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Similicure

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[Submitted Paper]

Ben: In the fall of 1986 I was visiting a friend's house in Switzerland. They had some problems with their fruit trees, and since the family had fared well with homoeopathic treatments, the mother argued, why not the fruit trees? She lead me around the back to where pear and apple trees were growing along on arched trellis. The leaves had dark red rings erupting and had been very demanding of water. This started at the end of the line and had spread through the trees very quickly. I thought that in a human these would be close to the symptoms of the remedy Belladonna and that is what I gave them. Just before Spring, I gave them another dose. The trees recovered, all but the first, and there has been no sign of rust ever since.

Her husband farmed grain on a nearby plot, and the summer of "87 brought him mildew, due partly to excessive rain. A plant sample showed a big lack of Magnesium, so that is what I gave, homoeopathically of course. Well that was a complete disaster and he lost the whole lot. I had not taken into account the synergistic effects of other minerals and on reflection I think Kali Phos would have worked wonders. My other mistake was not being there to antidote the remedy once it got obviously bad.

Later in England I tried a remedy made out of Aphids, and perhaps not surprisingly had good results. The aphids went away; but more on that later.

From these examples we can see a two things about homoeopathic principles:

1. That something which apparently causes a problem, is often also the cure.
2. That if you don't look at the whole picture, you can stuff up badly. This is the same moral tale lived out today all through our environment.

Since then I've learned a lot, experimented much more, and I've come to a certain understanding about the fundamental similarities of plants and humans. These days I prefer to treat plants, especially as so many humans suffer disease through the contaminants and deficiencies in the food they eat: often treating people is like mopping the floor with the bath still overflowing.

Eric: When I first met Ben I was working as a herbalist. For those of you who know your natural therapies you'll know that traditional herbal medicine is a sort of antithesis of homoeopathy. By then though I knew enough about homoeopathy to respect its effectiveness. Having worked with herbs the notion of plants behaving much like humans immediately made sense to me. Then I saw for myself some remarkable things. I saw completely degraded turf begin to re-knit overnight after a dose of Silica, and dormant seeds begin to sprout out of season.

After an application of Helix T. (toasted snail) the introduced species of snail all left my garden. They were gone for 3 months. Then I understood the enormous potential that lies in homoeopathy.

Fruit farmers can spend $30 a hectare 10 or 12 times a year in poisons that do little but weaken the trees and make them more attractive to nature's little helpers, the bugs and diseases.

Entire crops are lost to the increasingly epidemic numbers of insects on conventional farms, and those who try to regenerate the bush, of which so much has already gone, face seemingly insurmountable problems. For a moment there, I was feeling like a great moment in the making of history. Well, I retain some of that enthusiasm but the important thing right now is to get this knowledge out to those who can use it the most — time is of the essence, and that's why we're here.

Our philosophy is to assist nature, by means similar to her own, to regain a productive balance. I won't waste time by defining all this too closely. Briefly, though, its important to understand that this is, effectively, medicine. When we spray a plot for snails or aphids or parrots it is the plant, not the pest, that is affected. It takes up the remedy and through forces that will probably never be scientifically proven, makes itself seemingly unpalatable to those pests. Of course, excessive pest infestation does not happen just by chance. It is a sign, or symptom of some other more fundamental problem in the immediate environment.

Lets cut to the chase and tell you what we can do. I must stress that we still have a lot of work to do in accurately defining the totality of our remedies effects, but here is the bones of what we know so far.

For a moment lets consider the soil as the foundation of a plants environment. Soil, as we all know by now, is a very complex thing. From our point of view a soil is an organism, and can be treated as such. Our remedies have a distinctly more profound effect on a real, alive 'organic' soil than on that found on most farms nowadays. It is because the soil organisms take up the remedies in the same way as the plants, and are similarly affected. Even on a 'chemical' farm however the presence of a minute number of microbes and soil water are enough for us to consider the soil an organism.

Many plant growth problems have been ascribed to mineral deficiencies or excesses, and the answer is rarely to merely add the element in question to the plants' water. You West Australians will be aware that Iron is present in most of our soils in very high background quantities but that most of it is 'locked up'. Simply put, Similicure soil remedies, properly chosen, trigger the soil to unlock the molecules in question

and make them available to plants, and to whatever soil flora and fauna are present; helping to perpetuate the soil nutrient cycle.

Ben: We've also tried to concentrate on certain problem pests and diseases in modern agriculture. We understand that what these farmers are doing is by no means sustainable, and that without changing their ways problems like this will continue to recur; but in the meantime farmers need food too and ultimately it will be agriculturalists who will lead the way to a new understanding of our environment. When a broadscale grain farmer sees the part of his crop treated by us miraculously free of its usual smut problem, the first reaction is " how does it work? What's in this stuff?" Most people find it hard to swallow that it is mostly distilled water and less than one part in 10,000,000 active substance – and never more than 500ml per hectare. But that's what it is. There is no strength to a homoeopathic preparation other than what is known as potency. Broadly speaking, this refers to the number of times the substance has been ground, diluted and shaken. Many of you will no doubt be familiar with a similar concept of potentisation from Biodynamics, in their 500 and 501 sprays. We won't go into the differences here.

OK, I know some of this is a bit tedious but bear with us. There are a class of remedies called nosodes, and this means the remedies are made from a physical manifestation of the disease in question. A human example is the remedy made from the scabies vesicle. A plant example is a remedy made from a particular mould, fungus or insect pest. Of course, not all pests are the same. When we make a pest remedy, many things have to be taken into account. How generic will the remedy be with subspecies? Are there other beneficial species that will be adversely affected? How long will the plant remain resistant to this pest? Will the plant develop a resistance to the remedy?

We don't always get all the answers, but there seems to be a general principle at work here. Namely, that nature moves always towards what is appropriate. In the case of a mild infestation of, say, scale the remedy is not quite entirely effective. It's as if nature requires a few to be left around. The remedies are much more dramatic as the infestation gets worse, but do not have as long a duration of effect. When you get up to massive invasion, I suspect that the remedies will trail off in effectiveness steeply; we presume nature has a strong will in these regards, and not having experienced much biblical pestilence of late, we really don't know for sure. Resistance to the remedy is so far unseen, and as in most cases we will only ever treat a plant twice or maybe three times; thus disproving the remedy for this case or curing the problem, we don't expect it ever to be an issue.

Some of the pests we've made successful remedies for so far include; snails & slugs, thrip, cabbage whitefly, citrus leafminer, aphids, fruit & vinegar fly, scale, procession moth, African and Tasmanian black beetles, couch fly ,...well the list goes on. A note, though, about aphids: They have the odd tendency to take up the energetics and to an extent the chemical properties of the plant on which they feed. This effectively multiplies the possible varieties of aphid by the number of plants in the world. Still, the aphid remedy works more than half the time.

This brings us to diseases. They are much more complex, as a disease will have more of a 'character' than pest infestation. We don't have enough time to go into it in detail,

but diseases we've treated with good result so far include; rusts and blights, ergot, smut, downy mildew, blue mould, anthracnose and many others. The one we've really got hopes for is phytophthera, or rather, the collection of occurrences we call dieback. Many diseases are equally well treated by addressing the soil directly. This makes very common sense where there is much salt present, or a great imbalance of elements available.

Eric: I want to speak for a minute about Silica. As an element, it comprises most of both the earth's crust, and the material of plants. We got the idea that here on WA's mostly sandy soils we might consider Silica itself a 'problem'. We've used it in many situations with some very interesting results. In some ways it could be compared to the Biodynamic 501 spray, but it's not. It can best be described as bringing a cool light into the soil, and magnetically unlocking other nutrients 'hidden' by the Silica, thus also dispelling much of the water-repelling charge that builds up. It also has applications with fungal root and collar diseases, and can improve germination rates of most seeds in terms of time and number of survivors. You do have to be careful though, and we can't stress this too much. This is powerful stuff, and if you don't learn from our mistakes you'll have to learn from your own. If you use silica more than once in a growing season on a plant, it very likely will flower prematurely, or not at all, and will not likely set seed or fruit. In broadscale agriculture this may prove very useful for weed control. Enough of Silica and elemental imbalance. Where to from here?

First let's bring you up to speed on what we're doing right now. Well right now we're here talking to you and what we really want is for you to talk to us too. We're in expansion mode, as they say, putting out feelers and trying all sorts of things at once. We're treating a few farms locally, smaller suburban plots, and planning a project with a company that rehabilitates mine sites. We are also working on ways to decontaminate soils (indeed the environment at large) of various pollutants and radioactive waste products. We're donating our services to the next Greening of the Goldfields project, and the rehabilitation of Rottnest Island. I'm not shy about this – we need to make some money so that we can continue. That's why we are already selling those remedies we are sure of, complete with appropriate instruction. By this stage you can all draw your own conclusions about the sort of opposition we can expect, and from whom, but once we've got a few more runs on the board we'll be harder to stop.

One way to make sure we don't get buried by the mob like so many other good ideas have is for you all to go back to your friends and colleagues and talk about it. Our next big step will be to publish our findings so far, and start teaching others how to diagnose and treat plants safely and effectively.

Ben: To conclude, then. I strongly urge all those of you who've been interested to come and talk to Eric or myself during this weekend. We need your feedback and inspirations to improve our ability and knowledge. Thank you all for listening well.

Similicure is a company specialising in the homoeopathic treatment of plants and soils. They offer professional assistance in diagnosis and management of farm and garden problems, land degradation and rehabilitation. Similicure also produce a large range

of remedies for plant diseases, animal pest infestation, soil imbalances and other plant growth problems. All their products are natural, non-toxic, and simple to use.

Ben Rozendal was born in 1946 in the Netherlands. He worked throughout Europe on tree nurseries, organic dairy farms and in other agricultural areas until 1980 when he moved to India and studied classical homoeopathy. He has been treating humans since then and began experimenting with treatment of plants around 1986. Ben moved to Australia in 1991, continuing work as a homoeopath and founding Similicure.

Eric O'Gorman was born in Sydney, Australia in 1969. He has worked on various farms in the south west of WA and has studied in Environmental Management, Permaculture, Tree Surgery and Herbal Medicine. He met Ben in 1994 and they together devised the system that is the core of Similicure.