

Guidelines 5: Sowing and Planting Calendar

Background to the calendar

Earlier and less emancipated cultures identified the sun, moon, planets and stars as dwelling places of the Gods from where beneficial influences were radiated down on to the earth. Although most people no longer experience them directly these influences continue to stream in. Life on the earth is unimaginable without the sun but also the moon, planets and fixed stars play a vital role. Ever since the Agriculture Course was given, research has been carried out in the biodynamic movement to determine how these cosmic influences can be used to benefit agriculture. The current biodynamic sowing and planting calendar was developed by Maria Thun. She has undertaken countless sowing, cultivation and harvesting and discovered a direct and consistent correlation between plant growth and the lunar and planetary rhythms. Her findings are the foundation for the Biodynamic Sowing and Planting Calendar which is now translated into many different languages and is used across the world.

Siderial rhythm

The moon has many rhythms. The most well known is the waxing-waning cycle. It is the moon's movement through the constellations of the zodiac which is of most significance for this calendar known as the siderial rhythm. Just as the sun passes month by month through each constellation in the course of the year, the moon follows the same path but completes it in one month.

Astronomical and astrological zodiac

It is an astronomical calendar based on the movements of the

moon and planets and their positions relative to the fixed stars of the zodiac as we see them in the sky. It differs from the traditional calendar of astrology by nearly a month.



Chart showing the astronomical (outer circle) and astrological zodiacs

Ascending - Descending cycle

Just as the sun ascends for six months and then descends, so too does the moon on its path through the zodiac each month. It ascends for two weeks (archer - twins) and descends for two weeks (twins - archer).

Ascending moon: plant sap rises strongly and fills the upper part of the plant with vitality. Good for harvesting fruit, grafting, gathering herbs

Descending moon: Sap flows more slowly and vitality is greater in the roots.

Good for pruning, pricking out, transplanting, re-potting, applying compost

In the calendar the descending period is marked: '*Northern Transplanting Time*'. Please note however that seed sowing is not limited to this period. For the southern hemisphere our ascending period is their descending one (Southern TTime).

Root, leaf, flower and fruit days

Each constellation is linked to one element (earth, water, air, fire). Each element is linked to part of a plant (earth-root, water-leaf, air-flower, fire-fruit).

Constellation	Sign	Element	Weather	Plant	Bees
Pisces, Fishes	♓	Water	Watery	Leaf	Making honey
Aries, Ram	♈	Warmth	Warm	Fruit	Gathering nectar
Taurus, Bull	♉	Earth	Cool/cold	Root	Building comb
Gemini, Twins	♊	Light	Airy/bright	Flower	Gathering pollen
Cancer, Crab	♋	Water	Watery	Leaf	Making honey
Leo, Lion	♌	Warmth	Warm	Fruit	Gathering nectar
Virgo, Virgin	♍	Earth	Cool/cold	Root	Building comb
Libra, Scales	♎	Light	Airy/bright	Flower	Gathering pollen
Scorpio, Scorpion	♏	Water	Watery	Leaf	Making honey
Sagittarius, Archer	♐	Warmth	Warm	Fruit	Gathering nectar
Capricorn, Goat	♑	Earth	Cool/cold	Root	Building comb
Aquarius, Waterman	♒	Light	Airy/bright	Flower	Gathering pollen

Oppositions and Trines and Squares

An opposition occurs when two planets are opposite one another. A trine occurs when two or more planets are aligned at 120 degrees from one another - a third of the circle. Both oppositions and trines have a positive effect on growth.

Planets aligned at 90 degrees from one another (in square position) have been found to exert a negative influence.

Apogee, perigee and nodes

The moon increases and reduces its distance from the earth. Its furthest point is apogee, its nearest is called perigee. The moment of perigee has been found to have a particularly negative effect and should be avoided for sowing. A further lunar rhythm is the nodal cycle. The moon rises above the sun's path for two weeks and descends below it for a further two weeks. When it crosses at full and new moon eclipses occur. Nodes are best avoided for sowing and cultivation.

Other features in the calendar

Each month, some days are marked with (-----). These are caused by a variety of negative influences including those mentioned above and are best avoided. For those wanting more astronomical data a list of planetary aspects is given each month as well as the current constellation of each planet.

Further Reading

"The Maria Thun Biodynamic Calendar" -Matthias Thun £7.99

"Gardening for Life" - Maria Thun £14.99

Available from our on line shop at www.biodynamic.org.uk

Or call us on 01453 759501 to purchase over the phone.