the more

BRICK PIT BC (Thun Recipe Compost)

While the name Barrel Compost has been associated with the Thun recipe for many years, and may still be a viable way of making this product, we have recently constructed brick-lined pits to use for this composting process. This was prompted by several factors: wooden barrels are not easy to obtain; in active biodynamic soils the useful life of wooden barrels is relatively brief; bricks are universally available. The principal inspiration for the brick-lined pit comes from Peter Proctor’s book, *Grasp the Nettle*, (available from JPI @ \$24.95 plus \$3.50 shipping), where he speaks of making the Thun recipe in India where voracious termites would destroy a wooden barrel in a very short period of time. The dimensions for Peter Proctor’s rectangular pit are given as 600 mm by 1 m by 150 mm deep (approximately more or less 24 inches by 39-40 inches by 6 inches deep). The pit is lined with bricks stacked to a height of another 150 mm (about 6 inches) above the soil surface, with the left-over soil from digging the pit mounded up around the brick sides. We have chosen to construct circular pits lined with stacked bricks of approximately the same internal volume as the rectangular pit construction indicated by Peter Proctor. Additional inspiration for moving to circular brick-lined pits came from Patti Whelen, sister of JPI staff member Susan Gardner, who constructed such a pit last year. Patti was extremely pleased with the results as well as with the brick-lined pit itself. Do not forget to cover the pit, using a wooden lid or a piece of slate. We hope that the possibility of making the Thun recipe compost in a brick-lined pit will appeal to many biodynamic practitioners, and will put many more people on the road to biodynamic self-sufficiency in the face of Y2K and any other millennium problems we may face.

readily will we recover from this event. If, on the other hand, Y2K is the non-event that many are hoping and trusting will be the case, then those of us practicing biodynamics will be that much further toward fulfilling the hope that Rudolf Steiner expressed to Ehrenfried Pfeiffer: that the “benefits of the biodynamic preparations should be made available as quickly as possible to the largest possible areas of the entire Earth, for the Earth’s healing.”¹ Elsewhere, Rudolf Steiner expressed great

concern that Anthroposophy, of which biodynamic agriculture can be regarded as an essential part, be well established by the end of the 20th century in order to act as a counterforce to the materialistic impulse that would be growing ever stronger. At this point in time, we are dreadfully short of such a widespread use of the preparations. However, if we count the entire year 2000 as belonging to the 20th century, as is the mathematically correct thing to do, then we still have not just 8, but 20 months remaining in order to try to fulfill Rudolf Steiner’s fervent hope.

One should always ask oneself just why Steiner felt that the biodynamic preparations were so important to the earth and to the human race at this important juncture of time. While I cannot provide you with a guaranteed correct answer to that question, my own experience over the years in using the preparations, as well as in making them, suggests that there are very significant spiritual reasons for Steiner’s statement. I can best characterize my perception by suggesting that use of the biodynamic preparations, especially when all nine are involved, changes the local spiritual atmosphere of the earth in a very positive way. The elemental beings are nourished in very special ways where the biodynamic preparations are used. That nourishment allows them to correct more effectively the negative results of man’s prior misuse of the soil and the plants. Bernard Lievegoed expresses this in another way when he states, “In the compost heap spirit is released from its imprisonment in the Earth.”² Later on, in the same book, Lievegoed asks the questions: “What really happens when people plough the earth? When they make preparations following alchemical processes which

Continued on page 13

1. Steiner, *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture* (Kimberton 1993), p. 261.
2. Lievegoed, *The Battle for the Soul* (Stroud 1994), p. 40.

wish to be caught by surprise, we do try to guarantee a supply of preparations to those who have an Associative Contract with JPI, but the surest, safest way for the practitioner to guarantee a supply of BD#500 is to make one's own.

Some 15 years ago, in early May of 1984, Josephine Porter passed away, and by virtue of a certain innocence on my part, I agreed to undertake the preparations work that she had been engaged in for more than thirty years. What many people may not realize, is that Josephine Porter was for many years also the Secretary of the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, as well as the person who for quite a number of years also mailed out the quarterly publication of the Association. Throughout the visits I had made to Josephine Porter's farm over the years when I was learning to make the preparations, we had many discussions on the ideal "home" for the preparations' work. The nature of the biodynamic preparations, derived from the spiritual scientific research of Rudolf Steiner, seemed to require a nonprofit institution, in essence restoring the work to the position it enjoyed when it was done as a function within the Biodynamic Farming & Gardening Association in the beginning. It was only fitting that an institution devoted to the furthering of biodynamic agriculture through quality biodynamic preparations be named in her honor, and so the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc. was chartered on October 22, 1985 by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Then in 1995, JPI was selected by The Pfeiffer Foundation to carry on the production of the Pfeiffer Biodynamic Compost Starter and Field Spray. In the beginning of biodynamic agriculture in this country, the production of the various biodynamic preparations was under the direct guidance of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer. In his efforts to spread the word about biodynamics in this country during the period of the 1940's and '50's, there was little receptivity to the preparations and most particularly to the weird procedures for making them. Their manufacture was not something that could easily be discussed with your average American farmer. In addition, producing the preparations in substantial quantities was a matter of some difficulty, particularly with respect to obtaining the necessary sheaths as well as the quantities of preparation plant materials required. Pfeiffer's solution to both of these problems was the BD Compost Starter, which could be presented to the farmer as a special concoction which worked through beneficial soil organisms such as bacteria, enzymes, and other such entities. Although references did mention that the BD Compost Starter and the BD Field Spray contained the biodynamic preparations #502 through #507 plus BD#500, the emphasis for public consumption was on the beneficial soil organisms, particularly the bacteria, which were included in the Pfeiffer products. Quite a few people have attempted to duplicate the Pfeiffer formulation over the years, but have failed to achieve an equivalent product. Their failure is principally because they focus their efforts on the bacteria, and pay no heed to the biodynamic preparations themselves. In a certain sense, the bacteria are symptoms of the biodynamic effect rather than the cause of such an effect.

After the BD Compost Starter and BD Field Spray began to be produced, the preparations themselves were still available to the biodynamic purist, but a definite separation took place between the Pfeiffer products and the biodynamic preparations.

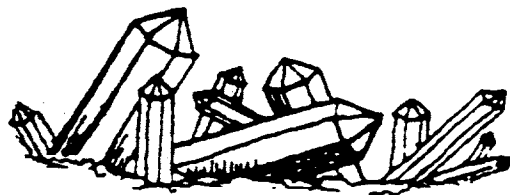
In some instances, persons within the biodynamic movement came to regard the Pfeiffer products as a betrayal by Pfeiffer of Steiner's original intent for biodynamic agriculture. It is difficult for me to draw that conclusion when one understands the seriousness with which Pfeiffer regarded Steiner's express wish that the preparations be used as widely and as soon as possible for the sake of the earth's health. Coupled with the lack of receptivity to the preparations themselves by the American farmer or gardener, Pfeiffer's approach to meeting Steiner's charge is readily understood when seen in the total context of the time and situation in which he found himself.

There are those who have expressed the opinion that whereas the biodynamic preparations are spiritual, the Pfeiffer BD products are merely biological. Once again, this is a view with a focus merely on the bacteria and not on the biodynamic preparations contained within the Pfeiffer products. When one really understands all that Ehrenfried Pfeiffer put into the BD Compost Starter and BD Field Spray, it is impossible to conclude that these products are not every bit as fully endowed with spiritual forces as are the biodynamic preparations. However, it is still the case that most American farmers will be more comfortable if the Pfeiffer products continue to be presented with an emphasis on bacteria, enzymes, and humus-building soil organisms. Nevertheless, at JPI we will describe the Pfeiffer materials as fully endowed with the biodynamic preparations BD#500, #502, #503, #504, #505, #506, and #507. We will also do our best to thoroughly inform all users of the Pfeiffer materials that to be truly biodynamic, the additional preparations, BD#501 and #508, need to be considered as well.

Shortly after JPI was chosen by The Pfeiffer Foundation as the agent to keep the Pfeiffer Products in the world, we began construction of a building to house the production of the Pfeiffer materials as well as the preparations work. That building is now nearing completion and will be dedicated at Michaelmas 1999.

* * *

In preparation for the new level of activity at JPI, we have recently welcomed aboard Jennifer Reeve from Norwich, England, as the Pfeiffer Products Technician. Also joining us recently is Robert Lehman, who will focus to a considerable extent on the farm and gardens at JPI, but whose ultimate interest, besides learning all he can about the biodynamic preparations, is to help with the educational program at JPI. With these two joining our current full and part time staff of Hugh Courtney, Susan Gardner, Bill Blake, Lee McWhorter, Mark Proctor, Patricia Smith, Malcolm Gardner, and many enthusiastic volunteers, we hope we can continue to carry out JPI's mission to provide biodynamic preparations "so that the Earth may be healed." ❖



Y2K PREPAREDNESS AND THE BIODYNAMIC PREPARATIONS

By Hugh J. Courtney

In a prime example of shutting the barn door long after the horses have left, we are now hearing and seeing much about the problem of computer chips and programs that are not able to handle the date change to the year 2000, or, in the jargon of abbreviation, "Y2K." Some experts predict a permanent end to the world as we know it, while others predict merely a ho-hum non-event. From my own effort to understand the ramifications, it seems that the computer problems within the financial sector are fairly well in hand in this country. The rest of the world, however, may be a lot less ready and that lack of readiness can result in a domino effect that may impact the banking industry in this country in spite of the massive expenditures to correct the problem. Furthermore, even if the financial community solves all its own computer problems, other factors connected to Y2K, which are not under its control, could manage to disrupt its operations. I am thinking specifically of a partial or, in the worst case scenario, a total failure of the power grid. Similarly, other potential hazards for the financial sector that are not within its control are a stock market crash triggered by Y2K related events, or a bank run created by the panic of an anticipated Y2K catastrophe. Lastly, other aspects of world commerce may be less well prepared than the financial community, and this could have a bearing on our ability here at the Josephine Porter Institute to deliver the biodynamic preparations in a timely fashion, or even to deliver them at all.

Within the transportation and petroleum industries, we are told that there are literally thousands upon thousands of so-called "embedded" computer chips that may seriously affect the production and dispensing of gasoline and diesel fuel as well as the normal operation of the entire system of train, plane, and truck transportation. Should these problems be as serious as even the more optimistic predictions suggest, our ability to easily ship the biodynamic preparations may be curtailed. The shipping of the preparations may well be regarded as totally insignificant when people throughout the country could be facing bare grocery store shelves, and an inability to travel to the grocery stores in the first place. Distribution of all goods and services could conceivably be shut down for a time. Should that be the case, it will be even more important that people grow their own food. Wherever possible, that food should be grown with the biodynamic preparations, particularly in the absence of the customary chemical and organic inputs that are so dependent upon the distribution system in this country. We here at JPI are very interested in seeing that there are stockpiles of the essential biodynamic preparations in many key locations throughout the country so that recovery from any Y2K event will be swifter and less painful. Below I will outline some steps designed to accomplish that aim.

Here at JPI we are in the process of upgrading our

computer hardware and programs so that the financial and administrative aspects of the operation will be unaffected. We are also planning to increase our production of preparations significantly, so as to be able to supply the ever increasing demand. However, even if we had a world supply of biodynamic preparations on hand here in Woolwine, Virginia, it is conceivable that the Y2K problem could prevent us from delivering them. In anticipation of that possibility, we are doing our best this year to encourage as many people as possible to begin making their own preparations, especially the two cow horn preparations BD#500 (horn manure) and BD#501 (horn silica). In addition, we also wish to encourage people to make the Biodynamic Compound (BC) preparation, which is perhaps more widely known still as Barrel Compost (Thun recipe). We are trying to build a substantial supply of excellent quality cow horns so that any biodynamic practitioner—even if only a backyard gardener—would be in a position to provide BD#500 and #501 not only for him/herself but to neighbors as well. If this same practitioner will also make a batch of the BC, a fairly complete biodynamic fertility program will be available.

One cow horn filled with silica and buried no later than the 4th of July (Independence Day) 1999, dug up in the Fall of 1999 around Thanksgiving Day can provide 50 to 100 or more units of finished BD#501. Seven cow horns (seven is the number of completion and is my preferred minimum) stuffed with good quality cow manure and buried sometime during the Fall between Michaelmas and the Winter Solstice of 1999 can provide 12-24 units of finished BD#500 in the Spring of

Y2K PREPAREDNESS & BIODYNAMICS

How can you help?

1. Take up the challenge of making your own BD#500, #501 and BC as outlined above.
2. Be prepared to grow food in the year 2000, and to help your neighbors with your knowledge of biodynamics.
3. Consider a contribution (tax-deductible) to JPI to help us meet our goals for obtaining good quality cow horns as well as for meeting the increased demand for finished preparations.

2000. If sometime during the remainder of 1999, the biodynamic practitioner can also make one recipe of BC in a barrel or a brick pit (see box), then a significant degree of self-sufficiency can be attained, not only for that practitioner, but for neighbors as well. A finished recipe of BC, easily containing 8 gallons or more, with approximately 48 units per gallon, can provide biodynamic fertility for a considerable number of acres. With a little help from neighbors or friends, a double recipe is just as easy to make as a single one, and will provide a generous supply of valuable fertility for growing food. JPI currently provides a kit for making a double recipe batch of BC at a cost of \$35.00 plus \$6.00 for shipping. (Single recipe kits are available at a cost of \$19.00 plus \$6.00 shipping.) Either BC kit includes everything needed except the manure. If enough people will take up the task outlined above of making BD#500, #501 and the BC, we can create the beginnings of a stockpile of preparations needed not only for Y2K, but also for the future growth of biodynamic agriculture in this country. Of course, it is essential that one has proper storage fully in place for any of the finished preparations being made. (If you do not already have one, please contact us for a storage instruction sheet.)