

## A Healing and Protective Treatment – The Biodynamic Tree Paste

Now is an ideal time to prepare for winter application of tree paste as a yearly maintenance treatment for healthy trees and shrubs. This is the version that Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer developed, the tree paste has also helped ailing trees under stress from insects and disease.

From pages 11–12 of *The Biodynamic Treatment of Fruit Trees, Berries and Shrubs* by Dr. Pfeiffer:

The original recipe for the tree paste was:  $\frac{1}{3}$  sticky clay,  $\frac{1}{3}$

cow manure,  $\frac{1}{3}$  fine sand. This mixture is approximate, for the sticking quality varies and the proportions have to be somewhat altered accordingly. As much water is added as is needed so that the paste can be easily applied and still will stick to the tree. To the solution can be added the Preparation 500, the equisetum tea (if needed), an extract of nasturtium plants against aphids, or other ingredients that one wants to apply.

Hugh J. Courtney

## Biodynamic Tree Paste - A Simplified Recipe for Beginners

While almost every biodynamic practitioner caring for trees has a favorite tree paste recipe that is uniquely their own, what is presented here is a much simplified version with exact proportions calculated for a few trees.

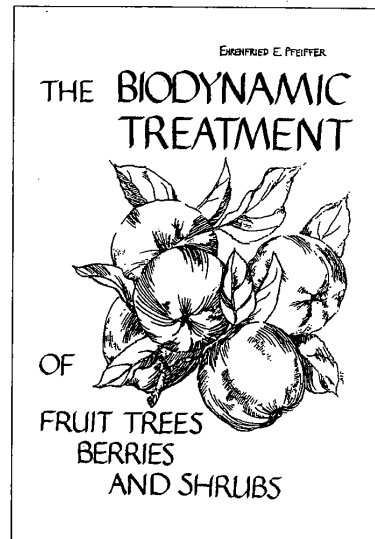
### Equipment and materials:

- 5 or 6 gallon bucket with Gamma Seal lid
- 5 pounds Bentonite clay
- 2 to 2.5 gallons de-chlorinated water (see “Preparing water” on next page)
- 1/2 gallon fermented Equisetum tea (See BD#508 recipe)
- 2 units Pfeiffer BD Field Spray
- Jiffy Mixer Model PS-1
- Power drill with 1/2 inch chuck

Place two gallons of de-chlorinated water in a five or six gallon plastic bucket. Slowly add the Bentonite clay while stirring contents using the Jiffy Mixer attached to the power drill. The Jiffy Mixer will thoroughly mix the water and the clay within twenty minutes while creating minimum splashing. Hand mixing may require several hours.

When approximately half of the Bentonite clay has been added, you may begin to slowly add the Pfeiffer BD Field Spray and the fermented *Equisetum* tea while continuing to stir.

Add remainder of the Bentonite clay until the mixture is quite thick and paste-like. Let the mixture sit for a few hours if possible. Stir again slightly to see if additional water needs to be added. If it is desired to apply the material in a spray form, dilute to desired consistency for your spray equipment. (Possibly twice as much water as originally used or more will be required to apply as a spray.) Three units each of Biodynamic Compound (BC) Preparation and BD #500 may be substituted for the two units of Pfeiffer BD



Field Spray, but will cause clogging problems if application as a spray is intended. Prior to applying tree paste, remove as much loose bark as possible using a wire brush, putty knife or other scraping tool. Use a whitewash brush or heavy-duty rubber gloves to apply to the tree trunk and larger lower limbs. A highly diluted solution of tree paste may be sprayed on entire tree if desired.

### Other ingredients sometimes used:

- Castor oil – 1/4 cup or less – as a binding and healing agent
- Linseed oil – 1/4 cup or less – as a binding agent

Some recipes add BD#501, powdered stinging nettle, liquid seaweed, whey, diatomaceous earth, lime, as well as numerous other possible helpful ingredients. The perfect tree paste recipe does not yet exist, since everybody who makes it will often add their own interpretation as to what might be the best formula for their particular tree(s) and their particular climatic and environmental conditions. For further reading on tree care and how to apply the tree paste see *The Biodynamic Treatment of Fruit Trees, Berries, and Shrubs*\* by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer.

### Preparing water

Any water obtained from underground should ideally be exposed to sun and starlight for at least twenty-four hours prior to use. If the source is chlorinated, fluoridated city water, forty-eight hours exposure is encouraged. Pond water is acceptable if not stagnant. Freshly collected rainwater is most preferred. The ideal container for exposing water to the sun should be a stainless steel or ceramic crock. A plastic bucket can be used as a last resort, but never use a vessel of aluminum.

For further reading concerning water quality and water as a carrier of light, see Chapter 4 of *Biodynamic Agriculture Introductory Lectures, Volume I*\* by Alex Podolinsky. For the properties of rainwater, see *From Mammoths to Mediums*\* by Rudolf Steiner, pp. 216–218.

### Fermented recipe - BD #508, *Equisetum arvense*

(Allow 10 to 14 days for the fermentation process.)

Take one unit of shredded horsetail herb. (One unit is about 1½ ounces by weight or about 8 to 10 ounces by volume depending on how finely shredded.) Bring the unit to a boil in one gallon of water and simmer for one full hour. Use a stainless steel or porcelain pot, not an aluminum one. Allow tea to cool and then transfer both the liquid and the shredded herb to a crock or other storage container with a loose fitting lid. Store this in a cool place, e.g. basement, and allow to ferment ten to fourteen days, until the “characteristic smell” develops. Thereafter, strain the remaining herb particles out, transfer the tea into a glass jug, and store it in a cool dark place until ready to use. The fermented tea can be stored six or more months without losing effectiveness. If desired, the strained herbal material can be used to stimulate the next batch to a faster fermentation. For further reading on BD #508, see *Applied Biodynamics*, Summer 1994, Issue No. 8\*.

### Supplies

The Jiffy Mixer PS-1 is available from JPI for \$48.00 plus shipping. To locate a dealer in your area, contact Jiffy Mixer

Co. Inc. at 1-800-560-2903 or <www.jiffymixer.com>. Bentonite can be obtained through a local ceramics supplier. The other supplies – wire brush with scraper, whitewash brush and the Gamma Seal lid (to close a five-gallon bucket to store the unused portion of tree paste) – can be purchased at hardware stores.

\*All publications cited are available from JPI.

## Root Dip for Transplanting

Since the fall is one of the best times to transplant, the recipe for Root Dip is also included here for the transplanting of trees and shrubs. While the ingredients are similar to the tree paste, the consistency is what Dr. Pfeiffer states, “a rather fluid paste . . . so that the root is just covered.”<sup>1</sup> His recipe calls for eighty percent clay, twenty percent cow manure, and adding BD #500 to assist with root growth.

A variation to Dr. Pfeiffer's Root Dip is adding enough water or molasses to Hugh Courtney's version of the Tree Paste (see previous page) to give a slurry-like consistency.

### Notes

- 1) Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, *The Biodynamic Treatment of Fruit Trees, Berries, and Shrubs* (Kimberton, PA: Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, 1992), 7