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the Stars

# BDANC

Biodynamic Association  
of Northern California



Summer 2009 Newsletter

*Seek the truly practical,  
material life  
But seek it in such a way  
that it does not numb you  
to the spirit that works  
within it.  
Seek the Spirit, but not out  
of spiritual lust or spiritual  
egoism.  
Seek it rather because you  
wish to become selfless in  
the practical life of the  
material world.  
Turn to the ancient princi-  
ple: Spirit never without  
matter, matter never  
without Spirit.  
And say to yourselves,  
We will do everything  
material in the light of  
the Spirit,  
And will seek the light of  
the Spirit in such a way that  
it enkindles warmth in us  
For our practical deeds.*

*- Rudolf Steiner -*

## The Biodynamic Association of Northern California, BDANC

is a member-run organization that aims to promote the biodynamic approach to farming and gardening. We allow time at our meetings for planning. Decisions are made by those who show up. We happen to really like getting together, and through BDANC we have the opportunity to:

- gather a dynamic interchange of people from many arenas of biodynamics
- spread our collective knowledge, learn from each other and grow together through study
- get reports of activities in the larger biodynamic and farming community
- learn about the preps by making them together
- ensure availability of the preps to the community
- experience other farms and gardens
- renew our spiritual intentions and our commitment to each other

We accomplish our goals through:

- quarterly meetings
- a quarterly newsletter
- a membership mailing and emailing list
- making and selling the preparations
- meeting expenses with income from dues and preps

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Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association

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phone: 541-998-0105 or 1-888-516-7797

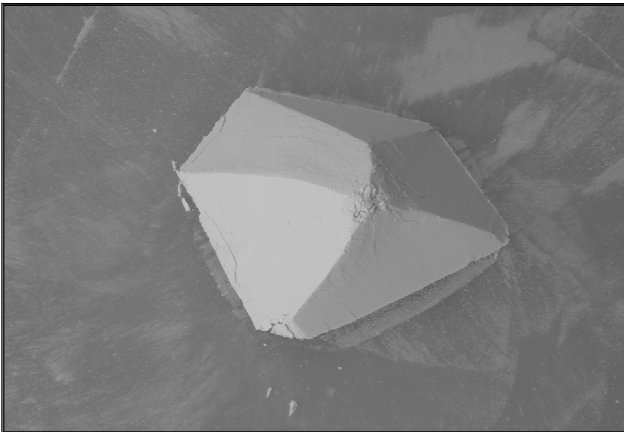
## Grassroots and So Much More

Chris Powers sent me these photos from our Spring Meeting at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks. I particularly enjoyed the sculptured pile of silica powder he titled "reconstructing the crystal". The entire weekend held an air of creative play, as people hula-hooped on the lawn, got lively during our discussion about community supported agriculture (led by our own Misha Vega), kept pace with Harald Hoven during the digging up of the preparations, enthusiastically contributed to the talk on apprentice training in North America, and huddled up next to Brian Gray to explore the stars.

I was most moved by David Basile's recount of his trip to Dornach for the international Biodynamic Conference, His heartfelt descriptions of people and places, performances and lectures, in a land far from here reminded me once again of the connection we all have to something larger than any of us. It is a comfort and an inspiration to be involved in a movement that is world-wide and yet held so devotedly and intimately.

Next month, at our Summer Meeting, we'll be joined by Robert Karp from the Biodynamic Association, and have the opportunity to explore the connection between our local group and the national groups. Won't you join us?

Laura Liska, Editor



*Laura Liska, helps coordinate biodynamic training and education efforts locally and nationally, teaches phenomenology to our apprentices, and is administrative coordinator for Biodynamic Education at Rudolf Steiner College.*



# Nevada County Group's Preparation Making: Our Second Year

*submitted by Marney Blair*



*The Nevada County  
Prepmaking Group*

On September 27, 2008 our local Nevada County group gathered to make the chamomile, dandelion, oak bark, yarrow and horn manure preparations. On April 27, 2009 we met to dig up and assess these preps. This journey that our group has embarked on is a wonderful exploration of the preparations. Each year has brought new challenges and unexpected gifts. Our group encourages other groups to join together and make their own preparations. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We can be reached at: [marney646464@yahoo.com](mailto:marney646464@yahoo.com)

## Horn Manure

*Sept. 27, 2008*

The cow manure was collected from the cow yard in the morning, all "good looking" patties. The cows are lactating Jerseys who enjoyed our irrigated pasture all summer. The pasture was sprayed with cow pat pit (contains all of the compost preps). Two horns, which we labeled "M", were from our heifer Maggie. Thirty horns were buried 18 inches deep in the garden on the western edge of the farm, sprinkled with a bit of mature compost before covering.

*October 17, 2008*

The group decided that our need for 500 had increased and buried 61 additional horns.

*April 27, 2009*

A beautiful day !! The soil was moist because it rained recently. The first set of horns we dug up were the 61 buried in October. They appeared a bit "green". The second set had a wonderful brown color. Later in the barn as we removed the manure from the horns we noticed that the preparation had turned a deep brown. After 24 hours there was no difference between the manure from September and the manure from October.

## Dandelion

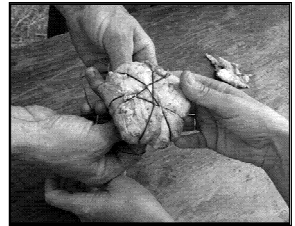
*September 27, 2008*

Thea Blair from Cedar Waxwing Farm and Mark and Katheleen Fenton collected the flowers for the dandelion preparation. The flowers were dried during the spring. Just before we placed the flowers in the mesentery, they were moistened with dandelion tea. Two sheaths were used for the dandelion. The first from a cow at Live Power Farm. This was her peritoneum. This sheath was rather thin and we decided to wrap it around the dandelion packet several times and tie with a cotton string. The second sheath was the mesentery from Maggie, our Scottish highland cow. This mesentery was packed tightly with dandelion and tied with a cotton string.



*April 27, 2009*

Both dandelion sheaths were mined by worms. It appeared worms ate their way through the entire prep. One sheath was more intact than the other. They were not marked, but the group assumed the more intact prep was in the mesentery tissue because it had less fat on it originally. Perhaps the worms were attracted to the preps because they were marked with a thin layer of pine bark which sat on top of the preps. (The marker makes it easier to find the preparation.) The prep was buried in an orchard at Fulcrum Farm near several compost piles. This was also a possible reason for the worm invasion. The group was unable to conclude what happened with the dandelion.



## Oak Bark

*September 27, 2008*

Bark was taken from a beautiful Blue Oak on the perimeter of the cow yard at Fulcrum Farm—harvested from this same tree last year. Bark was scraped from the tree with a shaving tool, run through a hand cranked meat grinder, then moistened with water. The skull was from Maggie, Fulcrum Farm's cow. She was harvested in the spring and her skull was placed in a compost pile to clean the flesh, and then in a garden bed. The skull was filled with bark, wooden plugs were placed in the various holes, and the skull was buried at the mouth of the pond at Fulcrum Farm. The creek has a wide area at this intersection, ideal for burying the oak bark prep. The skull was wrapped in chicken wire and attached to a t-post.

*April 27, 2009*

We found the skull in the creek just barely under water and still attached to the t-post, covered with silt from the winter rains. We brushed off the silt and began to remove the oak bark. At first the material had a wonderful red tint to it. However as it oxidized it became a deep brown/ black with a wonderful smell. The only consideration for improvement was to perhaps seal the plugs with beeswax. There was some discussion that this may seal the holes too efficiently.

## Yarrow

*September 27, 2008*

The yarrow flowers were collected at Fulcrum Farm and dried until we could stuff the bladder. The bladders were from Luke Frey and we stuffed them at the wonderful summer meeting hosted by FES. Two bladders were stuffed. They were then hung in the red granny smith apple tree for the summer.



*October 9, 2008*

Only one yarrow preparation was buried, using the same spot as the previous year--a nice open area at Fulcrum Farm in the pasture below the house. The other bladder was stolen from the apple tree, perhaps by a raccoon or some other critter.

*April 27, 2009*

The prep looked wonderful., with the form of the bladder but the bladder is completely gone. It had nice smell and the flowers looked transformed. All of us were very pleased with the outcome of this preparation.

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## The Dandelion Preparation

*Submitted by Kathleen Fenton*

When the dandelion's raying, sunlike flower goes to seed it becomes an airy white sphere of stars, a tiny cosmos. All the while it sinks its taproot deeply into the soil. The gesture of the dandelion is to draw forces from above down into the earth. In the Agricul-

ture lectures Rudolf Steiner calls the dandelion “a kind of messenger from heaven.”

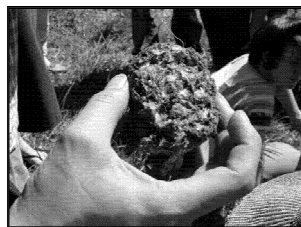
To make the dandelion preparation we pick these beautiful flowers near the time they first open, while they still have a tight button in the center, then we dry them, and in autumn, around Michaelmas, we bury them wrapped in a cow mesentery. The mesentery is a glistening, transparent abdominal connective tissue and lining, laced with nerves, lymph nodes and blood vessels. It is an ultra-sensitive membrane which concentrates and carries all that the cow has perceived about the land while digesting her fodder and composing manure to address the land’s exact needs.

Manfred Klett says that the mesentery is, in a higher sense, the brain of the cow, whose glory is her digestive system, and that it is here in the mesentery that the cow “develops her consciousness and powerful astrality.” How appropriate that the mesentery should serve as the sheath for the dandelion preparation.

In Spring when we dig up the preparation we find a humus-like earthy substance, penetrated all through with cosmic forces. The dandelion preparation is able to relate cosmic silica substance, which exists in homeopathic amounts throughout the atmosphere above, to the potassium rising up through the roots in the earth below. In this way, by bringing down forces from above which enable the plant to relate to the atmosphere at large, the dandelion preparation, acting through compost, creates in the plant a kind of sentience to its larger environment, an ability to perceive and draw to itself what it needs from its general surroundings.

Rudolf Steiner says “If a plant is very delicately permeated and enlivened by silicic acid, it becomes sensitive to everything and can attract what it needs. . . . the plants will be able to draw what they need from a very wide area. . . . They will be able to use not only what is in their own field but also what is in the soil of a nearby meadow, if they happen to need it. Such an interplay can be brought about by giving the plants the forces that the dandelion makes available to them.” (Agriculture, Lecture 5)

*Kathleen Fenton, previously a class teacher at the Sacramento Waldorf School, Director of the Nevada County Retired Seniors Volunteer Program, and co-owner of Peaceful Valley Farm Supply (a national organic farm and garden supply business based in Grass Valley), is now an artist living and gardening biodynamically on 5 acres just down the street from Fulcrum Farm.*





*Gabrielle Dietrich* helps keep the gardens beautiful at Rudolf Steiner College, where she also coordinates the Biodynamic Farm Visit program for school children.



## Compost

*Submitted by Gabrielle Dietrich*

sifting the compost.  
distracted by  
my thought-  
as erratic as the hummingbirds that keep visiting,  
finding material for their spring nests.

the corn cob;  
still holding strong to its form  
even after over half a year of heat mold  
and transformation surrounding it.

and i think of all the years  
of all the growers of  
all the food,  
stink,  
slime  
mold  
held back gag reflexes  
that have come before.  
how that corn cob came  
from a stalk. put into the the ground by a seed drill  
or hand.  
into soil prepared for it.  
specifically.  
and before it was set in to do its work , the soil was  
given compost.  
manure or vegetable.

what's the difference, really?  
either way, plant life was taken and mutated.  
given back.  
unrecognizable as what it once was.  
for years.  
the growth pf the plant  
which grows the animals  
which grows us  
depends



on the transformation of last year's plant.  
and last year's  
and on  
and on

back and back.

for as long as plants have grown.

so that slogan, "farmers feed america" is

twisted.

and we need to see  
straight  
think  
straight  
act  
straight.

understand

the whole planet feeds the whole planet.

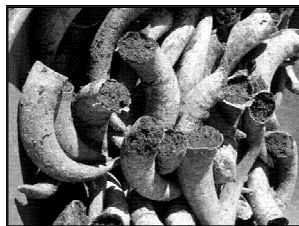
and one day the corn cob will give up.



## Community Supported Assistance

*Help us help each other.  
If you have land available,  
equipment to sell, need a  
farmer, would like to farm,  
please submit your needs to  
our editor for printing in  
future issues.*

Email [lauraliska@cs.com](mailto:lauraliska@cs.com)



## Connecting with the Stars, inspired by Stargazing with Brian Gray

*submitted by Christine Holmstrom and Betsyann Gallagher*

*The stars spoke once  
to man,  
It is world destiny that  
they are silent now.  
To be aware of the  
silence can become pain  
for earthly man,  
But in the deepening  
silence there grows and  
ripens what man speaks  
to the stars.  
To be aware of the  
speaking can become  
strength for spirit man.*

*- Rudolph Steiner -*

As Biodynamic practitioners we recognize that there is a relationship between cosmic forces and the earthly realm. We utilize this knowledge by following the indications of the planting calendar. But how can we deepen our personal connection with the cosmos? One way is by getting to know the night sky and increasing our familiarity with the constellations. We had this opportunity when we gazed at the starry heavens with Brian Gray after his lecture on "Astro-Geography and Biodynamics" at the BDANC Spring meeting.

We were blessed with a beautiful showing of Mercury in the western sky. Since Mercury is so close to the sun, it is seldom visible. So we were lucky! The other planet we saw was Saturn, in the constellation of Leo, the lion. We located several constellations and heard the names of many stars. We learned from Brian that Orion rides on the celestial equator. You can locate the celestial equator by the three stars of his belt, and then follow its route through the night sky. Some say that these stars are connected with the three magi, bearers of star wisdom, who followed a bright star towards Jerusalem to behold the newborn Jesus.

The Ancients perceived actual beings in the starry realm. Brian told us that the Egyptians saw the area we call Orion as the realm of Osiris. The bright star we know as Sirius was the abode of Isis, his sister and consort. Brian said that the ancient Babylonian understanding of the zodiac was rooted in mystery wisdom. The stars once spoke to humans; but how can modern humans experience the forces of the cosmos in an age dominated by materialism, technology and disconnection from nature?

Many Native Americans could point to the north during the day wherever they were. Was this a remembering of Polaris or a deep connection to their sense of place? Do you know where you stand on the earth in relation to the cosmos?

Learning the name and locations of major stars and constellations is only one aspect of connecting with the cosmos. This type of knowledge relates to the thinking realm. It can extend to the feeling life and lead to a desire for a deeper relationship with cosmic forces. One stargazer seemed to experience this when he asked, "How do I connect with the spiritual beings in the stars?"

The key to communing with cosmic forces is to abandon one's preconceived ideas and embrace the wonder of "not knowing." Prepare yourself with spiritual exercises – meditation, prayer, eurythmy so your vibratory frequency rises. Then, with an open mind and a grateful heart, find a star that "speaks" to you. Know this star is sending you love. Open yourself to receive and listen. Set an intention to keep the forces of illusion and egotism at bay; ask for assistance from the spiritual realm. Thank the spiritual beings in the stars for their love and guidance.

**N**oted author Robert Powell wrote in the 2009 Christian Star Calendar, "Gratitude and an attitude of positive expectation elevates the soul and spirit and attracts beings of the spiritual hierarchies, who are then able to allow their positive forces to stream in as a blessing upon daily life." He reminds us, "Without our prayers, the spiritual hierarchies do not have a definite sign as to what we would prefer...It is therefore important that we learn to pray with constancy for one another and for the earth, for the future good of humankind and Mother Nature."

As we become familiar with the night sky and acknowledge the spiritual beings in the stars, we can deepen our relationship with the cosmic forces that nurture the earth and help guide humanity. Just as we bend to the earth during the day in love and stewardship, at night we can lift our eyes and hearts to the starry realm in wonder and gratitude.

*Christine Holmstrom is a writer, gardener, state worker and member of the Raphael Garden CSA. She relishes the tranquility and beauty of the biodynamic farm at Rudolph Steiner College, the perfect antidote to the deadening effects of long hours sitting in front of a computer under flickering fluorescent lights.*

*Betsyann Callager is an avid gardener, mother, artist and stargazer. She is presently teaching gardening at Marin Waldorf School. Creativity and synchronicity are sacred themes in her life.*

# BDANC SUMMER MEETING

## Keynote by Robert Karp

*In his talk "Weaving a New Food System: Biodynamics, Regionalism and Associative Economics" Richard explores the potential convergence of biodynamics, regional communities and new economic paradigms. Join us Sunday for further conversation on Grassroots and Biodynamics.*

*Robert Karp is a long time food system organizer and student of Rudolf Steiner and is the new Executive Director of the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association (BDA)*

## Preps Purchase

member/non-member

Horn Manure [500]

\$5 / \$7

Horn Silica [501]

\$3 / \$4

Compost Preps

[502-507]

\$15 / \$18

Compound Prep

[Barrel Compost]

\$5 / \$7

For purchase at the next meeting, contact Harald Hoven SEVERAL DAYS in advance.  
916-965-0389

## A Weekend of Biodynamics: June 27-28, 2009

### Hosted by

Adam Gaska and Paula Manalo, of Mendocino Organics at Heart Arrow Ranch On Golden Vineyards, in Mendocino County

### Schedule of Events

#### Saturday June 27

7:30 Breakfast

8:30 Announcements

8:45 Observation of Yarrow  
(led by **Laura Liska**)

9:30 Making Yarrow Preparation

11:30 Growing Community  
(group study led by **Andey Nunes**)

12:30 Potluck Lunch

2:00 Farm Tour of Heart Arrow Ranch

4:30 Weaving a New Food System:  
BD, Regionalism and Associative Economics  
(keynote by **Robert Karp**)

6:00+ Dinner followed by socializing and singing around the campfire . . . Or a jump in the swimming hole!

#### Sunday June 28

7:30 Breakfast

8:30 Nature Hike

9:00 Visioning Farm Scale and Capitalization  
(talk by **Adam Gaska**)

10:30 Grassroots and Biodynamics  
(discussion with **Robert Karp**)

12:30 Lunch, Cleanup and Departure

### Cost

We invite you to attend at no charge, but ask that you bring a donation for our speaker.

### Meals

Saturday breakfast (\$7), **lunch is potluck so bring something to share**, Saturday dinner (\$12), Sunday breakfast (\$7), lunch (\$10). Apprentice discounts available (\$2 off per meal). **MAKE RESERVATIONS by JUNE 22.**

## Accommodations

Tent camping is available on the ranch, near Adam's barn/loft. You can arrive late Friday if you want to be there early the next morning.

**PLEASE CALL AHEAD FOR CAMPING.**

There are hotels in Ukiah and Willits (15 min):

The Discovery Inn, Ukiah 707-462-8873

Holiday Inn Express, Ukiah 707-462-5745

Baechtel Creek Inn, Willits 707-459-9063

Best Western, Willits 707-459-5800

## Directions

### From Ukiah:

Heart Arrow Ranch is right off 101 North, 2.5 miles north of the West Road Redwood Valley exit. Pass Reeves Canyon Rd on your left, after 0.7 miles, at the 35.19 mile marker, is our driveway. You will see a "DO NOT PASS" sign and an open gate. If you miss the driveway, turn around at Ridgewood Ranch. (See the Willits directions if this happens.)

### From Willits:

Take 101 South. It is tricky to turn left onto Heart Arrow Trail from the south side of 101, so pass it, and further down 101 S, turn right onto Reeves Canyon Road. Turn around, and go north on 101 (left). After 0.7 miles, at the 35.19 mile marker, is our driveway. You will see a "DO NOT PASS" sign and an open gate.

### Once you get here:

Follow the paved driveway up the hill for .5 mile until it turns into a gravel road. Park by the big pond, a 5-min walk from the garden.

## Contacts

**Paula Manalo** 240-626-3835 pmanalo@gmail.com  
for meal reservations, camping, and questions

**Harald Hoven** 916-965-0389  
to order preps in advance

## BDANC Planning Session

Join us over lunch on Saturday as we catch up on business for 2009. We invite you to bring proposals for work or events you'd like BDANC to support. We are a member-run organization, so whatever happens does so because someone took up the challenge to make it happen!

## Group Study

*"Growing Community"  
Come share ideas for nurturing our social capital and growing community for Community Supported Agriculture. Readings from Steiner's lectures about the cycle of labor transforming the land in service to society will be followed by round table discussion. Led by **Andey Nunes** founder of San Francisco Urban Biodynamic Collaborative, an organization furthering the study of Biodynamics & sustainable food production and working to reclaim spiritual connection to the urban environment while creating community.*



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## Newsletter and Calendar submissions

*We welcome calendar items, articles and photographs for the newsletter. Submissions should be related to local biodynamic farming and gardening activities. Inclusion is subject to editor's discretion and space available.*

*Items need to be submitted electronically, in the simplest format possible (no formatting please).*

*Deadlines are:  
Fall 2008 : August 5th  
Winter 2009 : Nov 5th  
Spring 2009 : Feb 15th*

*Please email our editor,  
Laura Liska, at  
lauraliska@cs.com*

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## BDANC Events

June 27-28, 2009 Summer Meeting  
(Heart Arrow Ranch, Mendocino County)  
Sep 26-27, 2009 Fall Meeting  
at Live Power Community Farm, Covelo

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## Workshops at Rudolf Steiner College

[www.steinercollege.edu](http://www.steinercollege.edu), 916-961-8727

### Biodynamic Farming & Gardening Workshops

*Harald Hoven, Saturdays 9am-5pm*

Jun 17-21 Biodynamic Advanced Intensive

Sep 12 Soil, the Foundation of Life

Oct 17 The Preparations

Nov 14 Compost

Dec 12 Seed Saving

### Backyard Biodynamic Workshops

*David Basile, Saturdays 9am-5pm*

Oct 10 Earth: The Ground We Share, Soil

Nov 7 Water: Growing our Daily Bread, Grains/Plants

### Natural Beekeeping Workshop Series

*David Basile, Saturdays 9am-5pm*

May 30 The Hive

Sep 19 The Harvest

### Special Event: Building Biodynamic Beehives

Nov 20-21 Alternative hive building

with Uve Bodenschatz from Germany

(details soon at [www.steinercollege.edu](http://www.steinercollege.edu))

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## Other Upcoming Events

### Events featuring Ana Pogacnick

Tuesday evening, Oct 6-Thursday morning Oct 8

Live Power Farm, Covelo CA

Contact Gloria Decater at [livepower@igc.org](mailto:livepower@igc.org)

Thursday evening, Oct 8

Fort Schlesinger's Barn outside Petaluma CA

Contact Fort at 707-762-3090

Friday evening Oct 9-Sunday morning Oct 11

Headlands Institute, Sausalito CA

Contact Karen [fkarendavisbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:fkarendavisbrown@yahoo.com)

## Application for BDANC Membership

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

phone number \_\_\_\_\_

email address \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a: new member? renewing member?

Are you a: farmer? gardener? teacher? other?

What would you enjoy having included in the BDANC programs this year?

How did you find out about BDANC?

Select one:

### **For BDANC membership only:**

Please make checks out to BDANC for **\$25**

Mail check and this application form to

**BDANC, PO Box 2423, Fair Oaks CA 95628**

### **For joint membership with the BDA:**

Please make checks out to Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association for **\$60**

Mail check and this application form to

**Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association,  
25844 Butler Road, Junction City OR 97448**

## Are You Due to Renew?

Membership is for one year. The last year for which you paid dues is indicated on your address label. IF YOUR LABEL DOES NOT SAY 2009, please use this application to renew your membership.

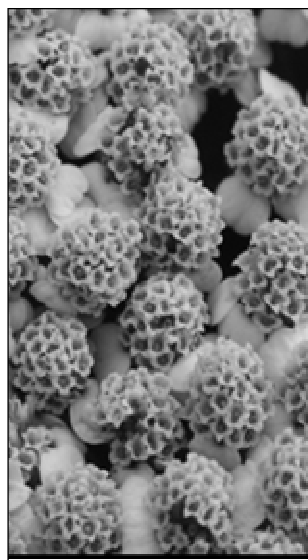
## Thank you!

*Your support contributes to the health of biodynamics in northern California, and allows us to offer this newsletter and special discounts..*

*BDANC membership includes quarterly issues of the BDANC newsletter, attendance at quarterly meetings and discounts on the purchase of preparations and on special events. Membership is for one year*

*National BDA membership includes the quarterly Biodynamic Journal and other member benefits.*

*Join BDANC and the BDA at the same time, and save! The \$60 fee covers both memberships.*



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Biodynamic Association of Northern California  
PO Box 2423  
Fair Oaks CA 95628

address correction requested

