

South West Biodynamic Group

Spring Newsletter 2020



The Trees

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said
The recent buds relax and spread
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die too,
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In full grown thickness every May.
Last Year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

Philip Larkin

Dear Members,

It is time again to ask you for your annual subscription to the group. (If you have already paid either by standing order or given it to me directly please ignore this!)

If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter, please make your payment (see below) for it by the following means as soon as possible:

- 1) Direct bank transfer to Barclay's Bank, Account
No 13509680, sort code 20 60 88.
- 2) Send a cheque payable to S.W. Biodynamic Group to Diana White at
Flat 12 Apple Wharf, The Plains, Totnes, TQ9 5QL

For an individual or organisation is	£15,	A couple	£20
Students & non-waged	£10.		

For this you receive newsletters and preparations without cost from Jeremy Weiss at Velwell Orchard. Please phone 07962 432317 in advance

We occasionally have speakers to give talks and/or workshops and assist members to attend relevant conferences or workshops if they cannot afford to go otherwise. We ask them to share what they learn with the group, through the newsletter.

If you do not wish to continue receiving the newsletter at the present time, please get in touch. If you feel you cannot afford the subscription but would like to continue to remain connected with the Group's work please also get in touch.

With best wishes,

Diana White,

Treasurer for the Group. – dianawhite35@hotmail.com

Accounts for 1st March 2019 to 29.2.20:

Brought forwards from 2018/19	£757.28
Income: Subscriptions	<u>£740.00</u>
Expenditure: Newsletters including postage	£761.20
Preparation Maerials.	£ 7.00
Website	<u>£ 51.00</u>
	<u>£819.20</u>

We finished the year 2019/2020 with **£676.28** in the bank.

Spring Recipe: Asparagus Tart with Wild Garlic

Serves 6

Required:

10in 26 cm Loose bottomed flan case, buttered.
Oven 200°C/ gas mark 6 to begin.

Ingredients:

For the pastry: 6oz/175 gr strong white flour
2oz/50g wholewheat flour
½ tsp sea salt
5oz/150g cold butter cut into small pieces

1 tbs ice cold water

For the filling:

8oz/225g onions, sliced in half moons
½ bunch spring onions
1 bunch young asparagus
Generous handful of wild garlic, shredded
1oz/25g butter
1 tbsp olive oil
6oz/175 soft curd cheese
5 eggs
¾ pint/ 425ml single cream
3oz/ 75g grated mature cheddar
Salt and pepper

Method :

1. Make the pastry – in a large bowl sift together the flours and salt. Work in the butter with finger tips lightly, lifting the mixture up to let in the air as you do it. (The mixture should resemble fine breadcrumbs.) carefully add the ice cold water. Now the pastry should stay together in a ball but not be too sticky (too much water makes pastry hard). Cover and allow to rest in the fridge for half an hour while preparing the filling.
2. Trim fibrous ends from the asparagus and poach in slightly salted water – enough to just about cover – for about 5 minutes (to blanch them). Drain.



3. Sauté onions in butter and oil until translucent, with a pinch or two of salt. Add garlic leaves and remove from heat.
4. Beat the eggs in a bowl large enough to hold all the filling. Add the cream. Make this mixture up to 1 ¼ pt 725 ml with eggs and cream. Add a little milk if necessary
5. Add cheeses, onions and wild garlic to the egg mixture. Test the seasoning. Add salt and freshly ground pepper.
6. Roll out the pastry and line the tin. Crimp pastry edges and place on a baking tray.
7. Pour in the filling then arrange the asparagus all around with the tips pointing inwards like the spokes of a wheel. Press them in a little so they are covered with the egg mixture but are still visible.
8. Cook for 15 minutes at 200°C/gas mark 6 to seal the pastry, then turn heat down to 180°C/gas mark 4 for a further 40 minutes or until firm and a little golden. Allow to rest 10 minutes before slicing.

From The Biodynamic Cookbook by Wendy Cook, published by Clairview

Spring Gathering – cancelled or transformed?

We had planned to hold a Spring Gathering at The Apricot Centre, Huxhams Cross on Sunday 19th April but due to the Covid19 outbreak we have had to cancel it. It has been suggested members do a stirring of 500 preparation on that day as we can't meet physically. In this way people can join forces in thought and action in their own gardens, plots or holdings. For those unable to join in with the stirring there could be a few minutes silence/meditation at a convenient time on the day, to concentrate on the health of our planet.

If you need to obtain some of the Preparation, please contact Jeremy Weiss at Velwell Orchard on 07962 432317

How to stir and spray 500 Preparation:

For those who have never done this before here is a practical description, taken from **Monty Waldin: Biodynamic Gardening Dorling Kindersley 2015)**

“Although horn manure (Preparation 500) is not a fertilizer, it adds a concentrated fertilizing force to the soil which benefits living organisms like beneficial bacteria, worms and the plants that grow there. It works in tandem with the horn silica preparation (501); horn manure works on the earthy underground part of the garden from which crops grow and develop their substance and form; 501 works on the parts above ground where crops ripen and develop their taste.

What to do with your preparation

Fill a large container (usually a bucket up about a half) with clean, slightly lukewarm water and add a small handful of horn manure.

Gently rub the preparation into the water using your fingers to remove any lumps.

Dynamize the solution for one hour by stirring clockwise and then in an anti-clockwise direction to break the vortex at regular intervals.

Apply it to the garden and to bare earth in large rain-like droplets. Treat the whole garden by loading a brush with the liquid and drawing it in front of your body in a spiral shape.

Spray it soon after dynamizing it – within an hour or two at the most.”

Mental Preparation:

Richard Smith who farmed at Higher Sharpham Barton Farm wrote a pamphlet on the Inner Work of the Biodynamic Farmer and gave this insight into the process of stirring and spraying of the preparations. Here is an edited extract:

“....but with the spray preparations we are working to heal the spiritual life of the Earth over wide areas. What is also apparent is the whole bacterial life of the soil is increased and the earth worms, which as blind creatures enter parts of the soil where they were previously scarce.

The activity of stirring and the spraying of preparations has, in itself, something creative for the inner life of people. One can relate to the listening form of the vortex, calling to mind how the ruminating cow has listened to the creative forces received by the plants, how the cow manure has listened in the horn under the earth to the winter planets, how the vortex itself is listening to the life of the zodiac and to the spiritual forces of the person stirring – and we realise that we are creating something powerful that can be heard in nature and awakens the beneficial elemental beings. It is the discipline of making time for this as something separate from one's normal pattern of the day, close to dawn or in the evening, in harmony with the breathing of the earth and the Moon's passage through the zodiac, that one is drawn into a special moment which has to be planned well in advance. Through this, one comes to it having prepared oneself in a certain quietness of mind. The stirring itself, the building and collapsing of form, the raising and letting go of tension yet all the time holding the pace is something which calls for concentration and the complete engagement of the will. It also draws one to reflect on the land for which it is intended. On completion of the spraying we find that we ourselves are enlivened by having united our whole being with the creative process. We realise how the farm or garden becomes an individuality shaped out of the spiritual faculties of the people whose heart flows into it.”

Summer Gathering – we cannot plan too far ahead at present. We will keep you informed by email and on website.

Biodynamics has a Crucial Role in the Current Emergency

In order to preserve reasonable or even, hopefully, good health throughout the difficult years ahead, we will need good nutrition as a key aspect of maintaining a good immune system which is perhaps the major way to reduce the impact of the viruses. Really only BD food can fulfil this requirement adequately.

Therefore we need to support and encourage existing BD growers and farmers in the work they do – also to enquire if there is any help we can offer. And if there is anyone who is thinking of setting up a commercial project, we especially need to support them.

I personally would be willing to help – please get in touch. Derek, Tel: 01364 644010.

Also, all people with land would be wise to grow more vegetables and fruit if possible and use biodynamic methods wherever possible. Please remember that all members are able to access the BD Preparations free of charge.

It is also vitally important that good quality seeds are preserved. Maybe some growers in this area can contemplate doing this later in the year. The Seed Cooperative, (www.seedcooperative.org.uk) based in Lincolnshire sells organic and Biodynamic open pollinated seeds. They are keen to produce more UK grown seed and details of how to become a seed producer for them are on their website. <https://seedcooperative.org.uk/pages/grow-for-us>

We could do well to support their work wherever possible.

Derek Lapworth

Farm Reports:

Eastmoor Orchard, Harberton: Noni Mackenzie and Mike Giles. 01364 653178/07800 734 270. It has been too wet to get on to the land so far this year and though the season will be late they will probably grow the same as last year. They did very well with Apple Juice last year and now have a few more hens.

They sell vegetables to Greenlife and also some to Ben's Farm Shop, Seeds II and The Apricot centre. They're growing the same crops as last year: rhubarb, Jerusalem artichokes, broad beans, french beans, salad, kale and chard, red & white onions. They had hoped to do more camping this year, with bell tents and our shepherds hut, but not sure whether people will be able to come for the moment.

Velwell Orchard : Unfortunately, we remain closed to volunteers and the public at this time. Please respect government advice and stay well and safe.

Jacob, Sasha, Kate and I, helped by Lola and Jago, are currently working very hard preparing, sowing, planting, mowing and doing our best to get as much food growing as possible with our limited resources.

We would be immensely grateful for any financial assistance. Please let me know if you can make a contribution via the Velwell Orchard bank account. We understand that many people are going through tough times at the moment but even very small amounts make a big difference to us. (See velwellorchard.org)

Apricot Centre, Huxhams Cross.

Short farm update

We're all keeping well on the farm and enjoying this glorious spring sunshine. The dry weather means we're able to begin cultivating the land and plant out all our salad, kale, beetroot, spring greens, kohlrabi, leeks and much more, which have been waiting in the prop house. Nothing quite like starting the season with a bang!

During these uncertain times, as well as supporting other local food and drinks businesses (Kitchen Table, New Lion Brewery and others coming soon), we are also supporting a number of other small growers in the area who have lost their business. Given our increase, this is a great opportunity for both us and them. We can assure you that we are keeping all supply lines as local as possible and trying to maintain quality as much as possible.

Produce for sale:

Vegetables from Huxhams Cross Farm (the Apricot Centre). We deliver weekly vegetable bags and as you've probably gathered, we've recently had a huge influx in the number of orders, far beyond our usual capacity. We have stopped taking new customers for the time being as it's important for us to provide good service to all of our existing customers, but do have a limited number of places for those at risk and key workers (please check website). Once logistical issues such as box packers, drivers and vans are resolved, we may re-evaluate.

The boxes contain Huxhams Cross Farm own produce as well as several small BD and organic growers who will be providing vegetables at certain times of the year. We can add eggs, fruit and water. You can order online at www.apricotcentre.co.uk. The Friday Market stall will not be taking place till further notice. Enquiries to Bob Mehew: 07507 841 158 or bob.mehew@apricotcentre.co.uk

Concentrated Fruit Juices from Derek Lapworth. 01364 644010

These are made with Demeter apple juice and organic apple concentrate, no water or sugar is added. Currently stock is limited to Rosehip and Elderflower.

Derek is hoping to build up sloe and elderberry juices in the Autumn to counter flus and viruses in the autumn. Elderberry is a wonderful prophylactic for viruses but possibly detrimental if taken when you are actually ill.

Greenlife Shop, Totnes. 01803 866738. Some Demeter products, Biodynamically grown vegetables in season and Seed Cooperative organic open pollinated seeds.

On the Hill_ Oxen Park Farm, Lower Ashton, EXETER, EX6 7QW – in conversion to BD. Contact Jo Clark, for availability of produce. Tel 01647 email – info@onthehill.camp. website : www.onthehill.camp

Our new 'Logo'

Melissa Milne has designed this beautiful image for the Group to use on a promotional card we are planning to leave at the Apricot Centre and a few other places. Thank you Melissa.

South West Biodynamic Group

The South Devon Biodynamic Group's purpose is to inform those interested in BD methods of gardening and farming of what is happening in the area.

We Issue quarterly newsletters and organise seasonal gatherings where we make the biodynamic preparations. These are then made available to members free of charge.

We charge an annual subscription of £15 per person and £20 for a couple. We offer a concession of £10 a year if needed.

We also organise the library of Biodynamic books kept at The Apricot Centre.

Preparations are available from Velwell Orchard. Please contact Jeremy Weiss 07962 432317, velwellorchard@yahoo.co.uk

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact **Diana White (Treasurer)** at dianawhite35@hotmail.com or phone 01803 473551

southwestbiodynamicgroup.org

