

Applied **BIODYNAMICS®**



Autumn 2013

Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Floyd, Virginia

Issue No. 82

JPI Has Expanded Its Operations

Abigail Porter

The Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics (JPI) has relocated and expanded. The JPI offices are now in a retail storefront in downtown Floyd, Virginia. Our biodynamic preparations and Pfeiffer products production site is now located on a farm about ten miles outside the town center of Floyd. The county, with a population of 15,000, is primarily agricultural (cattle and dairy farming),

and with the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway close by, also has a strong tourism and vacation economy.

The Farm

The JPI farm location, with hardwood and conifer forests, rolling hills, flat fields, and fertile bottomland along the headwaters of the Little River, provides diversity ideally



View of the farm coming in from lands adjoining Riverstone Organic Farm. Spikenard Bee Sanctuary is on the hill, to the right.

From the Editor

Dear Friends of JPI:

Welcome to our new issue. Abby Porter has done a great job giving us a tour of JPI's new home and neighborhood in Floyd, Virginia. If you are thinking of making a visit to JPI, please stay up to date with JPI on Facebook or via our e-newsletter (sign up at www.jpibiodynamics.org) to learn about upcoming preparation-related events taking place at JPI this fall and in 2014.

Though JPI has a new home, the organization's mission remains the same: "So that the earth may be healed." Biodynamics was initiated as an agricultural modality that would heal the earth and help farmers grow nutritious food for people and farm animals. Rudolf Steiner even went so far as to say that nutritious food was necessary in order to support our spiritual development. In his introduction to Steiner's *Agriculture* lectures, [Ehrenfried Pfeiffer reiterated Rudolf Steiner's intent to heal the earth by means of](#) "consciously restoring cosmic forces to growth processes by both direct and indirect means, thereby freeing the present conception of plant nature from a material, purely terrestrial isolation..." emphasizing that "only through such restoration would it be possible to re-energise those healthful and constructive forces capable of halting degeneration."

So, while JPI's directive is single-pointed, by virtue of the earth being healed, many other systems and relationships are also brought into balance. The biodynamic preparations support creative growth processes and formative forces that form the frame work of the natural world on which human beings all depend. Healthy farms have a direct connection to the health of our soil, water, and air. Beautiful farms and gardens make us feel good, they can become centers where we connect with each other, fostering community and neighborliness. They give us stability in our society by providing food security. And, as biodynamic practitioners, we are always mindful of the gnomes and fairies and other elemental beings whose "habitat" is cultivated and conserved through our agricultural practices.

Such a simple act as that of applying the biodynamic preparations can have a wonderful ripple effect because "...the interests of Agriculture are bound up, in all directions, with the widest spheres of life." (Steiner)

Warm greetings,
Christy Korrow

Applied Biodynamics

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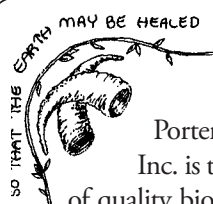
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Mission

The mission of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics, Inc. is to heal the earth through production of quality biodynamic preparations based on the spiritual scientific discoveries of Rudolf Steiner and to advance education and research in biodynamic agriculture.

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JPI Has Expanded Its Operations

suited for the growing of the preparation plants and for the burial of the preparations. Our biodynamic preparations are now buried at this site, and in the fall, we will be planting preparation plants and making preparations there. We are leasing the JPI farm site from Terry and Pat Brett, founders and owners of Kimberton Whole Foods in Pennsylvania, who own surrounding lands, including their home site. In addition, the farm adjoins Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary to the east and Riverstone Organic Farm to the south.

Long time employee Larry Mabe and Kendell Cockram have been mowing the lush growth of grass in the fields, cleaning up the farm site, and making preparations. In May, shortly after Ascension Day, preparations were dug up at the Courtney farm and transferred to our new farm site for processing and storage. Preparations that needed



Larry is mowing lush grass growth before digging preparation pits.

Biodynamic Preparations Legend

BD #500 – Horn Manure

BD #501 – Horn Silica

BD #502 – Yarrow

BD #503 – Chamomile

BD #504 – Stinging Nettle

BD #505 – Oak Bark

BD #506 – Dandelion

BD #507 – Valerian

Compost
Preparations

BD #508 – Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)



Kendell and Jerry digging the pit for cow horns.

additional time in the earth to complete their transformation were reburied on lands treated with biodynamic sprays. In early summer, BD #501 (horn silica) was buried, valerian blossoms were ground and pressed, and a hundred pounds of nettles were buried for a year plus a summer in the earth. Yarrow was stuffed into deer bladders and hung up to bathe in the summer sun. The BD #503 (chamomile), BD #506 (dandelion), and BD #505 (oak bark) compost preparations were unearthed and screened for storage in crocks which will be placed in peat moss-lined wooden boxes, ready for fall orders and Associative Contracts. By late summer and early fall, the BD #500 (horn manure) and #(x)500 (x= pre-potentized) had been dug up and processed, and the BD #504 (nettle), which spent over a year in the earth, was retrieved. Oak bark is now being harvested from the nearby woods, and materials are being collected for fall preparation making.



Burying 100 pounds of nettle in nylon screen pouch.



A river runs through it...



Heart-shaped stone found by Larry when digging pits for the preparations.



Barn production site entering farm from lands adjoining Spikenard.



JPI office and store is located in the Village Green shop and office building.

The Office

Our new centrally located retail and office space in the Village Green gives JPI's biodynamic mission local visibility and allows us to better serve and educate the growing sustainable farming community as well as the many visitors passing through or vacationing in the area. The building has a solar array with net metering which has dramatically reduced our energy costs. Even with air conditioning and many raining days, the electric bill for the five-room office and storefront was less than twenty dollars a month during the summer. We are easily accessed from the two main thoroughfares running through Floyd, and are located on the same town block as the farmers market and the office for Sustain Floyd, a grassroots non-profit organization created in 2009 to assist the Floyd County community with healthy, sustainable growth.

The JPI staff has not missed a beat with the move. Cynthia Bowman, the administrative manager and her assistant Carolyn Hanchey have the office and retail space up and

running. Even in the midst of the move, orders continued to be shipped out within three business days of being placed. The storefront is well-stocked with a wide variety of books suited for both the beginner and the experienced biodynamic practitioner – from guides to using the preparations to planting with the movement of the planets, from bees to wine, from the practical to the more spiritual and esoteric, some of which are not yet listed on our website. We continue to add new titles to our bookshelf. Biodynamic compost preparations, sprays, and the Pfeiffer Biodynamic Compost Starter and Field and Garden Spray are also readily available to anyone stopping by.

Outreach

Previously, from 1985 to date, JPI needed to establish a reliable, central location from which to provide biodynamic preparations and education. Now JPI is expanding its commitment to supporting the development of regional centers

for biodynamic preparation production, distribution, and education. With the growth of regional centers, access to education about the use and making of preparations, mentors and study groups will be available to more people closer to their own communities. We continue our commitment to making quality preparations for those of you who do not make your own and to providing educational resources. JPI looks forward to greater cooperation and collaboration with other biodynamic organizations, groups, and individuals across North America. With them, we will continue the efforts towards education about biodynamics and the preparations for the healing of the Earth and the evolution of humanity.

The JPI board is looking for additional board members and other volunteers who want to help us cultivate collaboration and partnership with our employees, our cus-

tomers, individuals, and other biodynamic and sustainable farming organizations. Next year, we will be creating a new website with more information on the use and making of biodynamic preparations, access to the newsletter online, and with improved navigation for the catalog and ordering. Please let us know how we can expand and improve the content of both the website and the newsletter so we can better serve your interests and needs. Send your suggestions to JPI at cbowman@jpibiodynamics.org with “website” and/or “newsletter” in the subject line. Although JPI will not be holding the annual Fall Preparation Intensive with the sacrifice of the cow, the JPI board will be gathering to help make preparations in late October. If you would like to join us, please contact Cynthia in the JPI office for details (540-745-7030). We expect to resume the workshop schedule in 2014.

Our New Neighbors: Local Sustainability

Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary was founded by Gunther Hauk and Vivian Struve-Hauk as a research and learning center to help restore the health and vitality of the honeybee. Gunther has been practicing biodynamic agriculture and beekeeping for nearly forty years, and in 1996, he co-founded the Pfeiffer Center in Chestnut Ridge, New York where he developed one of the first biodynamic part-time training programs. More recently, he was featured in the exquisitely filmed documentary, *Queen of the Sun: What are the bees telling us?* At the honeybee sanctuary, research is carried out with a variety of hive shapes, strengthening teas, and with the biodynamic method of reducing animal pests. The bees are kept in a way that respects their innate instinctual wisdom in respect to swarming, raising their own real queens and building their own honeycomb. A variety of annual and perennial plants and medicinal herbs are planted in the beautiful gardens to strengthen the bees' immune systems. The Spikenard healing and strengthening tea includes four of the biodynamic preparation plants in addition to other medicinal herbs. Initiated in 2012, Spikenard Farm offers a two-year certification training in biodynamic/sustainable beekeeping. Classes meet four times a year for three-day sessions. Additional classes in beekeeping and biodynamics are offered throughout the year, and educational articles are available in their e-newsletter and on their website. In order to better accommodate the increasing interest in sustainable beekeeping, construction of an open-air

classroom pavilion is nearing its completion. We feel fortunate to be able to locate next to another biodynamic farm and are looking for ways we can collaborate with them in the future.

www.spikenardfarm.org

Riverstone Organic Farm encompasses 150 acres, with ten in vegetable and fruit production. Chickens and sheep are also raised there. The farm produces over 200 varieties of certified organic vegetables, fruits, and flowers sold through a CSA, two farmers markets, a college, and to the restaurant and retail trade. In addition to the usual CSA produce share, an innovative Flavors of Floyd share is offered which includes sourdough bread from a Floyd bakery, organic coffee from the local roastery, as well as Riverstone eggs and produce.

www.riverstoneorganicfarm.com

Woody Crenshaw of Riverstone Organic Farm is a driving force and founding member of Sustain Floyd. This organization works to “localize our economy, enhance and protect natural and cultural resources, and advance issues related to energy independence, transportation, waste and recycling, and education.” Sustain Floyd operates a working, model organic farm where they hold classes. The organization has recently received a grant for a feasibility study to build a fruit and vegetable processing facility and are currently researching and developing a grant application for a feasibility and planning study to create a dairy processing facility.

www.sustainfloyd.org

The Valerian Preparation (BD #507) Revisited

Abigail Porter

Last spring, as I was looking through some of the past issues of *Applied Biodynamics*, I came across an article titled, “Prepared Valerian: The Secret to Finished Compost” (Summer 2001, Issue No. 33). Since I was getting ready to harvest valerian flowers, this caught my eye. In the article, the author (Joseph Stevens) proposes that Rudolf Steiner’s indications regarding the use of the valerian preparation were mistranslated and misinterpreted as published in both the Adams and the Creeger/Gardner editions of the *Agriculture* lectures. Stevens asserts that Steiner advised farmers to apply the stirred valerian preparation to the finished, transformed, colloidal compost rather than to a newly built pile along with the other five compost preparations. He further postulates that the success Alex Podolinsky has achieved in Australia, which includes millions of acres converted to biodynamics and the creation of thirty inches of topsoil in some places, is in large part due (in addition to other biodynamic farming practices) to the use of “Prepared” 500, where BD #507 is applied to the finished, colloidal BD #500 preparation.¹

Translations: A Closer Look

Stevens contends that the translators used the words “dung” and “dunger” interchangeably, when in actuality, Steiner used the word “dung” when he referred to raw manure, and he used the word “dunger,” or fertilizer, when discussing the preparation-treated manure (finished compost). Stevens feels that the full effect of the BD #507 is lost when it is applied to raw manure or uncomposted materials. Stevens states, “According to the indications, prepared valerian activates the phosphorus, or ‘light-bearing’ substance. Phosphorus is the switch that turns on the ‘light’ which catalyses the crystallized fertility of the finished compost into energy available for plants. Losing this effect means that the radiant force of the compost never gets ‘turned on,’ and as a result, the effect...will lack a characteristic intensity.”

My curiosity was aroused, and I promptly reread the section about valerian on the last page of Lecture Five of the *Agriculture Course* (Adams translation, p. 100), which reads in part:

“And so I think you should try to create good manures, by adding these five ingredients – or suitable substitutes – to your manuring matter in the way indicated [Steiner had already given directions on how to make the five compost preparations in the previous pages]. Manures in the future should not be treated with all manner of chemicals, but with these



five: yarrow, chamomile, stinging-nettle, oak-bark, and dandelion. Such a manure will have very much of what is actually needed.

Now you have one more bridge to cross. Before you make use of the manure thus prepared, press out the flowers of Valerian [*officinalis*]. Dilute the extract very highly.... Add this juice of the Valerian flower to the manure in very fine proportions. Then you will stimulate it to behave in the right way in relation to what we call the ‘phosphoric’ substance.

With the help of these six ingredients you can produce an excellent manure –whether from liquid manure, or ordinary farmyard-manure, or compost.”

The Creeger/Gardner translation of *Agriculture* is similar, but does use the word fertilizer more often, and perhaps more appropriately.

The operative phrases for me in both translations are, “Before you make use of the manure thus prepared....” (Adams) and, “Even better, before using this treated manure, press the blossoms from the valerian plant and greatly dilute the extract in warm water...” (Creeger/Gardner). Ordinarily, one would not be using the manure until the composting process has transformed it. This indicates that perhaps one should be applying the stirred BD #507 closer to the time when the compost will actually be used.

In the same issue of *Applied Biodynamics*, Hugh Courtney encourages readers to conduct their own experiments on the timing of the application of BD #507. (“New Insights on the Valerian Preparation – A Call to Examine Old Habits in Biodynamics.”) Both of these articles are available for you to read or download on the JPI website (www.jpibiodynamics.org/node/597#attachments).

Results

Only a few readers responded to the call for experimentation, even though a form was included with the newsletter for people to record their observations using BD #507 on finished compost. A follow-up on their results was printed in *Applied Biodynamics* (Winter 2003-2004, Issue No. 43) along with an anecdotal report of using BD #507 to protect blueberries from early fall frost.²

Steve Storch of Natural Science Organics in New York state changed his method of making biodynamic compost and Genesis Compound (his enhanced version of barrel compost a.k.a. Biodynamic Compound Preparation), and always waits for the compost to finish before applying the BD #507. Instead of sprinkling the stirred BD #507 over the whole pile, he pours it into a hole in the center of the finished compost pile and waits two weeks before using the compost or Genesis Compound.³ He has observed improved results by adding the BD #507 at the end of the composting process. Storch notes better plant growth, increased flowering, enhanced colors of fruit and flowers, and increased earthworm activity. Additional benefits have included improved frost protection for tender annuals. Impatiens that usually succumbed with the first frost were able to withstand four frosts before dying off. Heike-Marie Eubanks in Oregon reported better growth of a cover crop on the areas where finished biodynamic compost treated with BD #507 was applied, in contrast to beds that received no treated compost. Patricia Smith, editor of *Applied Biodynamics* at that time, has since changed to applying the BD #507 at the end of the composting process and feels that it makes a finer compost with superior results and retains moisture longer.

Future Research

It seems that this question of when to apply BD #507 warrants further investigation and research. To really confirm the best time for application, three compost piles and test plots would need to be set up. One pile would have the stirred BD #507 sprayed over the outside of the newly built compost pile at the same time the other preparations are inserted into the pile. The second pile would have the BD #507 sprayed over the pile only after the other preparations have transformed the pile. And, the third pile would have the BD #507 sprayed over the pile twice: once when the other preparations are added, and again when the compost is finished. A further variation might be to see if there is a difference in the compost material and effects with an additional pile by inserting the BD #507 in a hole in the center of the finished compost the way Steve Storch does.

The compost from the test piles would then need to be applied to three adjacent test plots with same soil conditions and the same seeds would need to be planted in each plot on the same day. Ideally, conventional analysis, sensitive crystallization, and chromatography tests would be conducted on: all three finished composts, soil in the three plots some time after application of the compost, and on the plant tissue/juice of the plants growing on the three plots. It would also be good to keep track of the date and type of day (whether root, water, air, or fire) on which each step was taken.

This is just one of many research projects greatly needed in the area of preparation making and use. I encourage anyone who has an interest in the question of the timing of BD #507 application to do further investigation and research. Please send your observations and findings to JPI so we can share them.

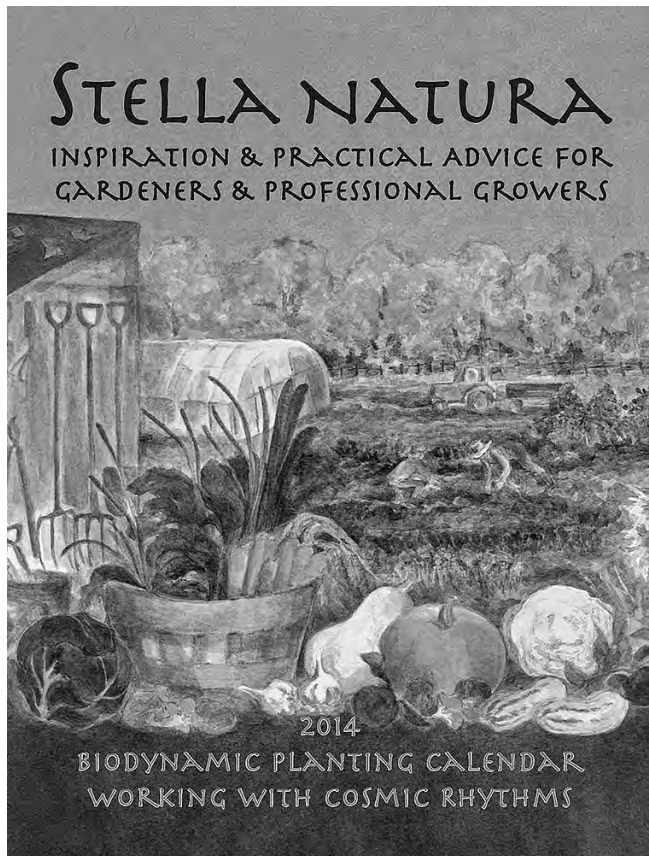
Notes

- 1) "Prepared" 500 – Horn Manure is made from finished BD #500 that is put into a ceramic crock and treated with one or more sets of Biodynamic Compost Preparations, the same way one would treat a compost pile. For larger volumes, the BD #500 is put into the crock in 4–5 inch layers with one set of the five compost preps inserted between each layer. BD #507 is lightly sprinkled or misted over the top layer. The crock is covered with a loose lid and stored in a root cellar or cool basement, allowing four–six weeks before use.
- 2) BD #507 has been used successfully in early spring to protect blossoms from frost and snow damage and has been used in the fall to protect fruit and plants from early frosts. It was applied in the evening before frost as well as the morning of the frost. See "Anecdotes and Antidotes – Biodynamics at Work." (*Applied Biodynamics*, Winter 2003–2004, Issue No. 43. Read the issue online at www.jpibiodynamics.org/node/597.)
- 3) It is reported that Maria Thun advised against inserting BD #507 into a hole in the pile at the beginning of the composting process when the rest of the preparations were inserted as, at least in her locale, it tended to make the compost black and clump together like slag. One assumes that she did spray the valerian over the top of the pile. (*Applied Biodynamics*, Summer 2001, Issue No. 33, p. 7.)

Highlights from the JPI Catalog

Stella Natura 2014 Calendars Now Available!

This calendar has many aspects: a basic introduction to astronomy, a simple ephemeris, a planting guide, a star map, aid for following the movement of the planets in the night sky, and articles by nine different authors. All of these attempt to provide a true picture of the world outside us and ideas to assist in developing a healthy relation to that world. Available for \$14.95



New Books

Sacred Agriculture: The Alchemy of Biodynamics

Dennis Klocek – \$30.00

Thinking Like a Plant: A Living Science for Life

Craig Holdrege – \$25.00

Monty Waldin's Best Biodynamic Wines

Monty Waldin – \$27.00

The Soul's Awakening: A Drama Of The Soul And Spirit,

Rudolf Steiner – \$13.00

Calendar of the Soul: The Year Participated

Rudolf Steiner, translated by Owen Barfield – \$8.00

Hugo Erbe's Three Kings Preparation (Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh)

Preorder now and save on shipping by including it in your fall preparation order, or have it shipped with your Associative Contract. Order no later than December 23 to receive your kit by December 31. Instructions included. Cost is \$37.00. (Learn more about the Three Kings Preparation by reading *Applied Biodynamics*, Winter 2001–2002, Issue No. 35.)

Prices above do not include shipping and handling.

Save the Date

October 10–14, 2013 in Paonia, Colorado and October 18–22, 2013 at Foxhollow Farm near Louisville, Kentucky: Homeodynamic Agriculture with Enzo Nastati.

To register, contact Caren von Gontard, PO Box 30, Paonia, CO 81428, 970-201-0125, adivg@skybeam.com

January 22, 2013: The Farm as a Living Organism

Held as part of the 34th Annual EcoFarm Conference in Pacific Grove, California. Contact the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association for details.

Gratitude for Dandelions

The staff at JPI expresses their thanks to those who harvested, dried, and contributed dandelion blossoms in 2013. Your efforts allow JPI to produce the amount of BD #506 (dandelion) necessary to meet the demands of the famers and gardeners we serve.

Curtis Belcher – Woolwine, VA

Rebecca Colwells – Hubertus, WI

Betty Mize – Bassett, VA

David Shaw

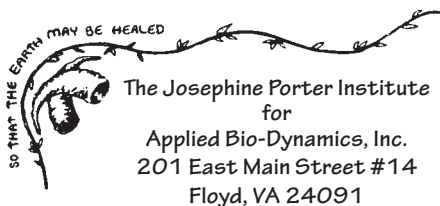
Tauzen Swanser – Missoula, MI

Mary and David Yoder – Fairchild, WI

Petra Zinniker – Elkhorn, WI

“Therefore they named ‘light-bearers’ these substances – like sulphur and phosphorus – which have to do with the working of light into matter.”

Rudolf Steiner – *Agriculture*, p. 43 (Adams translation)



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