



Biodynamics in the home garden

The first question that arises when biodynamics is mentioned is: what is the difference between biodynamics and organics? In a nutshell organic and biodynamic gardeners have in common what they *do not* do: not using artificial synthetic chemicals as fertilisers, pesticides or herbicides.

Building humus is the common foundation of organic and biodynamic soil health.

Biodynamic gardeners also use certain additional preparations and practices to enhance their gardening activities and outcomes.

The biodynamic gardener works with soil and plants as living, dynamic manifestations of a relationship between two poles. The earth is the physical element, and the sun and cosmos are non-material or spiritual elements extending to the farthest expanse of the universe, providing the energetic stimulus for life on earth. To enhance these influences biodynamic gardeners use two sprays, horn manure 500 as a soil spray and horn silica 501 as an atmospheric spray. In biodynamics we recognise the horn as an integral part of the digestive processes of the cow, with her numerous stomachs and quiet cud chewing, rather than purely an instrument of defence

or attack. Perceiving a cow horn in this way, and our use of it, may be a bit of a challenge for some of us but the results, all around the world in many different climates and cultures, are consistently positive. We bury manure from a lactating cow in a cow horn through the winter, and do likewise with finely ground silica buried in a cow horn through the summer. The resulting colloidal horn manure enhances soil biology and improves vigour and deeper rooting of plants. The horn silica increases the photosynthesis, strengthening the sun and light metabolism of the plants improving quality. Small amounts are stirred rhythmically in water for an hour, creating alternating vortices, and then sprayed sparingly over the whole garden; the horn manure as coarse droplets in the mid to late afternoon and the horn silica as a fine atmospheric spray in the early morning.

Stirring can be done by hand; gardeners who use their hands for this often comment on how the water quality changes in the process. Or you can purchase one of a number of beautifully designed water cascades, known as flowforms, which impart a rhythmic pulsation into the water.

These two biodynamic sprays quickly stimulate life and character in your garden.

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Biodynamic Compost Preparations

The biodynamic compost preparations are used to aid and optimise the breakdown, or perhaps better said the metamorphosis, of all decomposing organic matter in the garden into stable humus. Most experienced gardeners will be familiar with the benefits of compost. Biodynamic gardeners simply add

the biodynamic compost preparations once making the heap has been completed. The six compost preparations are made using six different plant substances: yarrow, chamomile, stinging nettle, oak bark, dandelion and valerian - often referred to as 502 to 507. These special instruments are not

made to add physical substances to the compost – only about 1 gram of each is used per garden compost heap - rather, they stimulate and 'organ'-ise the creation of new substances in the compost. In a sense, one could say they make the compost more intelligent and sensitive to the needs of plant life and can be viewed as the 'organs' of organic gardening, organising the availability of nutrients to the plant when it needs it. Biodynamic plants can then determine and process their own nutrient needs, becoming more balanced and less susceptible to insect and fungal attack; insect, fungus and weed problems are viewed as symptoms, or

messengers, of imbalances and stress in plants. Addressing the imbalances or stress proves to be more effective than shooting the messengers. If there is further need to support soils with poor mineral constitution, mineral supplements can be introduced very effectively by adding small amounts through the living process of a compost heap making them more potent and plant available. Healthy soil in turn grows healthy plants; plants which will be noticed for their taste, aroma, vibrant colours, longevity and enhanced scent. They will also have greater resilience in dry and wet conditions.

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Biodynamics and the planets

A second element to biodynamic growing is using the rhythmic energies of the Moon and planets. We all use the daily and annual Sun rhythms as a matter of course in our lives. It is well known that the moon has an influence on the tides but less well known is that this moon influence works on all fluid elements in soil and plants as well. As biodynamic gardeners we widen our observations and rhythmic practices and learn to include these extra terrestrial influences in our garden life. We work with astronomy, not astrology, the physical stars in the sky. These astronomical influences exist independent of our willingness or enthusiasm to work with them;

however those who plan their garden work to include these rhythms find great enjoyment and excellent results. Methodical veggie growers may have noticed that the vegies they plant at regular weekly intervals do not always mature with the same arithmetic regularity; later planting may be ready before earlier plantings. You may also notice that some plants germinate fast, some slow, some bolt to head while others remain inactive. Working with the rhythms of the Sun, Moon and planets can lead to understanding these variations in growth patterns and can lighten the work and optimise your outcomes.

Biodynamics may sound complex but it is remarkably easy and enjoyable to include in your garden work. More people have failed by being shy of starting than have failed through getting it wrong. The responses are truly rewarding, personally and environmentally.

To assist your beginnings a *Biodynamic Soil Activator* is available for those wanting to join the experience. It is easy to use and the results will encourage your further steps.

Biodynamic Agriculture Australia is a not-for-profit, membership association working with farmers and gardeners to regenerate the environment growing high quality produce and improving soil, water and atmospheric quality. The association assists by making and supplying biodynamic preparations. These and further information can be obtained by contacting our office or visiting our website:

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