

An Introduction to Homeopathy for Growers

Homeopathy has been used as a holistic health system for people for over 200 years and is currently used by an estimated 500 million people worldwide. Already established as an effective intervention for animals, it is becoming an exciting new option in horticulture, viticulture and growing.

In Brazil where 115,000 farmers and agronomists have been taught to use homeopathy for their farms and crops, they take a holistic approach called Integrative Homeopathy. This means they collect and evaluate symptoms from the whole farm, including the farmer, to look for remedies or ideally a single remedy that can address the major symptoms of ill health.

Advantages of using homeopathy in agriculture

Homeopathy has many advantages for agriculture: it leaves no residue, is not toxic, does not induce resistance, can improve the soil and is fast acting, cheap and easy to administer. It can be used to create healthier, higher quality and value crops with improved vitality, reduced susceptibility to pests and disease.

How to choose a remedy to boost plant health:

In emergencies and simple cases:

If a crop has an isolated symptom such as plant damage from handling/weather a simple method of looking up the symptom in a basic homeopathic therapeutics book will give you a good result. A plant suffering from injury or bruising will improve with arnica, for example, just as a person or animal.

Using homeopathy to boost and balance nutritional problems

In general where there is an observed plant deficiency in a mineral it can be helpful to treat the plant with that same mineral in homeopathic form. For example Calc carb 6x can help plants become healthier in lime-deficient soils.

Nosodes

Common pests such as slugs have been/can be made into homeopathic remedies to make the plants less attractive to the pest. An example is *Helix tosta* 6x which is a remedy made from the toasted shell of a snail, which, in practice if sprayed on a plant before it is attacked and on the soil around it, has demonstrated effectiveness for 3 months.

Companion plants

Basil made into a homeopathic remedy helps improve the resilience, health and taste of tomatoes just as the companion plant does.

Integrative Homeopathic Treatment for a farm (equivalent to Constitutional Homeopathic Treatment for a person). If the whole farm has health issues, then homeopathy offers a way to rebalance the entire farm including the soil, the plants, the animals and people that live there. It is important to collect all the symptoms, decide which are most important and look up the symptoms using a Homeopathic Repertory (plant or human) and check your choice by reading the *Materia Medica*.

Potency and dosag

In general lower potencies up to 30c are used in agriculture but the plants will respond to the remedy whatever the potency. Apply once, wait for a week and reapply if there has been improvement but not enough. You are looking for signs of an improvement in vitality as this will normally indicate that the plant will recover.

Making up remedies and how to apply them

For smaller volumes, up to 30 litres,

Use 6-8 pillules of a remedy bought from a homeopathic pharmacy and add them to a plastic/glass container with 150ml water, shake vigorously and add this to up to 30 litres of water.

For larger volumes agronomists often use 5ml of the medicating potency (also obtained from a homeopathic pharmacy) in 1 litre of water in a plastic container, stir or shake vigorously. Add this to 5 litres of water in plastic container, (stir again) then this can be added to larger volumes of water as necessary up to 100x the volume (stir again as much as possible).

The water used should be rainwater or spring water where possible. Homeopathy should be applied using a clean sprayer that has not been used for other products.

Sprayers used for homeopathic preparations should be washed with vinegar and surfactant and dried in the sun so there is no chance of water carrying over any previous remedy within the sprayer.

Most common remedies for common problems with farm crops, in reality there are many options

Remedy	Symptoms
Aconitum	Worse after cold, dry northerly winds or severe frost or sudden heat after cold weather (shock) use 200c on roots on frost free days.
Arnica	In cases of stress such as when transplanting, thinning, pruning, water deficiency and sudden damage by insects/ frosts/ harvests
Belladonna	Too many ants (spray remedy on leaves, plants and pathways). Sunburn or plants not well since drought or high temperatures
Calc carb	Plants unresponsive to good fertility, chlorosis, seedlings sensitive to cold, delay in new root growth, slow plant development and leaf yellowing, where slow composting is required, e.g. where there is a high C/ N ratio
Calendula	Skin or bark splits and damage
Carbo veg	When there is general weakness, e.g. after insect attack, defoliation, water deficiency, close spacing, flower loss, death of buds, plants in compacted soils, aging plants
Dulcamara	Waterlogging, cold and wet roots
Ignatia	Neglected, puny and sensitive plants
Nux vomica	Plants and soils polluted by pesticides
Silica	Strengthens weak plants, use 200c but only once at start of season or after a pest infection
Staphisagria	Attack of aphids, nematodes or mites, plants in excess shade, grafted plants flea infestations. Pruning injuries.
Sulphur	Excess transpiration, plants with high fertility needs. Disturbed water balance. NB the remedy induces detoxification in plants, soils.
Thuja	Waterlogging for plant that is sensitive to cold and damp, wart like growths