

## CHALLENGING TIMES AND THE ROLE OF BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is in the news. We are seeing the effects of our current farming methods on the health of our environment, on human health and on the global economy. Modern industrial agriculture practices present serious challenges to the future sustainability of life on our earth.

As society attempts to cope with the turbulence caused by our industrial approach to agriculture, the biodynamic idea of the farm as a whole, self sustaining, living organism is one out of many concepts that can help bring a timely solution to contemporary challenges and can help to bring renewing forces to community life.

During this winter intensive The Nature Institute and the Hawthorne Valley Farm Learning Center will offer two complementary weeks of instruction to those seeking a fuller understanding of biodynamic agriculture. The first week will offer



participants a way to deepen their own observations in relation to the world of plants and to practice flexibility of thinking as a means of becoming more perceptive land workers. The second week will focus on concepts and practices more specifically related to biodynamic agriculture.

February 14 to 19, 2010

### *Cultivating Perception and Flexible Thinking*

At The Nature Institute

Can we learn to perceive and understand nature in more vital and truly ecological ways? When we enliven our perceptions and enhance our ability to form more dynamic and holistic pictures of nature's creatures and processes, the life of nature can become ever more embodied in what we perceive, think, and do. To stimulate this transformation of our capacities, we will carry out exercises in flexible thinking and careful observation. We engage in phenomenological explorations of the qualities of the plant, which lies at the heart of all agricultural endeavors.



#### ***Morning Seminars (9 am to 12:30 pm):***

Projective geometry—exercises in flexible thinking  
The plant—metamorphosis; plant growth forms in different environmental conditions and in relation to climate and seasons

#### ***Afternoon Seminar (2 to 3:30 pm):***

Observation exercises related to the plant study

#### ***Evening Seminar/Observation Session (7 to 8:30 pm):***

Astronomy—finding orientation in the night sky

This course will be led by Craig Holdrege and Henrike Holdrege; for more information about the work of The Nature Institute, visit [www.natureinstitute.org](http://www.natureinstitute.org)

February 21 to 26, 2010

### *The Theory and Practice of Biodynamic Agriculture*

At the Hawthorne Valley Farm  
Learning Center

Biodynamic agriculture is an attempt to bring a macroscopic perspective to practical agriculture. This perspective includes both the physical and non-physical aspects of the macrocosm and of the earthly kingdoms of nature. In this sense it is truly a holistic approach to agriculture.

In this second week we will explore the spiritual constitution of the kingdoms of nature; the genesis and management of soils; the diversity of plant growth forms in relation to soil, climate and cosmos; the wild relatives of our cultivated plants and weeds; ecological methods of weed management; principles of crop rotation; planting to support beneficial insects; managing orchards, perennial crops; understanding and using planting calendars; and more.

Morning seminars will run from 9 am to 12:30 pm; afternoon seminars from 1:30 to 5 pm. There will be a lecture on Rudolf Steiner's biography on one evening and a dance band on another.

#### **Presenters include:**

Jean-Paul Courtens,  
Malcolm Gardner,  
Walter Goldstein,  
Claudia Knab-Vispo,  
Eric Nordell (on  
DVD and by phone),  
Rachel Schneider,  
Miranda Smith,  
Sherry Wildfeuer and Hugh Williams.



## Fees

Sliding scale: \$250 to \$420 for each week; or \$450 to \$800 for both weeks.

Fees cover materials, morning snack and a mid-day meal at Hawthorne Valley Farm.

Fees for this intensive have been subsidized by a generous grant from a foundation that wishes to remain anonymous.

## Registration

**Registration Deadline:  
January 20, 2010**

**For further information, or to  
receive a registration form  
please contact:**

Hawthorne Valley Farm  
Learning Center  
327 Route 21C  
Ghent, New York 12075  
Attention: Caroline Smialek

Phone  
518-672-7500 x 105

Email  
caroline@hawthornevalleyfarm.org

**Knowing the  
relationship of  
plants to their  
environment  
is key to all  
agricultural  
endeavor**



# Plants, Earth and Cosmos

**BIODYNAMIC  
WINTER INTENSIVE 2010**

For farmers, gardeners, and others  
seeking a working relation to the land

## Week One

February 14-19 at  
The Nature Institute

*Cultivating Perception and  
Flexible Thinking*

## Week Two

February 21-26 at the  
Hawthorne Valley Farm  
Learning Center

*The Theory and Practice of  
Biodynamic Farming*

