

**DIE DÜNGERPRÄPARATE RUDOLF  
STEINERS - HERSTELLUNG UND  
ANWENDUNG (Rudolf Steiner's  
Biodynamic Preparations – their Production  
and Application)**

written and published by Walter Stappung

Reviewed by Bernard Jarman

**This year when I was at the International Agriculture Conference at the Goetheanum, I was shown a new book on the biodynamic preparations. I eagerly leafed through it and soon discovered it to be far more than one person's approach to the preparations. It is something altogether different. For a start it is a hardback book in A4 format that weighs nearly two kilograms! It is also accompanied by a hefty book of references!**

It was written and put together by Walter Stappung who as a biodynamic advisor in Switzerland, has dedicated much of his life to the biodynamic preparations. He has spent many years researching all aspects of the biodynamic approach and especially the making and using of the preparations. His research work has taken him to all corners of the world and into virtually every archive that exists. The result is a very comprehensive documentation that contains virtually everything which is currently known and practised in relation to the preparations.

What is particularly remarkable about this book is how concise and yet how comprehensive each section of it is. In a mere two pages for instance a summary is given of the challenges facing modern agriculture, the fundamentals of anthroposophy, the agriculture course and the biodynamic preparations – and nothing significant is left out! Being concise and yet all encompassing is a quality permeating the whole book.

When we make the preparations together, many questions inevitably arise especially with regard to improving their quality. One such question for instance concerns the quality of the cow manure used for make the horn manure preparation. It is generally accepted that the manure should be as firm as possible but should it come solely from lactating cows? Is the manure from dry cows (which tends to be firmer) as good or possibly even better than from cows that are producing milk? Fully referenced experiences and comments from various farmers are drawn together and then reflected on briefly by the author. The quality of the manure depends of course on how the cattle have been fed and cared for. What kind of feed produces the best manure? Again many comments and opinions are brought together but all of them point towards the importance of avoiding concentrates, having pasture (or hay) fed animals and applying the preparations to the animal feed crops. The author explores these issues and again takes great care to reference all the comments. Readers can then sift through the evidence for themselves and determine what is right in their own particular context. This is the approach taken throughout the book.

The first half of the book concerns everything involved with making the preparations with a chapter being

devoted to each preparation in turn – collecting the herbs and the various sheaths, how the preparations are made and buried in the earth, how they are stored – all in great detail. Nor is the European situation alone considered. With each preparation he asks how the process can be adapted to the various climatic zones and what particular challenges present themselves. There are always many questions and many individual answers. A second part of the book concerns the way preparations are applied. Questions are explored such as how often the spray preparations should be applied, the quantity to use, the most suitable weather conditions and whether the water should be warmed prior to stirring and if so how – numerous detailed questions. There are practical instructions too for assembling stirring equipment and for making or adapting sprayers. The compost preparations are entered into in a similarly detailed way as are the various supplementary preparations – birch pit, barrel (CPP), compost starters etc. including some very early recipes from the 1920s.

Every kind of crop grows in its own unique way and there is a fascinating chapter describing how the application of the preparations can be tailored to the needs of specific crops. Recommendations from many different practitioners have been brought together for all kinds of vegetables, herbs and cereal crops as well as vines and fruits including those from tropical countries – again all with their authors carefully referenced – though occasionally the reference is a 'Mr. Anonymous!'

The last section of the book consists of detailed appendices relating to earlier chapters. These include an extensive description of anthroposophy, additional and alternative approaches to the silica preparation, further thoughts towards understanding the compost preparations, a commentary on alternative preparations and various supplementary comments to the preparation making and application procedures.

The book is a work of true dedication and an extremely valuable resource for anyone seriously engaged in biodynamic farming and gardening. It is a reference work rather than a good read and is currently only available in German. Like the "Case studies of Worldwide Practice" produced by the Agriculture Section last summer, this book demonstrates how individual our work with and how differentiated our understanding of the original indications of the preparations, can be. Not only is it the result of a lifetime's research, it contains enough information in it for a future lifetime's work. Walter Stappung deserves a great thank you from the whole movement.

Available direct from  
Walter Stappung:  
Walter Stappung,  
Längimoostrasse 6,  
CH-3075 Rüfenacht,  
Switzerland. Email:  
WStappung@yahoo.com  
(€128 including bibliography)

