

Winter Application of Biodynamic Tree Paste

Abigail Porter, *Applied Biodynamics*, Fall 2014

Biodynamic tree paste is applied once or twice a year, in late fall after leaf drop or in late winter before the sap flows and buds break, when the temperature is above freezing. It is used to provide a protective covering primarily on the bark of fruit trees to enhance the vitality, to help protect the bark from splitting, to discourage insect breeding and infestation, to heal injuries and to cover wounds made during pruning. It may also be applied to fruiting bushes, vines and roses. A coating of the tree paste may slow blossoming so there is less danger of early frost damage. It is recommended for newly planted trees to give them a good start and it is also helpful for ailing or stressed trees.

One of original recipes contained equal parts of sticky clay, cow manure and fine sand. Later, Dr. Pfeiffer modified it by adding one stirred unit of BD#500 (horn manure) and .5 to 1.5 percent Equisetum arvense (BD#508) tea for its anti-fungal properties. Another recipe contained equal parts of fine clay and cow manure and one unit of stirred #500 containing enough water to make a paste the consistency of heavy cream or paint. To this, sufficient equisetum tea is added so it is one percent of the total volume.

The tree bark should first be gently brushed or scraped to remove moss, lichens and dead, loose bark which provides breeding grounds for insects. Backyard gardeners can use a whitewash brush or paintbrush to apply the paste by completely covering smaller trees and the trunks and lower branches of larger trees.

Care needs to be taken that you do not break off buds as you are brushing the paste on. The paste may be further diluted and strained to use as a spray to cover the upper branches of tall trees. Hand application is impractical for large orchards and the spray is used to cover the whole tree.

Over the years practitioners have developed their own variations according to their needs. JPI currently makes available a version that contains bentonite clay with the Pfeiffer BD Field and Garden Spray and fermented BD#508. You may also make your own and a recipe with exact measurements for a few larger trees or several small trees appears in the Fall 2004, *Applied Biodynamics*, Issue No. 46 (available on the JPI website under "Articles & Resources.")

There are also recipes in *The Biodynamic Orchard Book* by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer and Michael Maltas.

References:

- *The Biodynamic Orchard Book*, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer and Michael Maltas
- *Bio-Dynamic Sprays*, H.H. Koepf (based on a pamphlet of the same name written by Evelyn Speiden Gregg currently out of print)
- *Using the Biodynamic Compost Preparations and Sprays in the Garden, Orchard, and Farm*, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer currently out of print)