

Biodynamic Tales

Mark Moodie



Readers will probably know that Dr Steiner initiated biodynamic agriculture through eight lectures he presented 100 years ago. For thirty-five of those years I have been asking BD colleagues what has arisen as a result of their BD activities. When the internet became accessible, I asked the same question more widely.

This curiosity led me to farms and gardens, libraries of books, academic papers and articles. What should one do with all these stories?

I decided to share them so they might be useful for future growers looking for successful precedents to their own situations, or for those who might wish to learn, or to be inspired. How do you share several thousand stories? A book? A lecture tour?

Come on, what century is this!? ... I made a website. It's called Considera. It's open 24/7 at www.considera.org.

I would invite those of you who like books and academic papers to start with the collected literature. As I write, there're over 1700 pieces – some that I am confident are not available anywhere else. (Prove me wrong.)

That's an overwhelming library so I have taken upon myself the painstaking task of extracting all the practical bits and putting them together in a highly structured form. I've called it a 'materia medica' because I am trained as a homeopath, but I could have called it a catalogue, a formulary, a database, or a silo, a compendium. Not only does it have all those practical bits from publications, it has tales from growers I've talked to over the years. It's all there on Considera.

How might one best use the site, or make it useful? Well, perhaps you have an issue in your garden. Let's say you have lice on your broad beans and you don't know what BD approach could help you most or indeed at all. Search the materia medica / database / silo ... for the word 'lice'. That'll lead you, among other options, to the page for the biodynamic preparation known as 501 or horn silica. There you can read the bare bones of what Lilly Kolisko did with 501 for that very issue. Click the little blue number after the relevant entry ('38' for LK) and you will be led to the fuller context from which those bare but practical bones were noted. (Perhaps there you will find why she hints, "Must be done at the right moment".) But perhaps before you click

away you could read through all the other stories related to 501 – such a versatile preparation!

If even what has been noted for 501 is too much information you can filter out what you don't want and just find what horn silica has done for broad beans,... or grapevines or cabbage or carrots... and that'll be presented to you. Again, perhaps you'd rather not hear about issues addressed in Egypt by 501 because that's such a different habitat. In this case, filter so you only get stories from the UK (or just Egypt!) – you can do that with one judicious click. Or maybe you don't really respect any other researcher apart from, say, Katherine Castelliz – you're a click away from hiding all the other stories so you can find out what Katherine discovered. Or Podolinski. Or Thun. Or any one of over fifty story-tellers/ researchers who have shared their experiences with 501. That's just one way in.

Another would be to go to the forum page and discuss pertinent subjects with some of the 500+ humans who have signed up over the years. You'll probably end up with me since it's my baby and I know and love my baby best, but perhaps a wider discussion will be kindled.

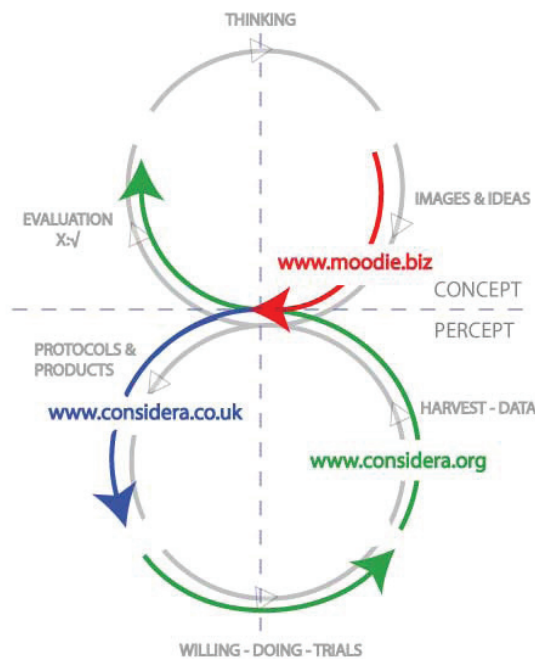
Alternatively you could read about some of the experiments I have opened up over the years concerning BD peppers and planting times.

Whilst there, you might want to explore the history of the way BD developed in the UK through the 'timeline' with all its dusty treasures, and click your way down one of its convoluted wormholes.

The most productive thing I think you could do – and urge you to do ... please!! – is to add practical

experiences resulting from your own engagement with biodynamics. Then this free and open-source commonwealth will be fuller and richer for those who are navigating the multi-faceted issues growers meet every day, as they try to unfold the potential of Dr Steiner's gift to the planet. You can add your experiences right on the website, but if you don't get on with computers just talk with or write to me and I'll add your stories in – you won't be the first to engage in this way.

www.considera.org addresses only a part of the BD mystery. It deliberately focuses on practical outcomes in ways that shouldn't scare off our more mainstream colleagues. But of course the results are part of a wider understanding of things. These results are only really in context with anthroposophical ideas and creative uses of the preparations. In the main I have kept these facets of the bigger picture at arms length in two linked sites. One offers publications



full of explorations and ideas around biodynamics, and the other makes potentised preparations and peppers available in Europe. Click the lemniscate in the top left of every page to discover these and how they complete each other. You'll also find ideas and preparations which have arisen from disciplines not obviously in the Steiner stable. I'm comfortable with this. I tell myself that not all of Michael's pupils have laboured directly within the anthroposophical stream or are branded in Sagittar font.

There's more, but you will have to engage to find these other treasures.

I started this work decades ago. The technology has moved on a lot and I was lagging behind like an aging wildebeest unable to keep up with the pack, in danger of being picked off by the digital hyenas who get their Darwinian kicks from vandalism. The ASinGB responded to my impassioned grunts and gave me a grant to bring the site into the 2020s. I am truly grateful – and happy now to share this shinier, more robust and safer version of Considera as my offering to biodynamic agriculture on its 100th birthday.

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INTRODUCTION TO GARDENING THE BIODYNAMIC WAY

**Sunday 27th October 2–5pm
at Rudolf Steiner House**

With Dr Sue Peat and Douglas Davidson

The workshop will cover the background to the biodynamic planting calendar and to using the biodynamic preparations. It's autumn so we'll focus on sharing tips for harvesting, composting and preparing your garden for winter. For the last hour, we'll stir the horn manure preparation (known as 500), so bring an empty screw top bottle if you would like to take some home. A 500ml bottle is enough for an average garden. The workshop is suitable for those new to biodynamics and for anyone who would like to give their garden, window boxes or house plants an autumn treat!

Sue and Douglas are enthusiastic gardeners with lots of practical experience of biodynamic gardening.

**ALL WELCOME, NO NEED TO BOOK.
Cost: Full £10 / Concession £5**

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Part-time, temporary | Remote/hybrid position



The Ruskin Mill Centre for Research (RMCR) has a vacancy for a Research Assistant to play a vital role in researching the history of biodynamic agriculture, contributing to a publication exploring 100 years of the biodynamic farming movement in the British Isles.

The role of Research Assistant is part-time and temporary. We anticipate the research, analysis and writing to require the equivalent of nine months' full-time work, spread over two years with a total budget of £20,000. The ideal candidate will have demonstrable experience in qualitative data collection and analysis and be a confident writer with academic and/or popular publications, as well as a PhD in a relevant discipline. Research can be carried out remotely but some visits to the RMCR's Field Centre in Gloucestershire will be needed. Interviews will be held in early September, with an anticipated start date to follow shortly after.

A large amount of data for this project has already been collected, but further collection and analysis is required, as well as co-writing of the text with the editorial team. The Research Assistant will contribute narrative material within the overall framework of the project, and will be credited as co-author for a text aimed at a mainstream audience.

How to apply

▶ please submit a covering letter, CV, and two samples of writing to simon.reakes@rmt.org

For more information, please visit thefieldcentre.org.uk