

SUMMARY OF  
FELLOWSHIP OF PREPARATIONARATION MAKERS INTERVIEW  
WITH WALI VIA (AND MARJORY HOUSE)  
OF THE OREGON BIODYNAMIC GROUP  
APRIL 2020

**PRE-INTERVIEW SURVEY RESPONSES, WALI VIA –**

***How long have you been making preparations?***

Forty-four years.

***Do you currently make the preparations as an individual, a group, or as part of an organization? If a group or organization, with whom?***

I make some of the preparations as an individual and others as part of the Oregon Biodynamic (BD) Group.

***Please describe the location where you make the preparations (climate, soils, landscape).***

The preparations that I make individually are made on our farm, Winter Green Farm, in Noti Oregon. These include 500, 501, 502 (occasionally), 503 (occasionally), 504, 506 (occasionally), 507, 508, BC (barrel compound) (historically), and Prepared 500. The Oregon BD Group makes the following preparations on our farm as well: 500, 501 (sometimes), 502, 503, 505, 506, 507 (in 2018), and BC. Between the Oregon BD Group and my individual efforts, all of the preparations are made on our farm, annually.

The farm is located in the foothills of the Coast Range adjacent to the Willamette Valley. It is a mild climate moderated by its proximity to the Pacific Ocean. I've been keeping weather records for the past twenty-eight years. The lowest temperature I have witnessed was -5F, the highest 109F, but both of those are highly unusual. Generally winter temperatures range from the mid-20's to the mid 50's, and summer temperatures from the mid 60's to the mid 80's. Our average rainfall is 59.36 inches. I have witnessed it as low as 29.59 inches and as high as 100.25 inches.

Our farm contains several soil types, primarily silt loams, though we bury the preparations on a slight hillside to avoid flood events, and this soil is a silt clay loam. The holes where preparations are buried have been modified with additional soil from our bottomland fields as well as biodynamic compost.

The farm is located in a relatively narrow valley of typical coast range forest (Douglas Fir, Red Alder, Big Leaf Maple, and various ferns, berries, fungi, etc.). On the farm's 171 acres, in any given year there are about twenty-two acres in vegetable and berry production and 100 acres in pasture and hay fields. The remainder is Oregon White Oak groves, wetlands, and infrastructure.

Except for 505, the preparations are buried in the "preparation garden," which is located on a gentle hillside pasture. 505 is buried in a mucky area 50 yards downstream of a small spring.

***Which preparations do you make and on average how much of each?***

Starting in 2018, the Oregon BD Group ramped up production. I have given the 2018 and/or 2019 quantities and a more typical historic range. We are uncertain what the demand will be for this increase in production. Our future production will be based on future sales. I have also included the amounts of preparations that I make for our farm, in addition to those that I make with the Oregon BD Group.

500 – In 2018 the Oregon BD Group put down 267 horns, and over 500 in 2019. Historically the Oregon BD Group put down 150 – 175 horns 165 in 2019. I personally put down 150 – 175 horns for our farm as well.

501 – For the last four years, the Oregon BD Group has put down two to four horns a year. In 2019, the Oregon BD Group put down five horns at Marjory House's farm. I generally put down about one to two horns a year.

502 – The Oregon BD Group always puts down at least one bladder, but rarely more than four. Sometimes these are large elk bladders, sometimes smaller deer bladders, or a combination of both kinds. We have a new source for bladders, and it appears that we will be able to make more in the future. In 2019 we put down about eight Bladders. I personally rarely put down a bladder but have a couple times in past ten years.

503 – In 2018, in our attempt to increase production, we stuffed sixty-seven 6-inch sausages, or about thirty-five feet of intestine. This is up from 2017's fourteen sausages, which is historically about average. In 2019 we stuffed thirteen sausages. I have only made this preparation on my own one time recently.

504 – Records on 504 are sketchier than other preparations, as Oregon BD Group members tend to make it on their own and contribute what they want to the group. In our records, I see FINISHED quantities ranging from one cup to two gallons. I personally make it every year for our farm and typically get one to three quarts of finished preparation.

505 – In 2018 we buried six fresh skulls and six skulls that had been used once before. In the past we have buried between two and five skulls, usually four or five. In 2019, we buried about four. I don't make this preparation individually.

506 – Typically we make two to five quarts of finished preparation per year, burying one to four packages. In 2019 we put at least two pounds of dried dandelions into eight packages. In 2014 I made this preparation on my own, but generally just make it with the group.

507 – The Oregon BD Group typically makes this preparation at the summer meeting. Records indicate that we typically make between .5 and 2.5 cups. In 2018 we made it at our farm and got forty-four ounces. I always make this preparation on my own, typically making about a cup.

508 – 508 is made by individuals in the Oregon BD Group, and there are no records. About every two years I collect about five gallons of dried, non-milled herb.

BC – Historically, we make two to three batches per year, yielding four to five gallons per batch. Most are made with Maria Thun's recipe, but sometimes we have made it without the eggshells and basalt at Beth Wieting's request. We have discontinued the production of the latter unless we receive further requests for it. This fall we made two batches of Maria Thun's recipe.

Prepared 500 - I turn at least one-half of the 500 that I make into Prepared 500, making several gallons per year. The Oregon BD Group intends to begin production of this preparation.

### ***How do you obtain preparation making ingredients?***

For both preparations that I make as an individual and with the group, all cow parts are obtained fresh from our beef herd. We either butcher the cow on the day we make the preparations, or the day before.

For the preparations that I make individually, I collect dandelion, nettle, valerian, and equisetum from our farm. I collect yarrow from the coast and purchase Organic chamomile from Mountain Rose Herbs.

For the preparations made by the Oregon BD Group on our farm, contributions are collected by our members from around Western Oregon of all of the plant ingredients. Oak bark from our farm has often been used.

Manure for the Oregon BD Group preparations are made from a mixture of manure from our farm and manure brought by other Oregon BD Group members. The manure that I use in the preparations for our farm is from our beef cattle.

***Do you distribute the preparations to others? If yes, to whom?***

The Oregon BD Group distributes their preparations. They historically have primarily sold to its members, but also to the general public. They are ramping up their production and this will likely shift to more sales to non-members. The preparations that I make individually I use on our farm, along with occasional gifts to others or trades with the Oregon BD Group.

***Do you sell preparations? If so, what do you charge?***

Yes, the Oregon BD Group sells preparations. For the general public, we match the going rate of the Josephine Porter Institute (JPI). For Oregon BD Group members who contribute significantly to the preparation making or the organization, we charge 50¢ per unit plus shipping and handling. We have just adopted a policy that a few members who contribute a very high level to preparation making or the organization will get their preparations for free.

***Who have been your primary mentors in learning how to make, store, and apply the preparations?***

There are many! Dr. Herbert Koepf gave me, and others present in the mid-1970's, our original instruction on making the preparations. This was our foundation for understanding, making, storing, and using the preparations, and his influence has permeated our work ever since. I feel one could say that the Oregon BD Group comes from this European "stream." Evelyn Gregg provided foundational advice as well, primarily through Mildred Cowger who was the first biodynamic practitioner in Oregon and an original member of the Oregon BD Group. For instance, Mildred demonstrated the art of removing fat from the peritoneum as Evelyn instructed her.

Over the years we have had many experts visit, both while making preparations and at conferences and meetings that we hosted in Oregon. Those that stand out as having the greatest influence on our preparation making are Andrew Lorand, Dennis Klocek, Peter Procter, Ruth Zinniker and Harald Hoven.

Fellowship of Preparation Makers members have offered extensive information from their experience which has significantly informed our work. These include Hugh Courtney, Pat Frazier, Lloyd Nelson, Laura Riccardi Lyvers, Dewane Morgan, Bill McCranie, Brian Wickert, Uli Hack, and Karen Davis-Brown.

Guest speakers at Fellowship of Preparation Makers Conferences have also offered valuable insights, which have been brought back to Oregon.

Finally, I must pay respects to the many, many people who over the years have contributed their insights and labor as fellow members of the Oregon BD Group. These include especially Beth Wieting, Devon Strong, Robert Cox, Wali Eubanks, Ilse Kolbuszowski, Doug Moser, Jean Kessel, Heike-Marie Eubanks, Dave Robison, Kathryn Casternovia, Woody Fitzgerald, Tim Love, Tal Carmi, Karen Martens, Carol Ach, Don Tipping, Kris Woolhouse, Neil Austin, Paul Sansone, Sam Stalnaker, Barry Lia, Sharol Tilgner, Joanne Campbell, Claudia McCue, Jim Fullmer, Michi Okuda, Marjory House, Andhi Reynna, Roland Ransdell, Teri Peck, Cynthia Care, Carol Cox, Renate Joy, Christine Young, Matias Baker, Clay Wesson, Adam Lee, Adam McKinnley, Beth Hoinacki, Justin Moran, Lili Tova, Mica Derrington, Kevin Jones, Noah Marquis, Traci Jo Partin, Gary Palmersheim, and many others.

The Oregon BD Group's preparations are truly a synthesis of the collective wisdom of all these fine souls.

***Would you be comfortable sharing contact information of other preparation makers in your area?***

Always!

**AUDIO INTERVIEW APRIL 2020--**

BW: Wali, thank you for agreeing to do this. As you know, you filled out the written questionnaire and now these are some interview questions we decided to ask each preparation maker. *You represent the Oregon Biodynamic Group so tell me a little bit about that group* before we get started with the questions.

WV: Originally there was a conference in Washington State in 1975 that was oriented to biodynamics. Walter Goldstein and Beth Wieting were there, and I am not sure who else. I could not make it, but the next year there was a meeting with Dr. Herbert Koepf and a handful of us went up to Washington. Initially we thought of ourselves as a regional group – Oregon and Washington -- but it quickly became clear that the real dedicated members were in Oregon at that time. So those of us in Oregon began meeting regularly, with making the preparations our primary purpose. That was 1976 and we have done so every year since. The group has seen many, many people who are dedicated to biodynamics and preparation making. Some have passed on at this point, and new folks come every time. Our preparation making meetings are anywhere from thirty to fifty people and we make them at our farm here in Western Oregon. Then we have other meetings. We have a summer preparation making meeting at another farm -- usually Marjory House's in recent years -- and a winter meeting that is more of a study and business gathering.

We have been a fairly organized group over those years, with different defined roles that each of us took on and committees to carry out different aspects of the work. Recently we have become a 501(c)(3) in our own right, which is a new step for us. Up until the point where we legally became a 501(c)(3), we made all of our decisions via consensus and it has been very respectful process, our decision making. Now as a 501(c)(3), legally, I think there is some voting involved but still, the spirit of the process remains consensus.

BW: That voting on the 501(c)(3), I wonder if that is a requirement or not or the way you guys have chosen to do it?

I don't really recall. I do not think it is important. The important part is the spirit remains. It has been a time of real relationship building. There has always been a strong sense of reunion when we get together, seeing friends that are scattered across the state -- a fairly large state. Mostly it is Western Oregon, although we have had some Eastern Oregon participants from time to time. I could say that we have an open house every year that is sort of an introduction to biodynamics. It is a full day session that we move around the state so different people can attend. For many years, back in the 80s and 90s in particular, I would say that we put on weekend conferences, sometimes twice a year, with guest speakers from around the country and those were very, very important for our own education as well as drawing more people in.

BW: We will go the questions here but that kind of gives us a feeling for what your group is and how it has developed. So currently you have a fall gathering and then your spring gathering when you dig up the preparations. Then you have a summer meeting, and your winter meeting is more of a study and business meeting to plan for the next year. Those are the four events you basically have each year. Then you also have an open house in the summer that is more of an introduction and to give people a place to come every year and learn more.

WV: That is right. We do have an organizational structure, which probably is not worth going in to at this point.

BW: You said something earlier that I want to ask you about. You are an organized group and that does not often happen. There are people in the group that understand process and organizations to make sure that happens. I think that is an important part of the group's success, being able to get so many people coming to do that.

WV: Yes.

BW: So, these are some of the questions we just ask of the individual Preparation makers. You remember the articles from Europe, that they had a bit about who the person was. The first question is, *what was the doorway that led you to biodynamic agriculture?*

WV: When I was a teenager, I had an inner sense that nature would be a teacher for me and so after high school I was determined to learn from nature. Although I was a suburban city kid I went to the country, where I fell in love with agriculture on a homestead level.

BW: What year was that?

WV: That was in 1972, when I moved to the country. I had that feeling a little earlier than that. A year later I moved from Georgia to Oregon, and in the mid-70s I was serendipitously given a book called *Gardening for Health and Nutrition* by Philbrick and Gregg. That book had come from a Quaker woman named Mildred Cowger, who was the only biodynamic practitioner in Oregon. She had become friends with Evelyn Gregg, who was one of the authors of that book, and Evelyn had instructed Mildred on how to garden biodynamically, including making some of the preparations. As soon as I read the opening chapter – I actually think it was just the introduction to that book -- I knew that the authors had a spiritual connection to agriculture that resonated with my own inner feelings. Up until that point, I think I had a frustration with everything I was reading about agriculture. It was all very practical and materialistic in its outlook, and here I sensed that these authors knew something that was important. That is what kicked it off for me.

BW: Do you know anything about Evelyn Greggs' background?

WV: I am not the best person to ask on that. Mac Mead would be a good one, I think. I believe she studied with Pfeiffer.

BW: Right, and with Gandhi in her younger years.

WV: Yes. Mildred, as I mentioned, was a Quaker -- a Friend, as the Quakers call themselves -- and so I think probably that connection to pacifism and all could have been a point of meeting for them.

BW: I didn't mean to interrupt you there, but that was your doorway that led you to biodynamics -- this book *Gardening for Health & Nutrition* in the mid-70s. That led you to Mildred.

WV: Right, and I think it is worth talking about how I was inspired to begin making the preparations at this point, as almost a continuation of that story. Soon after reading that book, there was a small gathering of folks -- just a handful of folks -- from around the Northwest. We met in Washington State and were interested in learning more about biodynamics. Dr. Herbert Koepf was there who, at the time, was sort of the head of international activity in biodynamics, and he was explaining how the preparations were made. I remember clearly one evening we were stuffing a bladder with yarrow. I was absolutely entranced by the beautiful form that the bladder took and amazed by how many blossoms it held. Sometimes it is those almost emotional impressions, I think, that attract us, and I think that was the moment for me. I don't remember if it was at that time or if it was a little thereafter, but we were given some original instructions on how to make the preparations and at the very top there was a handwritten note that said these instructions were for your eyes only. I think that was telling of the time, because the preparations were still pretty secret out of concern that they would be misinterpreted by the general public. Anyway, through this experience, I was hooked. Beth Weeding was also there at that meeting and we became lifelong friends, for over four decades. Beth and my relationship largely centered around the making of the preparations until her passing a few years ago. Our first meeting of the Oregon Biodynamic Group, although I do not know if we officially called ourselves that then, was held at Mildred Cowger's farm. She had a very large garden that she raised biodynamically and she would get organs from her butcher that we would use for making the preparations. Those were the early days. That was sort of the kickoff for the early group. After being at Mildred's, really most of the preparation making meetings happened on whatever farm I was currently living on, which were three in number. I have been on the current farm since 1986, I believe, so we have been making them here since then.



BW: So, the first ten years, you had two other farms before you got there, from 1976 to 1986? The second question, which you kind of answered a little bit, is *what inspired you to begin making preparations?*

WV: I think I pretty much just covered that as well.

BW: *How has your preparation making changed over the years and what insights have come to you as your preparation making has evolved?*

WV: As you can imagine, over that period of time our techniques have changed considerably and yet we largely follow the original instructions that we were given. Oregon in those earlier years was very isolated from the larger biodynamic movement, and we had no experienced preparation makers close by to mentor us along the way. It was just sort of a teacher here or there that maybe we would bring in that would give us insight, but nobody was standing over the pit as we unearthed the preparation to tell us if this preparation any good or not, or do not do it this way, do it this way. We were learning by trial and error.

BW: How do you feel about that?

WV: It is slower. It was much slower to learn by trial and error but, on the other hand, it meant that we had to have a certain dedication and fortitude to keep going and I think that strength of the will around the preparations was important. That was somehow ingrained in us. I will give an example of some of our trial and error. We certainly wanted to bury our preparations in the best soils on our farm, which were in the bottom lands. On the farm that I was living at the time, the annual rainfall was about 100 inches a year, with almost all of it falling exactly when most of the preparations are buried. When we went to dig them up, the preparations would be completely waterlogged and anaerobic. We quickly learned to move our sites up onto the hillside sloped slightly. In the beginning we were making very small quantities of the preparations and we devised different methods to help locate the preparations when it was time to unearth them. Simple measurements yielded spotty results to finding them. We said, "Let's try tying a natural cotton string to, for instance, one end of a chamomile sausage and then bring the other end of the string up to the surface so we could then follow it down when we came to unburying it." Well, that string just rotted, so we were right back where we started. Then we tried a string from a plastic feed sack because we knew it would not decompose, which was an improvement. But it was still very difficult to dig down following that string to the preparation. It was an archeological uncovering and you had to be very careful not to pull on the string. It was just a mess. After too many years of that trial and error, we settled on placing four bricks on the sides of the buried preparation so that when the shovel hit the bricks, we would know that we were there. Now, we have changed that, so we put the more delicate preparations along with some soil surrounding them in unglazed pots and we have taken away the bricks. Sometimes we

will get really big -- as big as you can get -- flower pots and then take what would be the bottom of the pot and turn that into sort of a lid. We would always keep a good-sized crack between the pot which we would lay on its side between the pot and the lid so that we were not completely putting a hardened barrier between the earth and the preparation. Then we brought the bricks up to the surface to simply mark the edges of the pit, so we knew where to begin digging. We never put the bricks right on top of the preparation but on the edges of the pit. Other changes were that in the early years, as I mentioned, we would get our animal parts from the local butcher, Mildred's butcher. Since about 1987 I would say, we have been using fresh parts from cows slaughtered on our farm. We arrange for our butchers who have a mobile unit to do the kills either on the day we make the preparations or the day before, and we typically butcher five or six animals a day during the butchering season.

BW: These are cows, right?

WV: These are cows, yes. So, we have plenty of material to work with. We can be a little choosy about our sheaths. I can think of one case where we consciously decided to ignore Rudolf Steiner's indications for practical reasons. For many years, we placed the burial sites in different fields around the farm as Steiner suggested and this proved to be really difficult for three reasons. One is, we are a working farm with multiple employees and multiple tractor drivers. It was difficult to keep everyone abreast of where each preparation was buried and there was always a danger that a tractor tire would run over a pit or that it would be tilled up accidentally. Secondly, we have a six-year rotation on the farm with three years in veggies followed by three years of pasture, and the cattle was sometimes not so gentle on the sites either. They would start digging holes with their head or something down where there is nice soft ground... so that seemed problematic. Finally, since we are a group rather than an individual and we were up against trying to herd thirty to fifty people all over the farm efficiently enough to get all of our work done in a day and that was really difficult. To address this, I decided to make what I call a "preparation garden," which is a circle about 50' wide in diameter that has dedicated holes for each of the preparations, except for the oak bark preparations which we bury in a wet, boggy area on the farm. That solved all of those problems and it has also led our group to be much more focused during the day as we are all there together rather than strung out in transit between the sites.

BW: How has your preparation garden worked?

WV: I think it works great. There may be arguments to be made that the preparations are too close to one another and that somehow might negatively affect them, but we have not seen that. The preparations turn out really well and feel like the results are also good. I am very happy with this going forward.

BW: I am going to say, in your preparation garden you have the 500, the yarrow, chamomile, nettle and the dandelion.

WV: That is correct. We also have some pits for BC.

BW: And the 501 is also buried in that garden?

WV: Yes, and 501.

BW: So, the valerian and oak bark would not be in that area?

WV: Correct. I should also mention that the way we prepare the pits themselves, is that I went around to our fields and took a little soil from different fields. Again, the preparation garden is on a hill side, so with more dry soil. We took some of the better bottomland soils and combined them with some biodynamic compost and mixed that all together and put that in the pits. Periodically I will re-compost the pits.

BW: You say periodically meaning two years, three years?

WV: Every few years or so I will put some more compost out, just like you would if you were farming. Then we will, of course, spray the area with 500 and 501.

BW: The question is, *what have your preparations changed over the years and what insights have you come to as your preparation making has evolved.* Any insights you want to mention?

WV: I think some of that might come out later in some of these other questions.

BW: *What unique techniques in making preparations have you adopted that you feel have been useful that may be useful to others?* So, what are some of the things that have you learned through the years that you think would be good practices for others?

WV: Certainly, we have developed many different techniques, but I think each preparation maker has to make adaptations according to their situation. That is the most important thing. But I will list a few that I have made. Let's start with 501. One year Andrew Loran came to visit and he told me about a letter he found at the Goetheanum that Steiner wrote a couple of weeks after the agriculture lectures were given that he had sent to the Keyserlingks, the hosts of the lectures. In it he said that he thought it would be a good idea to put some local silica and farm soil into the 501 along with the silica crystals. It happened that, when Andrew was visiting, it was the perfect time of year for making 501 so I said let's do it and we did. We filled a couple horns and the next year when I began using the new preparation. I sensed that the overall quality

of our produce was markedly enhanced. Furthermore, I had a much deeper connection to the silica preparation, as much of the material used had come from our farm where, before, we would get our horns from you so they are coming from the Midwest area and then the crystals -- we do not have any real crystals here, so they would be coming from wherever, Arkansas, maybe Eastern Oregon or something. Now, I would collect soil from the different fields to use and then, for the local silica, I have tried a couple different things. One is that I would take some sand from down by the creek that runs through the property. I also have a basalt gravel pit that is just probably a couple of miles as the crow flies and also underlying some of our farms, this area. From the gravel that we received from that mine or that pit, I sifted out some basalt dust and I have used that too. Anyway, that is one thing that we do.

BW: Can I ask how much sand to basalt you would put in the horn? A teaspoon? One-half teaspoon? A pinch?

WV: I will tell you what I do. I am not telling you I think it is right. I started with using one-third brown quartz crystal, one-third local silica and one-third soil. When Andrew was with me, his intuition was a little different. He thought just using a pea sized amount of the ground quartz would be sufficient. I know that since making it on our farm, that in his consulting business he introduced this way of making 501 to farmers internationally and he told me later that those farmers also were getting really good results. I do not know if he modified the quantity that he originally was using or not.

BW: When you said pea sized quartz, you gave three – silica, local crystals, and then soil. The pea sized quartz, would that be just the ground silica and you did most of the horn from local crystals and soil? Is that what he was suggesting, or am I misinterpreting that?

WV: Yes, local silica and soil, not necessarily local crystals although that would be ideal, I assume.

BW: He was using just a pea size of the quartz crystal and filling it up with the local silica and soil?

WV: Right.

BW: Like you said, this is just how people do it, it is not saying it is the right way. It is how to do it for your own farm and that was the whole point earlier. Each preparation maker needs to make their own way for their location.

WV: That is right. I think, although, that it is good to keep Steiner's original indications very much in mind and that he would want us to adapt his indications to our particular situation. I do

not think we should be frightened of making adjustments, but we should just feel into it as the right thing to do. Another thing that I do is also with 501 since it takes a long time to grind down quartz into a really superfine powder and I am impatient and busy. What I have started doing is that I have a tubular piece of metal, a pipe, that I have welded a base, and then I take a large wrecking bar. I will put the quartz in the bottom of the pipe and then smash it with the wrecking bar a number of times. Then I take the contents and put it onto a 55-micron screen, which is really, really small, and shake it around (wearing a mask). The really fine stuff goes through. Then I take the rest and put it back in the pipe and smash it some more. I just keep doing that until I have enough fine powder for the horns that I wish to fill.

BW: How long would it take you to fill a horn doing that? Just a ballpark figure?

WV: I am only filling one third of a horn because I need the other stuff. Maybe a half hour or so, forty-five minutes maybe. I haven't timed that one. I was going to move on to 504, the nettle preparation. On our farm, for quite a number of years we grew medicinal herbs on an acreage scale. This included having an acre of stinging nettle, which is really fun to have around. In determining the best way to grow nettle, we experimented with both our local wild *Urtica dioica* and with some seed that we imported from Germany. The two varieties are quite different in their forms. The native nettles here, which can grow up to seven feet tall in our lush environment, have really large leaves. Leaves that can be as big as your hand and the leaf nodes are spaced far apart on the stem, where the German strain is much shorter and has smaller leaves and the leaf nodes are much closer together. I made 504 from both and found that because the Oregon nettles have really thick stems, they would not breakdown fully and would leave me with a mix of dark black preparation from the leaves mixed with the coarse bits of stem. The German nettles by contrast had far fewer untransformed stems. Now what I do is I make my 504 from a mixture of both strains, both the native and the German nettles, but I strip the foliage from the lower stems, and I include the stems, leaves and flowers from the tender tops.

BW: Are talking of the German or the local or both?

WV: Both. I do it with both. I just take my hand and run it up the stalk, stripping off the leaves and then the top part that is tender just breaks off in that process. All of that goes into the 504 and the resulting 504 is just unbelievably luscious. That is all I can call it. It is this beautiful fine, black humus-like powder. It is just yummy.

BW: How do you put it in the ground?

WV: I have tried all sorts of different things. I am sort of curious and so I have tried different things that Fellowship members have suggested. I am not sure if I have determined an absolute favorite way yet. I do like stuffing the nettles into flowerpots or unglazed pipe, that sort of thing.

That works really well. It is really easy to get out. I have tried the nylon or whatever it is, lawn tree bags, mesh lawn tree bags and that also works but I am not as thrilled about having that plastic substance down there with the preparations. Usually I use pots, I like that. It takes a lot.

BW: Horn silica and 504 are different techniques for making preparations you have adapted. Any other ones?

WV: So, with 506 we have been using the peritoneum for this preparation and take great pains to scrape out the fat between the two layers of peritoneum. This is how we learned to do it from Mildred Cowger who learned how to do it from Evelyn Gregg. In talking with preparation makers from around the country, most did not go through this process of scraping, which is quite laborious. It is definitely the most time-consuming part of making the preparations on our fall preparation making day. Several times we have done side by side experiments using a scraped peritoneum and a non-scraped one, or one with fat and one without fat, and have found that the preparation from the un-scraped peritoneum is not as transformed as the scraped one. My sense is that perhaps the fat, to some extent, insulates the blossoms from the forces that are at work. Pretty much my total experience with making this preparation is with our cows, so I have not looked at peritoneum from other farms. Our cows are on really lush pastures, irrigated pastures and are fed well so maybe they have just got more fat on their peritoneum. I don't know.

Another thing maybe worth mentioning is 507. I use freshly harvested flowers and my grinding and pressing techniques have changed through the years. I began by putting blossoms through a hand crank meat grinder and then squeezing out the juice by hand using a cheesecloth. Then I went to using an electric juicer for quite a few years, which was faster and required less effort in terms of the squeezing part. Now I have returned to the meat grinder and the cheesecloth but instead of squeezing it out by hand, I use our shops 20-ton press to squeeze out the juice.

BW: How do you do that?

WV: At the bottom I have a piece of metal, then I have a piece of pipe that goes on top of the piece at the base. Then I put the ball of cheesecloth. I have to do this multiple times because there is a big pile of pulp to get through. I put that in the pipes, and then I take a flat base, again, that is of metal (the same diameter to slightly smaller than the pipe itself) that is attached to a metal rod going up. Then I put that on the press and just squeeze it down. I have pans underneath to catch the juice as it flows out, and what I have discovered is that I just get a tremendous amount more juice out of the pulp doing it that way.

BW: Can I ask how big the pipe is? What is the diameter?

WV: Probably four inches.

BW: So, you have a four-inch pipe and you put the materials in the pipe?

WV: Yes in the pipe.

BW: And then what do you use to squeeze it? It is a rod?

WV: There is this circular plate that then goes on top of the pipe and then I just press that using the 20-ton press. I squeeze down that rod and circular piece of pipe and that squeezes the juice out.

Gotcha. So, it would look like a canning jar lid but much thicker and that is what you put inside the four" pipe, so it would be 3.75" in diameter and you push that down with and it just pushes all of the liquid out.

WV: Yes, and it is even tighter than that. It is not 3.75". It would be like 3 and 15/16 inches or something.

BW: Just enough clearance to get in. Well thank you. I will start doing it that way. I have all of that stuff. I could do it that way.

WV: It will take trial and error probably to figure it out but yes.

BW: So that was talking about different techniques that you found that were helpful. Those were good. Any others before we move on?

WV: I think that is good.

***BW: What is your biggest challenge as a preparation maker and which preparation is the greatest challenge for you?***

WV: I would say over the years, it has been obtaining enough bladders. We have always had enough, but it always felt touch and go. We would put the word out to our group to get a bladder if you can sort of thing, but none of the members in our group, as far as I know, are hunters because it seems like we are always getting bladders from somebody else who is hunting. Heike Marie Eubanks has been a real important member of this group for a very, very long time. She has a relationship with her butcher, which got us a really nice supply of bladders. If that relationship holds up, we should be well set going forward.

BW: Are they elk bladders or deer bladders?

WV: We use both. Whatever we can get. I prefer the elk bladders. I think it is closer to the red deer that Steiner was recommending and, of course, it is a much larger vessel so you can make a lot more. Certainly, in the early years the most difficult preparations for us were 503 and 506 but now we have really consistent results with all of the preparations, so I do not think we are feeling particularly challenged with any of them.

BW: So that was chamomile and dandelion?

WV: Yes, it just seemed to be less transformed.

**BW: *How has your work with preparations changed your perspective in life and if so, how?***

WV: Yes, it absolutely has changed my perspective on life. It is hard for me to imagine someone working with the preparations and not being humbled by how little we really know, not only about the preparations but life and nature in general. I am a firm believer that the preparations work on us far more than we work on the preparations. By that I mean that this sort of work opens one up to explore life's mysteries with a deep sense of awe, I would even say reverence. It helps one connect to the larger whole of life and gives one a deep sense of purposefulness. I feel in this time more than ever humanity needs to discover ways to heal our planet and ourselves as part of the planet and the preparations are a way of service toward that end.

BW: Anything else you want to add to that?

WV: Somethings are difficult to put into words and I think the answer to that question is one of them. We will stick with what I have said.

**BW: *What advice would you offer to new preparation makers?***

WV: Given our experience of years of trial and error, I would say to find a mentor to help you along your way. And, while you are at it, find some friends to work with you on it. I would add to be joyful in this work. It is a privilege, an honor, and a joy to do this work and bringing that spirit to the table so to speak, or to the field, I think is very important. Many people feel like they have to understand something completely before they can begin to do anything, and I can guarantee you that you will never understand these preparations completely. You will never stop learning about them. Perhaps the questions that have been evoked in me over the years through my work with preparations are maybe more important than even the work that I do with biodynamics in general. So, realize that you will never stop learning and that by the time you are on your deathbed you have realized how little you know, and that is just fine.



BW: Yes, that is great advice for a new Preparation maker. ***What social relationships have you developed as a preparation maker?***

WV: Well rather than spending the next hour telling you, let's just say that there are way too many to count. I have made many friends from both the Oregon Biodynamic Group and the Fellowship of Preparation Makers, and what a blessing they have been. I know in my answers to the pre-interview questions, I listed a whole bunch of people that have contributed a lot to our group over the years, and it is worth repeating that what has happened here in Oregon is a group effort. Although there have been individuals along the way that have inspired and encouraged and helped keep us on track and all of the rest, it has taken the participation of dozens and dozens if not hundreds of people to make the Oregon group what it is today, and I just feel that is a tremendous blessing. I would also like to say that, in making the preparations as a group, there is something lost, and something gained. To me the gain outweighs the loss. The loss is that as an individual you can go deeply into your intuition; you can make adjustments to the way you do things; and you can make those decisions immediately and embark upon them. In that, there is a real depth and ability to move forward quickly let's say. But as a group, there is a dynamic that occurs that is very, very special. It is like, instead of one individual putting their energy and intention into making the preparations, you have that intention from a large group of people. I think that must have a very, very positive impact upon the preparations themselves and, of course, more people can also provide more insights. And, ideally, people rightly motivated and working cooperatively together will find answers that are far greater than any one individual would have on their own.

BW: You have started to make some of your own preparations on your farm as well as with the group, so then you are getting the best of both worlds.

WV: I do. You can imagine. Let's say I have been making a preparation the same way for the last fifteen years with good results as a group, and then I get on a call with the Fellowship of Preparation Makers and Hugh or Lloyd or Pat or anybody else and they say, "I do it this way." I think, "That is really interesting, I want to see how that works." Then I will do it myself without having to go to the group to get it approved. I like that flexibility. It is also really special for me when I have made so many preparations with a group, to do it as an individual. I can take the time. I don't have to worry about keeping things on track and making sure everybody is doing things correctly. I can just do it myself in my own way. There is a certain beauty in that too.

***BW: What do you and the preparation makers in your vicinity need to meet the demand for preparations in your area?***

WV: In the last couple of years, the Oregon Biodynamic Group has ramped up its production of preparations significantly and it is not currently a problem of meeting demand. The problem is

getting more preparations used in our region. We have the preparations, now let's get them out there.

BW: I agree with that the demand we can meet; we just do not have the demand. We make enough at this point. *Would collegial sharing with other Preparation makers be of interest to you beyond this interview? If so, how can we help you to develop the relationships with other preparation makers?*

WV: Yes, of course. I think collegial sharing is incredibly important. I am already very connected, though I also know that there are preparation makers that I am not in touch with and I think it is important to make those connections. We all need to support one another in this work. You and I have this Subgroup Two of preparation makers and we know people that belong to our Fellowship of Preparation Makers, but you just mentioned preparation makers that you don't even know and those would be the ones I would like us to reach out to.

There are preparation makers that we do know that we have come in contact with from time to time, at a conference or on a phone call, but it is not ongoing like we have with the Fellowship. I think some of those relationships could also be developed and that would be wonderful.

BW: *Do you have a vision for the future of preparation use in North America?* You, personally.

WV: I think it has been challenging in our materialistic society for biodynamics and, in particular, preparation use to find acceptance. Esotericism is not the path of the many. We cannot expect most people to take up the preparations to the depth that most of us who have engaged in this work for some time have found so valuable. Farmers are practical people. Mostly they want to know if something is going to work before they are willing to spend their time and money. I think for biodynamics to really take off, there will need to be convincing research with proven results. That research is time consuming and expensive and, as a movement, resources have not yet been there for it. But I think that there is another avenue that can be taken simultaneously. That avenue has already increased preparation use, and I believe it will accelerate in the future. It is recognizing the preparations as a means for healing the earth. As we witness the global changes that are occurring, people are really yearning for a way to help. If the preparations can be promoted as a way to heal and bring balance to our planet, I believe that many will want to join us and, as I said earlier, once you start working with the preparations, they start working on you. We can expect a deepening in those new relationships with the biodynamics and the preparations.

Another area that I believe we are going to have to explore is the potentizing of the preparations. Clearly when biodynamics becomes practiced on a wide scale, there are not going to be enough

horns and possibly other materials well. The generation that follows ours will very likely need to take up the task of how to obtain effective results through potentization. I never worked with that. I am very, very happy and feel privileged to be making the preparations in the way that Steiner indicated originally but we may need to make adjustments going forward. I think it may come to pass that the consciousness of human beings will evolve to the point where our relationship to the spiritual world is such that the preparations are no longer necessary in their physical form. We have a long way to go before that.

BW: Could you say that again, explain that a little bit more, about the consciousness of the human being?

WV: I believe that we as humanity and as individuals within humanity are developing our consciousness in new ways, and as we become adept in that expansion of consciousness we may find ways that we can bring what we have known as the influence of the preparations to bear through nonphysical means. We have a long way to go before that is the case, and we have to be careful not to believe prematurely that we have already arrived. I think the use of the preparations is still incredibly important. I have often thought that the making and the using of the preparations are part of our training to develop that capacity.

BW: And the will, the observation, a lot of those things we develop.

WV: I think the work of the Fellowship has been very important. Most preparation makers were once relatively isolated from one another, and now really deep bonds have been made. We have exchanged a lot of information with each other, and that spirit of cooperation really must continue and spread. Again, there are important workers with the preparations that have not participated in Fellowship activities and, of course, that is fully their choice. There are many other ways to interact. But I think it would be good if we made conscious efforts to extend invitations to them. I feel like it is the spirit of cooperation of the Fellowship that will lead us forward. I think that is an important thing about where we are headed in this work. I think that needs to be foundational.

Finally, I would say that I have a concern about the commercialization of the preparations. We see over and over that once something becomes popular and there is potential for profiteering from it, someone will jump in with monetary gain as their chief motivation. In my view that would be a real shame. But I also believe that the anecdote to this is to establish more and more local and regional groups to make and distribute the preparations. What a commercial endeavor will never replace is human to human relationships and working together for. Every effort should be made to foster more groups dedicated to preparation making. We all know that well-grown home-grown tomatoes are better than commercial ones, and it is probably true, as well, of well-made preparations.

BW: That is so true. So many principles there. *Again, what steps can or should be taken to make the understanding and use of preparations more accessible to the world?*

WV: I think I have already answered that question to a large degree. I don't think I have anything more to add.

BW: *What is your favorite preparation?*

WV: Let me see, I guess two rise to the surface. One is 507, the valerian preparation. That just popped into my mind when you asked the question, so that is why I am saying it. I do not have a rationale for that. It is just intuitionally what came. I also have a real affinity with the nettle plant and, like I said, the end product of our nettle preparation is just absolutely remarkable. So that is another one that I have a great fondness for.

BW: *Are there any other areas where you want to expand on what you said* or other thoughts as far as this interview project for finding the wisdom of all of the preparation makers?

WV: I would like to say that this is a really important endeavor, this interview project. Already it has yielded some tremendous interviews and there are many more preparation makers out there that have wisdom to share. I would encourage anybody reading this to consider making a donation toward the project to further it along. It is these sorts of interviews that I feel will accelerate the education of new preparation makers and refine the process of experienced preparation makers. It is going to be through us all working together that we forge our way into the future and help heal this planet.

BW: I was especially taken with your view of how to make people aware that preparations are healing the earth, because so many people want to do something, but they have no way or idea how to help. Preparation making could be a way for people to heal the earth. I was really taken with that. Then to your comment about commercialization and the antidote is people making preparations in their region. I really agree with those suggestions as ways to go forward with this.

WV: Well, of course, there is that old adage, "think globally and act locally." There is a deep truth in that. And, of course, in biodynamics we are not just thinking globally but we are thinking universally. This planet is our home, and we have to learn to walk in a different way, in a healing way. I feel like the challenges that we have brought upon ourselves and the earth at this time are truly opportunities to develop our capacity as healers, and that there may be a larger reason or purpose for humanity going through this difficult stage that we are in. Perhaps we can come out the other side as more whole individuals and a whole humanity that recognizes the essential unity of life.

BW: Alright, so that kind of covers our questions. Wali is there anything else we need to talk about or want to say?

WV: I think we are good Brian.

BW: This has been really great interview Wali, so I appreciate that.

WV: I appreciate the opportunity.