

Journal of the foundation meeting of the thematic and professional group herbes and medicinal plants at the Agriculture conference, Goetheanum, 2 and 3 of Feb. 2017

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The idea of founding a professional group herbes and medicinal plants arose during the 2016 Agriculture conference. The aim of the group is the mutual perception of the different initiatives working in cultivation and processing of medicinal plants and to start networking. Further, exchange of experience and research questions shall be granted.

The foundation meeting in early February 2017 was appreciated by about 70 participants from the French, English and German language areas. Projects, experiences, demands and research questions were presented. The opening talk of Jean-Michel Florin, co-leader of the section for agriculture, referred to the important research on the relation between the human being and medical plants and preparation plants, respectively. He pointed out the future need of an intensified international collaboration concerning the growing demands for high quality medicinal plants.

During plenum talks, general questions like the handling of demeter-guidelines or the marketing of medical herbs were discussed. On the other hand numerous special research questions popped up for attention in future meetings: Differences of medical plants on different continents, differences in quality between wild harvested and cultivated herbs, what does it mean to cultivate plants according to their being?, does growing under glass or in open field have an impact on the substances of content, and first of all: What does a plant make to be applicable for healing?

Bernhard Ehrmann, head of the WALA-Garden at Bad Boll, Germany, was concerned with Rudolf Steiner's hint about a non-organic kind of manure for medical plants, different from the one for vegetables. The question is: How do I fertilize medical plants? What special kind of soil-fertility and -conditions is appropriate to go along with transforming it from a wild into a cultivated plant? Which special roles play the biodynamic preparations, ashing and metallic manure? Michael Straub, head of the Weleda-Garden at Schwäbisch-Gmünd (Germany), reported about important experiences with the application of vegetable metal to particular medical plants (e.g. gold to Saint John's wort).

During the second meeting on February third, the group accepted the challenge to relate the physiological properties of a plant to its Gestalt, in a collective thematic work with Torsten Arnken of the Natural Science Section. Two samples of wood (apple and plum tree) were tasted without initially knowing their identity. The inner observation of the two quite different tastes were transformed into colored sketches which were interpreted as a kind of imagination of the cosmic impact of Jupiter (apple tree) and Saturn (plum tree). It was a sample to adumbrate a path of transforming sensory perceptions into a perception free of conceptual anticipation.

As a first collective activity together with HORTUS OFFICINARUM, association for biodynamic seeds of medicinal plants, a

visit of the herb and medical plant garden at Ekkarthof (Lake Constance, Switzerland) is planned on June 10th 2017

(Find details: <http://www.hortus-officinarum.ch/aktuelles/index.php>)

According to the subject of the upcoming agricultural conference at the Goetheanum, the meeting of the thematic group in February 2018 will likely deal with two or three of the biodynamic preparation's plants.

It is planned to edit a Newsletter in German, French and English twice a year (can be ordered here: info@odilienzeit.ch). The French translation has been taken over by a member of the group. To translate the German version into English, we are still looking for a volunteer!

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