

# SOUTHWEST BIODYNAMIC GROUP AUTUMN 2022 NEWSLETTER



**‘That time of year thou mayst in me behold’**

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consum'd by that which it was nourished by.  
This thou perceiv'st which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Sonnet 73 by William Shakespeare



### **From the Editor:**

There has been a surge of interest in Biodynamics with several new members joining the group over the summer.

The 'sub-group' which makes the preparations have been busy. They met towards the end of August on the subject of Equisetum at Whites Farm. We did not need to make any of the preparation as there was enough stored, but we learnt about the qualities of this very ancient plant and how a tea or fermented brew can prevent moulds and mildew on crops, working in a different way from silica preparation.

If you are interested in helping with picking of the various plants and flowers needed, storing and making the preparations contact Selby at [selby@crookedpath.co.uk](mailto:selby@crookedpath.co.uk) or Rosalyn at [rosalynjmaynard@gmail.com](mailto:rosalynjmaynard@gmail.com).

Thank you to those who volunteered to help with distribution of newsletter. Thanks also to Ros Bourne, our Secretary, who has moved to Aberdeen but is happy to keep membership lists and the website up to date as it can be done from a distance. D.W.

## **Seasonal Recipe**

## **Cabbage Parcels stuffed with Chestnuts. Serves 6**

12 blanched green cabbage leaves with the toughest part of the stem removed in a V-shape

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

### **For the Stuffing:**

8 oz/225g whole rice cooked in 2 cups of good stock.

2 heads of roasted garlic cloves

8oz/225 cooked chestnuts (either fresh or dried and rehydrated) chopped small

1oz/25g butter and 1tsp olive oil for sautéing

Salt and pepper

1 red onion finely chopped

1 tsp finely chopped parsley

4oz/110g wild mushrooms (or chestnut mushrooms) finely chopped

1 tsp finely chopped sage.

### **Method:**

- 1) Sauté the onion in the butter and oil until soft but not brown.
- 2) Add mushrooms, garlic and lemon. Season.
- 3) Add the rice which should be fairly sticky, the chestnuts and herbs. Check the seasoning. It should hold its shape when moulded.
- 4) Place a tablespoon or more depending on the size of leaf, on each cabbage leaf just above the V. Fold the flaps upwards and roll the leaf into a cigar shape. Tie with fine string or secure with toothpicks.
- 5) Pack the cabbage parcels into an ovenproof dish. Any leftover stuffing can be cooked in a separate dish or used to stuff vegetables (See below)
- 6) Pour a little stock into the bottom of the dish. Cover and bake in a moderate oven (180° C /gas mark 4) for 30 minutes.
- 7) Serve with tomato or parley sauce and maybe a beetroot and orange salad, with extra stuffing on the side.

### **Stuffed courgettes and bell peppers:**

This same stuffing mix can be used with the addition of a beaten egg to the flesh scooped from the blanched courgettes or bell peppers (cut in half lengthways, blanched in salted boiling water for 5 minutes and drained.) Sprinkle with Parmesan. Bake in a moderate oven for 30 minutes

From The Biodynamic Cookbook by Wendy Cook, published by Clairview.



## News from Huxhams Cross Farm and Apricot Centre

This year has certainly been a challenge in many ways and great yields and success in others. The avian bird flu and restrictions imposed made it hard to keep the chickens humanely, locking them in the bird sheds caused them to peck each other and cause illness and deaths within the flock. We're looking to transfer them to a large barn for winter so any



more restrictions can be dealt with in a manner best suited for the hens.

It has been a hot and heavy summer with a sharp corner into Autumn with rain and heavy winds. This last couple of seasons has been a bit unusual in weather patterns and it's affected the farm and team hugely. Irrigation has been top priority throughout July and August to keep the crops watered and fruitful. The team had been starting earlier during the summer to overcome working in the polytunnels and fields in intense heat. Now the cooler climate is upon us, the later starts are back on schedule and jumpers and hats are being clawed from the cupboards.



The



flowers

produced this year have been exquisite with our new fruit and flower growers. We get pleasure in supplying them to local shops, cafes and our market stall and seeing the delight



people find in them. The flower team incorporates herbs like mint and basil into the bouquets so they smell incredible and our market stall is always attracting bees as well as customers.



Our fields and poly tunnels have produced great crops with fantastic yields allowing us to offer more for wholesale than we ever have before. It's good to be working with other businesses within the community to create a better economy and infrastructure for the area. The Summer brought us our first harvest of apples which has been 6 years in the waiting. Our peach trees bore fruit for the first bountiful harvest, we had had a few fruits last year but not enough to supply and sell at market.



## Up and coming events

To book any course please check out our website [www.apricotcentre.co.uk/training](http://www.apricotcentre.co.uk/training) or [rachelphillips@apricotcentre.co.uk](mailto:rachelphillips@apricotcentre.co.uk)

**24th-25th September - Intro to Agroforestry**

**£144 INC VAT**

**Introduction to Agroforestry returns in 2022 in memory of Martin Wolfe. We created a course that combines Martin's lectures as well as Marina's experience of implementing Agroforestry and designing Agroforestry systems for other Farms.**

"Agroforestry is both a traditional practice and a modern practice". It has undergone a renewal and uptake for modern sustainable farming methods over the last 30-40 years. The name 'Agroforestry' was created in 1977 to describe the deliberate use of incorporating trees into farming practice.

The course will be run by Marina O'Connell who is a horticulturalist, permaculture designer, tutor, and biodynamic farmer. She has over 30-years worth of experience in training and growing in sustainable food systems including designing and implementing agroforestry systems on 3 farms.

This 2-day course will equip you with an overview in how to;

- Types of Agroforestry systems and what they look like
- Design of Agroforestry systems, including tree choices
- Implementation of Agroforestry systems
- Manage agroforestry systems.
- Benefits and Challenges of Agroforestry.

The course will lead you through designing and planning your own agroforestry system.

We will visit 4 agroforestry systems on the Dartington Hall Estate, incorporating Alley Cropping, the Forest Garden at Martin Crawford's Agroforestry Research Centre, and the new Agroforestry plots at the Schumacher College at Huxhams Cross Farm.

This course is not residential.

## **22nd-23rd October - Introduction to Wildlife Tracking**

Introduction to Wildlife Tracking

Tickets £120 inc VAT for two days

Please note this course is an adult course 18+

Wildlife tracking is an ancient science and art - one that humans once relied upon for survival. Tracking involves a range of skills such as identifying the animal that left the clue, working out what it was doing and when, and even finding the animal itself. It is a great way to hone our ability to observe details around us and to build our knowledge of wildlife, specifically their presence, movements and feeding ecology.

The course will be run by David Wege who teaches nature tracking for the Field Studies Council and with Woodcraft School Ltd. He has done this for the last 8 years, having now left behind a 30-year career in international biodiversity conservation with BirdLife International. David is a life-long, passionate birdwatcher, wildlife photographer and all-round naturalist.

This 2-day course will:

Introduce tracking as a science and art that can deepen our connection, appreciation and understanding of our wildlife.

Introduce mammal and bird foot morphology and how that relates to the tracks we find in the field, and helps us identify the track maker.

Introduce commonly-found wildlife sign (droppings, homes and beds, feeding signs, scrapes and rubs, trails, feathers, hair and bones), how to identify these and what they tell us about the animals that left them.

This course will balance classroom-led and outdoor learning opportunities, focusing on building introductory knowledge of wildlife tracks and signs, and the identification/ understanding of some examples of these that we will endeavour to find in areas within and around Huxhams Cross Farm.

This course is not residential.

## **Wellbeing**

On the wellbeing side the team have been really stretched this year and thus it is with great relief that we welcome Alexandra Thomas to join us as the Clinical Lead for Devon. Alex comes to us from a background in working with families in crisis, as a link between education, healthcare and social care. Alex will be working closely with all our Devon based therapists, and will also help us to diversify the business including looking at the potential of setting up a wellbeing service for Totnes.

We have also been collaborating with Diversity Business Incubator in Plymouth to initiate our Communities of the Soil project - a permaculture project with the aim of enabling connection, wellbeing and belonging in Stonehouse, Plymouth where large parts of the community come from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. We have held many events within the community, painstakingly building individual relationships through conversations, shared food, fun activities, bringing people out to the Apricot Centre and sharing the potential of growing food together. We are getting close to being able to share the designs that have been created as a result of these meetings and then moving on to the next steps of implementing them! Watch this space for more details.

## **Whites Farm News**

The heat of the summer has brought an early harvest season and we have been busy with apple pressing and juicing.

Our salad bags are now being sold at the Seed in Buckfastleigh and Dean Court Farm Shop.

Regular volunteer days continue and the ground around the polytunnel in the lower garden has been cleared and prepared for re-skinning.

The BD Preparations have been moved from Velwell to Whites Farm and the boxes to house them were built and installed.

We have a Preps Day and stirring on 25th September and a Study Group will begin at the end of October (all welcome).where we study the Agriculture Lectures by Steiner.



We shall be celebrating Michaelmas next week on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September and have invited the community to join with tasks on the land (and pizza baked in the wood-fired bread oven). Please contact Denise Jones-Gordon if you would like to come to this event or our volunteer days - [deniselaurenj@icloud.co](mailto:deniselaurenj@icloud.co)

### **Volunteer Days at Velwell Orchard.**

It is becoming steadily clear that people able to access the ability to grow food, flowers and herbs are discovering not only the practical advantages of having free, healthy food, but that it has deep therapeutic effects. Gym sessions no longer needed!

It is now a welcome oasis in my life that on Wednesdays I can join with others for a day of picking, planting, weeding, cooking and eating in a Biodynamically run orchard, the property of Jeremy and Kate Weiss. On our arrival we are invited to help ourselves to the produce which has been harvested that very morning – no money is involved but donations are always welcome.

The orchard is garnished by a beautiful walnut tree in its centre. It was planted by Derek Lapworth when farming the Orchard over 20 years ago.

There are two ducks which animate the landscape, a cat called Baggins, a very good rat catcher, prowls around looking for prey and an occasional stroke. Guinea pigs multiply characteristically, providing gifts for other children Jago's friends (son of Jeremy and Kate). Tom Petherick two cows profile the neighbouring hill.

Mel Milne, a long time volunteer, now brings daughter Ana who is not even a year old but already knows her way around the Orchard and its cheerful volunteers. She is totally unafraid of the ducks, chickens, guinea pigs and the people. I observe how each week a new development occurs in her young life, enhanced by her weekly visits to this chalice shaped piece of land. Robert and Anne have been faithful helpers at Velwell for many years and offer a lovely grandparent presence to the Orchard.

This week it is damson and ripe Victoria plums – baskets of them jewel like with the must shine on their purple skins. Today I have the task of de-stoning the damsons for jamming and freezing



Lunch 'emerges' seamlessly, pulling on whatever has been harvested that day. I often help with this. It is a dream come true for me – creating a delicious seasonal and balanced meal with products that have been growing only a few hours previously. We lay the table– a large piece of marble that had previously been on our farm in Mallorca. There are usually about 12 of us. The clay bread oven sits in the background – having provided many a feast of Pizza. We go home nourished on so many levels with overflowing baskets of produce and gratitude for this unusual generous projects and all its helpers.

Wendy Cook. - September 2022

PS: I wanted to share that I had, earlier in the summer, been to Dartington Hall Literary Festival to hear George Monbiot's talk. I had previously enjoyed his contributions and his column in the Guardian. But more recently he has become convinced that agriculture is the most destructive activity of humans. Even organic (he doesn't mention Biodynamics) farming is destroying soil, microorganisms and all levels of wildlife. He maintains that all or at least most of our dietary requirements can be created, ostensibly from water - his fermented- lab-food. He has a considerable following, convinced by his passion, packed up by statistics. I bought his book 'Regenesis' to try to understand his position. It is extremely worrying to those of us who appreciate well grown food from every perspective and, of course, understand Biodynamics which is unique.

Monbiot has apparently moved to Totnes. I strongly believe that we should be aware of this. A conversation would be important. Maybe we should arrange a debate with him? - Wendy.

### **Opportunity to help in Garden and share produce. Diptford**

We received a letter from a long term member of our Group – Daniel Sutherland

. We like to invite anyone interested in BD activities to meet and see the garden of *Craxon Combe* near Diptford Village - TQ9 7NA. We do need help, as we hope to continue with gardening, composting and growing fresh food again next year; then with the possible option of local marketing and sharing revenue.

We offer compensation for help needed from someone with practical BD experience, knowledge and understanding of the instructions from Dr. Steiner about composting with preparations in the 500-series. Soil fertility has been sustained here organically since 1968. That year we began to restore and work the garden that belonged to *Craxon Farm*.

Daniel and Mary Sutherland - tel. 01548-821379

PS Daniel Sutherland received his BD diploma from the Dutch College *Warmonderhof*. He continued environment studies in landscape and land-use planning and wildlife ecology in the University of California, Berkeley, USA and in London University. Daniel and Mary are retired from Devon Local Government and voluntary socio-environmental activity in the Devon Community.

### **Dates for Diary:**

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September: Autumn Preparation day at Whites Farm, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh. TQ11 0LS. 10 – 4. Come for all or part of the day. 10-12 preparing preparations. 12-2 shared lunch 2-4 stirring and spraying.

**Sunday 2nd October** will be Teigngreens **Farm Open Day**, co-hosted with Oxen Park Farm and On the Hill. Oxen Park Farm,,Lower Ashton, Devon EX6 7QW. There will be food, fun and farm tours. More details to come on social media soon. See [www.teingreens.co.uk](http://www.teingreens.co.uk)



**October 20-23<sup>rd</sup> 2022**      At Emerson College

**OBSERVING, CULTIVATING AND IMAGINING: THE TRANSFORMATION OF SUBSTANCE**



Acesta Social Farming and Gardening Conference with

Peter Brown~David Borghout ~Inessa Burdich~Wendy Cook Hartwig Ehlers~Simon and Paulamaria Blaxland-de Lange~ Thomas van Elsen~ Michael Evans~Michael Fuller~Hans Gunther Kern~Astrid van Zon~Ben Hess~Diana Fisher~Penny Raeside~Anna Redgrove~ Rebecca Voge~~Kelly Williams~Kim Retallick~Ilanthe Lauwaert~Melody Brink organised/sponsored by ACESTA the anthroposophical Care Education and Social Therapy Association, Aonghus Gordeon from RMET and Pericles..

**SWBD Study Group**

Autumn & Winter Study Group  
The Agricultural Lectures

**Begins: Friday 28th October**

Fortnightly there after 10am-12pm by donation at  
Whites Farm, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh TQ11 0LS

**Open and accessible to anyone:** interested in Biodynamics, organic farming, growing, gardening, animal husbandry and Rudolf Steiner's work in general.

**Edition/translation:** George Adams translation.

**Contact:**

Denise Jones-Gordon  
e:mail [deniselaurenj@icloud.com](mailto:deniselaurenj@icloud.com)

**About the lectures**

With these lectures and discussions, Rudolf Steiner created and launched 'biodynamic' farming — a specific form of agriculture which has come to be regarded as 'premium organic.' However, the agriculture Steiner speaks of in this book is much more than organic, and involves working with the cosmos, earth, and spiritual entities. To facilitate this, Steiner prescribes specific 'preparations' for the soil, as well as other distinct methods born from his profound understanding of the material as well as spiritual worlds. He presents a comprehensive picture of the complex dynamic relationships at work in nature and gives basic indications of the practical measures which are necessary for bringing them into full play.

**For more information about the lectures follow this link:**

[https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA327/English/BDA1958/Ag1958\\_index.html](https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA327/English/BDA1958/Ag1958_index.html)

## **Biodynamic Produce for Sale**

### **Hemp and other Tinctures available (all home made)**

The CBD tincture was made by Nick Read from the hemp grown at Dartington and is the only UK organically grown CBD.

Please see his web site for costs and purchasing information. <http://www.englishhemp.co>.

**GREENLIFE SHOP, TOTNES.** 01803 866738. Some Demeter products, Biodynamically grown vegetables in season and Seed Cooperative organic open pollinated seeds.

**TEIGN GREENS, OXEN PARK FARM,** Lower Ashton, EXETER, EX6 7QW – in conversion to BD. Contact Tim Dickens for availability of produce. [www.teingreens.co.uk](http://www.teingreens.co.uk)

**VEGETABLES FROM HUXHAMS CROSS FARM:** We deliver weekly vegetable bags or boxes. 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, flour fruit and water. You can order online at [www.apricotcentre.co.uk](http://www.apricotcentre.co.uk).

### **Hapstead Farm Meat:**

All produce from animals that are managed according to high welfare, organic, biodynamic regenerative farming principles. Contact Tobias Goulden about what is available. - Email: [tobiasgoulden@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tobiasgoulden@yahoo.co.uk).

### **FRUIT JUICE CORDIALS for SALE -** Contact Derek Lapworth on 01364 644010

All with organic apple juice--

All bottles are 500ml unless otherwise stated. At £6 per bottle

Elderflower	Elderberry	Rosehip	Blackcurrant	Sloe	Wild Fruits
Mixed Fruit	Sour Cherry	Plum			

In 330 ml bottles are the following--- At £5 per bottle

Elderberry Elixir   Sloe Elixir   Sour Cherry Elixir   Raspberry juice.

Please phone me for orders or knock on my door at no 10 Chapel Street, tel is 01364 644010.,

### **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. As a member you receive

- A quarterly newsletters and seasonal gatherings where we make the biodynamic preparations. These are then made available to members free of charge.
- A library of Biodynamic books kept at The Apricot Centre.

We charge an annual subscription of £15 per person and £20 for a couple. We offer a concession of £10 a year if needed. Sort Code 20-60-88 Acc. No. 13509680 South West Biodynamic Group

**Preparations** are available from Whites Farm,, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh. TQ11 OLS. Contact Mark Gordine [mgordine@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mgordine@yahoo.co.uk) or Denise [deniselaurenj@icloud.com](mailto:deniselaurenj@icloud.com)

**If you wish to join, please contact Diana White (Treasurer) at [dianawhite35@hotmail.com](mailto:dianawhite35@hotmail.com) or phone 01803 473551 or 07747 398 839**

