

Southwest Biodynamic Newsletter

Summer 2025



Rewilding the Garden -welcome Teasel, by Kitty Roberts.

Dates for your diary: 14th July at Half Moon Field. Yarrow study 9 am

Wed 6th – Sun 10th August 2025 Summer Land and Craft Camp at Whites Farm Education Trust, Buckfastleigh – see inside for details

Sunday 19th October SWBD Group Autumn Gathering – details to follow

From the Editor: I thought Kitty Robert's picture on the front page doesn't need a poem to conjure up Summer. It speaks for itself.

For the Spring and Summer newsletter I rarely get contributions from growers as they are so busy - so apologies that some of the news has been gleaned from websites and social media.

However I have had two contributions which I hope you will enjoy.

Diana White

Teign Greens and On the Hill – Oxen Park Farm, Lower Ashton, Exeter, Devon, EX6

We usually give news about Teign Greens, the market garden part of Oxen Park Farm which has 55-acres of land in the beautiful Teign Valley. The Farm was certified Biodynamic & Organic by Demeter in 2022.

Teign Greens is a Market Garden on about 4 acres of the Farm.

The rest is home to On The Hill which is a land-based learning social enterprise. On the Hill is run by Jo Clark and Tina Sharman. They organise camps and courses mainly for young people, with residential and day programmes, outreach work in local schools as well as running courses for teachers. All the visitors take part in the life of the farm which has a small flock of sheep, pigs, garden and orchard. They cook and eat the produce they have gathered.

In the recent 100 year celebrations of Biodynamics, Jo Clark was given an award for his long service to Biodynamics by the BDA..

By creating not for profit enterprises, small farms can be viable and more importantly it brings people on to the land where they can develop a relationship with environmentally friendly farming methods and how good food is produced .



They are holding a **Family Camp from 12th to 17th August**, which is fully catered, with activities for both adults and children.

If you have time to look at their website there are some inspiring videos about what goes on there. Type in On the Hill Devon into your search bar.

Whites Farm

**Summer Land and Craft Camp
at Whites Farm Education Trust, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0LS
Wednesday 6th – Sunday 10th August 2025**

Join us for five vibrant days immersed in **land, craft, and community**. Set on the edge of Dartmoor national park and the Dean Burn, this hands-on summer camp offers an inspiring blend of practical workshops and shared meals and camping.

Discover • Learn • Share • Grow

- **Green Woodwork** – learn to shape wood on a traditional bodger's pole lathe
- **Raku Pottery** – experience the alchemy of Raku firing
- **Pinhole Photography** – capture images with handmade cameras and explore the **Phenomera**, our unique mobile pinhole darkroom
- **Land Work** – get your hands in the soil with biodynamic gardening

Stay or Visit

- **Camp on site** – basic camping and all meals included: **£70 for the week**
- **Day visits** – join from 10am to 4pm, with lunch provided: **£10 per day**

Open Day – Saturday 9th August, 10am–4pm

Come experience Whites Farm! Try your hand at:

- Pinhole photography
- Pole lathe turning
- Raku pottery
- Discover biodynamic growing methods

Wood-fired pizzas and cream teas available

Special Evening Talk – Saturday 9th August, 7:00pm

Aonghus Gordon: *“The Arts and Crafts that Support Special Education”*
Insights inspired by Rudolf Steiner, William Morris and John Ruskin.
All welcome – donations invited



Yarrow Day at Half Moon Field, Tigley, Totnes. (A385) 9am start

On 14th July 2025 there will be a Yarrow Day at Half Moon Field
9am start – workshop on Yarrow and its properties and value as a compost preparation. Afterwards the group will pick yarrow found in the field, followed by a bring and share lunch. If you are interested in coming, please email halfmoonfield@planetmail.com or call Carol on 07900666074 for directions.

Sarah has sent me the following: -

Experiencing Yarrow. Experiencing Community. How we draw
ese together, through our heart to the Earth.

This has been a question for some while.

I am looking forward to how this can be, in joining the gathering at Half Moon Field on Monday 14th July, with Carol, Selby and others.

The essential movements, to meet the challenges of our time, for the transformations needed, require the qualities of our heart. In this way, our activities in the garden, on the farm, wherever we tend the soil, plant and animal life, give to the being of Earth. The development. Evolution of our home.

Like the plant, we each have our unique individuality to unfold. And the inner path's choosing, of one person, become the expression of a gift in the world for another. With this understanding and dedication, we grow the strength, resilience and build the harmony of community. Acknowledging inwardly, it may not always be experienced as a pathway of peace or comfort!

The Yarrow

I WILL pluck the yarrow fair,
That more benign shall be my face,
That more warm shall be my lips,
That more chaste shall be my speech,
Be my speech the beams of the sun,
Be my lips the sap of the strawberry.

May I be an isle in the sea,
May I be a hill on the shore,
May I be a star in waning of the moon,
May I be a staff to the weak,
Wound can I every man,
Wound can no man me.

A song to pick Yarrow from the Carmina Gadelica a compendium of Scottish Gaelic charms, hymns, and folk songs collected by folklorist Alexander Carmichael in the late 19th Century.

I have felt warmly embraced in questions, now expressed in the title of this writing, through encountering Kitty Roberts. Last summer, I went to meet her, as I reached out for support in the process towards gathering yarrow for the compost preparations. In part, Kitty's response was shared in this poem above from the Carmina Gadellica.

Kitty also shared her observation, I had missed, of details in Maria Thun's biodynamic calendar. That Maria Thun's research over many decades, yields her advice, to pick the yarrow, to be stuffed in the stag's bladder, for biodynamic compost preparation yarrow 502, on a fruit day in ascending moon cycle, and not on what we may assume, a flower day. From reading Lecture Five of the Agriculture Course, I note Rudolf Steiner says "yarrow flowers - which have gone to seed a bit". I'm only now beginning to touch into the beginnings of his spiritual seeing, through the description of yarrow's relation to potash.

Inspiration for me about yarrow, come from these words in the Agriculture Course:
"This preparation is linked to the planet Venus..."

"You might say that in yarrow as in no other plant, the nature spirits reach the height of perfection in their use of sulfur. And if yarrow is brought into the realm of biological activity in the right way, its effect within the animal or human organism is to correct any weakness of the astral body."

I am sorry for my haste, in trying to find a suitable date for the picking at the Spring Gathering, when I suggested a flower day. But, of course, this will be fine too!

Should you wish, these are some fruit days in ascending moon, when maybe you'd like to collect yarrow for the stag's bladder or for your own teas. Mornings of **Friday 15th August, Tuesday 2nd, Wednesday 3rd, Thursday 4th, Thursday 11th and Friday 12th of September.**

Picking Chamomile and Valerian for the compost preparations

If you have access to valerian and chamomile (*Chamomilla officinalis*) to pick, you may wish to do so, on the morning of Monday 14th July and if it's still blooming, on the morning also of Monday 11th August, but only up until 11 am.

The weeks of drifts of white valerian blossoming in my garden has almost passed. Now, a haze of subtle buffs and some of the night-time colours Goethe speaks of, in these hot days. I missed the window of valerian juice making in mid-May. But hope to be more inwardly prepared to meet challenges, so I can invite a gathering next year, to study valerian together here.

What this means for the farm or garden; to be an individuality

This is another of my year-long nurtured questions. And so time now, to invite a sharing of this with anyone who would like to gather for this conversation. I am thinking in September. Here on the edge of the village of Holne, Dartmoor. I welcome you to be in touch. walkingtotherivertoswim@protonmail.com or 01364 631102



Recipe .

In the last edition we had a Millet Recipe. This time we have a Barley one, suitable for summer. This is from Wendy Cook's book 'Foodwise' published by Clairview, in a chapter on menu planning. In this chapter she remembers her days as cooking for Michael Hall Steiner School where she began to work with a cereal/planetary menu programme, effectively using specific grains on the different days of the week. Barley with links to Venus was a Friday grain.

Rice – Monday – Moon
Oats – Tuesday – Mars
Millet – Wednesday – Mercury
Rye – Thursday – Jupiter

Barley – Friday - Venus
Maize – Saturday - Saturn
Wheat – Sunday - Sun

Barley Salad:

Ingredients:

8 oz/200g whole barley
Double the amount of good vegetable stock

For the dressing:

½ pint Greek yoghurt
2 tbsp olive oil
Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 tbsp chopped mint
1 tbsp chopped flat leaf parsley
½ tsp cumin
½ tsp cayenne
Small red onion finely chopped
Diced cucumber for garnish
Crisp lettuce and chopped serving

Method:



Soak the barley overnight or for a few hours. Pout away the soaking water. Cook in double quantity of stock. Do not stir during cooking. The grain should be plump, having absorbed all the stock and tender. (Note, many Middle Eastern dishes are served at room temperature)

Dressing:

Whisk the olive oil into the yoghurt, add all the rest of the ingredients keeping back a little parsley and onion for garnish.. Adjust seasoning. Garnish bowl with crisp lettuce leaves and spoon in the barley salad. Sprinkle with parsley, chopped onion

and a little paprika.

Half Moon Field Biodiversity Survey.



At the end of June a wildlife survey for Devon biodiversity records office. Was done. Here is a picture of a grid where the different species are counted and recorded.

Carol Asuray said

'It's so verdant and vibrant at the land during the summer. It's the perfect time to discover who we're sharing the ecosystem with.'

Anthropology Research Project on Biodynamics at Whites Farm

As a student at the University of St Andrews studying for a masters in social anthropology, I became interested in biodynamics as it is something that, living locally in Devon, I had been aware of for many years, but never really learnt much about. When at university, I discovered that almost everyone I spoke to had never even heard of it. I decided to research biodynamics for my dissertation, using Whites Farm as a case study.

Anthropology is the study of what it means to be human, through immersive research of the social and cultural processes of everyday life. I thought biodynamics to be particularly interesting for its conception of the human, nature and spirituality that distinguishes it from other Western approaches to food production. I set out to explore how spirituality is understood and deployed in biodynamic farming. I wanted to gain a better understanding of the cosmology that underpins biodynamic practices, for instance, why the preparations are used, how nature is conceived and worked with and what characterises the spiritual and cosmic worlds on the farm.

I spent several weeks in June helping out at Whites Farm and also attended the stirrings at Velwell, learning about the approaches to biodynamic gardening and also Goethean and holistic science. I very much enjoyed the fascinating conversations with everyone I met and learning about the amazing work being done on Whites Farm. I made notes from each day of working with and talking to people, and am currently analysing the data to write up my dissertation. I am so grateful to all who took part and want to warmly thank everyone at Whites Farm and Velwell. I hope that the write-up will contribute to anthropological understandings of how biodynamics works and also act as a bridge between anthropology and anthroposophy.

Hugo Saxton

BIODYNAMIC PRODUCE FOR SALE

BIODYNAMIC BEEF from our freezer from our biodynamic South Devon Cattle, various cuts and joints but all the sirloin, rump and fillet steaks have been sold.

Please contact Tristan Bertie 07836 591 847

Lordswood Churchstow Kingsbridge

Or e-mail me at lordswood.biodynamics@btinternet.com

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 – Contact for availability of produce. www.teingreens.co.uk email teingreens@gmail.com

VEGETABLES FROM APRICOT CENTRE/ 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 meat. You can order online at www.apricotcentre.co.uk

BD FRUIT JUICE CORDIALS for SALE - All with organic apple juice

Contact Derek Lapworth on 07747 120 669

Hemp and other Tinctures (all homemade)

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

Please see website for costs and purchasing information.

<http://www.englishhemp.co.uk>

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 Denise deniselaurenj@icloud.com

If you wish to join, please contact Diana White (Treasurer) at dianawhite35@hotmail.com or write to 12 Apple Wharf, The Plains, Totnes,