

Biodynamic Ashing and Radionics

What is Ashing?

In lecture 6 of his Agriculture course given in 1924, Rudolph Steiner described the basic technique with variations for different creatures. He used problematic weeds, vertebrates and invertebrates as examples, in that order. He began by describing the role of the Moon and its relation to weeds.

“Now a large number of plants - notably those which we ordinarily count as weeds - are greatly influenced by the workings of the Moon ... we get the strongest weeds if we let the kind Moon work down upon them - ... We must contrive to check the full influence of the Moon upon the weeds ...

Then we shall set a limit to the propagation of the weeds; they will be unable to reproduce themselves. Now we cannot 'switch off' the Moon. Therefore, we must treat the soil in such a way that the earth is disinclined to receive the lunar influences. ... We can make the weeds reluctant, in a sense, to grow in soil which has thus been treated ...

So now you gather a number of the seeds of the weed in question. ... light a flame - a simple wood-flame is best - and burn the seeds ... by letting their seeds pass through the fire and turn to ash, you will have concentrated in the ash the very opposite force to that which is developed in attracting the Moon forces.

Now use the tiny amount of substance you have thus prepared from a variety of weeds, and scatter it over your fields ... Already in the second year you will see, there is far less of the kind of weed you have thus treated. It no longer grows as rampantly. Moreover, many things in Nature being subject to a cycle of four years, after the fourth year you will see, if you continue sprinkling the pepper year by year, the weed will have ceased to exist on the field in question ...”

Although the ideas may not be self-explanatory the technique is simple enough. For animals / vertebrates, he explained:

“... But we can no longer speak so generally when we come to the animal pests ... catch a fairly young mouse and skin it, ... but you must obtain this skin of the field-mouse at a time when Venus is in the sign of Scorpio ... At the time when Venus is in Scorpio, you obtain the skin of the mouse and burn it. Carefully collect the ash and the other constituents that remain over from the burning. ... And there remains, in what is thus destroyed by the fire, the corresponding negative force as against the reproductive power of the field-mouse. Take the pepper you get in this way, and sprinkle it over your fields. In some districts it may be difficult to carry out; then you can afford to do it even more homeopathically ... provided it has been led through the fire at the high conjunction of Venus and Scorpio, you will find this an excellent remedy. Henceforth, your mice will avoid the field.”

And for insects:

*“... you do not take part of the insect as you do with the mouse ... take the entire insect. ... It is best to burn it; ... **you might also let it decay**; ... Now it is necessary to perform this operation when the Sun is in the sign of Taurus ... ”*

How do you do it?

The basic technique for making a pepper (ashing) is to collect the parts, burn them, and scatter the ashes. Here is more detailed information on the steps.

1 - The fire

Steiner suggested a wood fire is best. Do not use grilling charcoal. Put the seeds, insects or skins in a container such as a tin can or a pan which has been burned first to remove any linings, paints and labels. The contents are then heated until they turn to charcoal. One can use a wood fire, a kitchen stove and pan,

or even a blowtorch. It is important to stop at the charcoal stage rather than letting it burn to salt ash – we want there to be carbon remaining in the residue (see Step 2).

2 - The residue

In Glen Atkinson's commentary on the agriculture course, he passes on an interesting suggestion:

“Peter Bacchus has long advised that it is the Carbon ash rather than the salt ash that one wants for peppering. So once the ash is collected it is placed in some water and stirred for a few seconds, to dissolve the salt ash. This mixture is then strained through filter paper, and the water discarded. The filter paper is then dried and the ash recollected. This ash is then used for further potentizing or spread as suggested ...”

Note that Steiner states “... you might also let it decay...” This is an excellent way to create the same disruption of the life force boundary, especially for insects, slugs, snails and other invertebrates.

Capturing as many as you can, put them into a container filled with water to the brim with a tight lid when the Moon is in Cancer. Leave it for about four weeks until the Moon is in Cancer again, and spray the liquid where there is a problem. According to Maria Thun, where slugs and snails are a huge problem, add about twenty slugs to the horn silica preparation and stir for an hour (called “dynamizing”) before spraying over the affected area. The light effect of silica is very disagreeable to slugs.

3 – The timing

When discussing ashing for vertebrates what did Steiner mean by ‘Venus in Scorpio’? There is still debate about this and it would appear that Steiner's suggestion was not clear even to the delegates at Koberwitz given that he was asked in the third discussion, right after the sixth lecture, first whether he meant Venus in the astronomical sense (“Yes, the one we call the evening star”) and second, “What did you mean by: *When Venus is in the Scorpion.*” Dr. Steiner replied: “That means any time when Venus is visible in the sky with the constellation of the Scorpion in the background. Venus has to be behind the Sun”. Simple right? Not necessarily... A paper was written by the current translator of the Agriculture Course, (Malcolm Gardner: ‘When is Venus Behind the Sun?’) which addresses this very question. He had thought that a straight-forward interpretation – the evening star in front of Scorpio - was fine but when he found that there were some successful peppers when Venus was the morning star, he went back to the drawing board. He asked himself whether *behind* meant temporally or spatially? If we are swayed by the mention of the Evening Star then it could be temporally, i.e., that Venus is visible in the sky in the evenings because it goes down later than the Sun. Considered spatially, on the other hand, it would suggest that Venus is on the far side of the Sun as seen from the Earth with Scorpio in the background. If you favor the latter interpretation then the next question that arises is “When is Venus in a high (superior?) conjunction with the Sun against the background of the Scorpion.” The answer is “very rarely and not for a long while to come”. The conjunctions of Venus and the Sun dance around each other making a fairly static pentagram of 5 conjunctions over 8 years. These currently occur in front of the constellations of Libra - Sagittarius - Pisces - Taurus – Leo and will not be back in front of Scorpio for many years. One vertex of the pentagram left Scorpio to enter Libra around the time Steiner was still lecturing.

So usually, in practice, vertebrate peppers are created when Venus is in front of the scorpion, sometimes when it is this side of the Sun, sometimes the far side, sometimes as the morning star (Lucifer/Phosphorus) and sometimes as the evening star (Hesperus/Vesper).

Why Venus and why Scorpio? When Steiner was talking about the inner planets he said that the main heavenly body to consider for the plants was the Moon but for animals it was more important to consider Venus and Mercury. Scorpio? In the attribution of the constellations to the parts of the mammalian archetype Scorpio is the hips and reproductive organs.

4 – Potentizing

When treating large areas, create a potentized homeopathic dilution: put one gram (or level teaspoon) of the dynamized ash in a small bottle with 9 ml (grams, or teaspoons) of water and shake vigorously for three minutes. This is the first decimal potency (D1 or X1). Add a further 90 ml of water and shake again for three minutes. This is the second decimal potency (D2 or X2). Repeating this procedure until D8 (X8) would produce 100,000 liters (26,000 gallons). Therefore, it is advisable to proceed until D4 and then start again using smaller quantities, always diluting in the ratio of 1 to 9. Maria Thun noted that she had best “deterrent effect” at the 8th potency. This can also be done with pure wood ash in place of water to make a potentized dry ash pepper.

What is the ‘mechanism’ of the peppers?

How does the incineration of a pest and the spreading of their ashes have an effect on that pest? To get some idea of this one might note the different levels of the macrocosm to which Steiner refers us in the agriculture course. For the weeds we need go no further than the etheric level whose macrocosmic analogue is the lunar sphere. For the vertebrates one refers to the planet (macrocosmic astral) and the zodiac (macrocosmic spirit/self), while for the invertebrates one is looking at the Sun and the zodiac (both of the starry realm).

Rudolf Steiner offers an indication in the agriculture course - that weed peppers limit the reproductive capacity that the Moon brings to the Earth. Another interesting explanation comes from Enzo Nastati, who suggests:

“With incineration by contrast there is a complete and rapid separation of the etheric and physical bodies. Scattering the ashes on the soil or potensising them and spraying them on the field will establish a clear signal of separation between the physical and the etheric, so the elemental beings linked to the pest will no longer wish to incarnate in that soil or plant.... For weeds and insects, it is sufficient to connect to the forces of the etheric plane, but to make a pepper for a higher animal one must follow other principles. For example, at the level of the zodiac, one burns only the hide when the animal’s reference planet passes in front of the reference constellation. But there is a second method to obtain an effective product: incinerate the part of the animal that most distinguishes it, that most embodies the characteristics of the animal. For example, the most characteristic parts of the rabbit are the ears and testicles, in the rat it is the paws and muzzle. With this burning one frees the "demon" that lives in the animal (which remains linked to the ashes for a time) and brings it to the field. The other animals of the same species, seeing this demon, are terrified and scatter.”

Does it work?

Most times it works very well. Here’s one report from someone with no familiarity with biodynamics, after the use of a (potentized) pepper against grey squirrels.

“Since applying the potion 2 years ago the little grey darlings have not touched the trees despite our property being on the edge of woodland still overrun with squirrels. It took a while to get the right conditions for application. It was a wet season so we patiently waited for a dry period before we applied. But yes - success!! - and so easy! - all from a tiny spray bottle!! Would highly recommend it to anyone with a squirrel problem!!”

The grey squirrel was burnt in Edinburgh on 20th October 2005 at 5pm. The ash was taken to the 10 potency following some discussion on the BdNow discussion list.

Perhaps because of the uncertainty about the Venus-Scorpio question results are not always so dramatic. This leads to the next question.

How might the technique be further developed?

Research and development. The biodynamic community could improve peppering if experiences are shared, if we let each other know what was done and what were the results, and possibly even creating a library of successful peppers from which members can withdraw or to which they can contribute. The empirical approach could reveal the conditions that work by collating information on the successful peppering and looking for the common elements. Between these twins – theory and practice – it should not be beyond us to continue to develop this discipline.

And of course, employing **RADIONICS!** Use peppers as a reagent and add additional tunings to thwart pests, like an inversion of its General Vitality and prayerful appeals. Dowse/analyze for the best times, planetary alignments, techniques, and other variables. Radionics stands to take the concept of peppering to new levels, and allows us to make a pepper once and use it, potentially, in perpetuity.

Various tips from Maria Thun

- We noted an increase in the effects when the ashes had been stirred for an hour prior to their application. Homoeopathic dilution to D8 (8X) is recommended for '*certain deterrent effects*'.
- Field mice skin, birds skin and feathers - Venus in Scorpio (Venus behind the Sun) (Steiner) and the moon is in Taurus (Thun)
- Insects - entire insect - Sun in Taurus (Entire insect world Sun passing through Aquarius, Pisces, Aries and Gemini on to Cancer. Feeble in Aquarius and Cancer) (Imago more towards Aquarius, larva more towards Cancer – Steiner in third discussion)
- Stable fly - Sun and Moon in Gemini
- Wax moth - Sun and Moon in Aries
- Cabbage fly, turnip gall weevil Colorado beetle, and Varroa Mite - Sun and Moon in Taurus
- Mole cricket - Sun in Taurus, Moon in Scorpio
- During longer nodal periods animal pests are more prevalent. In the case of Saturn these animal pests affect the roots; in the case of Jupiter the leafy region of the plant is most affected.
- Slugs and snails - Moon in Cancer