

Sowing autumn and winter crops with biodynamic seed baths

Most of you might have noticed a drastic change to the weather after very burning light and heat and strong drying winds with hosepipe bans in some regions of the UK. Since Wednesday we had rains returning and we will find that the temperatures will feel rather autumnal in the next couple of weeks particularly with high wind speeds up to 33 mph and more in exposed areas from next week onwards with more chance of heavy rains.

Possibly a blessing in disguise to be able to sow and transplant for our autumn and winter garden.

I would like to share with you today the incredible benefits that biodynamic preparation seed baths can add for our food crops.

The benefits of seed baths with **biodynamic preparations** were researched by **E. E. Pfeiffer and M. Künzle** in 1954. They also noticed that this increased the growth-rate when the plants were tiny and most vulnerable

Benefits:

- Protection from rot in the soil or being eaten
- Increase in viability and vitality for germination
- Faster germination (beating the natural herbs from taking over)
- Increase in the growth-rate when the plants were tiny and most vulnerable
- Increase of yields up to 30%
- More resistance to pests and diseases
- Higher nutrient density, better texture, more vibrant colours, enhanced flavour and aroma

So, follow this quick guide to soaking your seeds with biodynamic preparations before sowing if you want to give it a go:

Follow these indications and soak your seeds in following biodynamic preparations:

Horn manure prep. (500): Spinach, Perpetual Spinach, Swiss Chard, Beetroot, Fodderbeet

Chamomile prep. (503): Peas, Beans, Radish, Cabbage family

Oakbark prep. (505): For all the Lettuce and Beans

Valerian prep. (507): Carrot, Onion, Leek, Celery and Celeriac, Chicory, Cucumber, Tomato, Aubergine and Pepper

Seed Baths Procedures

Dissolve a teaspoon of preparation 500 (or in liquid 1ml of 507) in lukewarm rainwater (or filtered water) and stir respectively and hour or 15 minutes.

All other preparations are dissolved in lukewarm rainwater (or filtered water) and left to stand for 20-24 hours, before soaking the seeds in them.

After preparing the preparations in this fashion the seeds can be soaked:

Beans: 10-15 minutes; sow right away or as soon as possible the same day.

Cabbage family: 30 minutes: dry on cloth or kitchen towel and sow right away.

Radish: 15-30 minutes: dry on cloth or kitchen towel and sow right away.

Peas: up to 2 hours: put into a cloth for 24 hours afterwards. This insures the fastest germination of the peas.

All other seed varieties: Soak for 1 hour and then dry on a cloth or kitchen towel and sow right away.

The maximum time seeds can be kept after soaking is for two days in a moist and dark place. I trust you will have a go with these seed baths particularly as we seem to face more and more challenges with the erratic weather and onslaught and one sided developments in insect populations and fungal and bacterial communities.

Happy biodynamic gardening to you all
Hans-Günther

If you wish to get more practical experiences of these seed baths, the many uses of the biodynamic preparations and growing your own biodynamic, open pollinated seeds for vegetables and flowers join us on the 15-16 July in Michael Hall Steiner School in Sussex. See details on flyer posted in the Biodynamic Gardening Club Facebook site or contact admin@wholisticliving.co.uk

PS you might like to do your own comparative experiments and tell us about them in the Gardening Club - it can be exciting to experience it



The effects of treating seeds with very dilute solutions (0.003%) of biodynamic preparations (after Pfeiffer, 1983)

A. Radishes (grams, average of 20 plants)	Radish and Root	Leaves
Control without preparations	2570	2530
Seed bath with 500	2775	2655
Seed bath with dilution of BD compost	3010	2300
Seed bath with 500 plus 502–507	4600	4090

B. Maize (average for 10 plants)	Height (cm)	Weight (g)		
		Roots	Stems	Ears
Control without preparations	181	50	2181	727
Seed bath with 500 plus 502–507	185	65	2250	800

