



Stinging Nettle Project - Calendar of Steps and Methods

CALENDAR OF STEPS/METHODS

Stinging Nettle Research Time and Task Table

First, thank you all for coming to La Paix to participate in our joint Research Project on the efficacy of stinging nettle as a fertilizer. If our research proves that stinging nettle can be used by farmers as a reliable fertilizer, we can then apply for further research grants

[Stinging Nettle Research Journal Feb/March April](#) [Project Timelines and Tasks](#)

to further substantiate our experiment. Myra Bonhage-Hale, Steward La Paix Herb Farm April 3, 2011.

revised April 3, 2011 by group consensus
scroll down for individual farmer's progress

[February, March Journal](#) [April Journal](#) [May Journal](#) [June Journal](#)
[Calendar of Steps & Methods](#)
[July Journal](#) [August Journal](#) [September Journal](#)

Step:	Date	Technique	Document
Step 1. Seed tomatoes April – April 30th tend and water	April – document date	Plant seeds under grow lights using organic potting soil if possible. (Premium Organic Compost McGraw and Gypsum from Sevens Springs Farm www.7springsfarm.com or 800-540-8181 preferred) Consult Journal for more information: http://www.lapaixherbfarmproducts.com/stingingnettleprojectjournal.htm	Begin your journal. Email to lapaix@frontier.com For web page Photo if possible <i>Please email each task as done for web page documentation.</i>
Step 2. Harvest your Stinging nettle	1, Early April or when 1-2 ft high 2. 3rd & 4th week of April.	1. Harvest spring stinging nettle wearing gloves and long sleeves. Harvest or obtain first cut Stinging nettle, (as much as possible) dry about 1 oz. to send to Dr. Wickline (see address below) Take half of your harvest and dry. Call Myra (304-269-7681) or email at lapaix@frontier.com asap for appointment asap (within a day or two of harvest) to bring other half fresh for distillation. This will be your hydrosol supply for the season. Please note La Paix will be closed on April 15th and 16th due to attendance at Sustainable Fair in Elkins. 2. Send sample of dried nettle and your commercial organic fertilizer to Dr. Richard Wickline, WV Dept. of Agriculture for analysis. Richard D. Wickline Chemist Office: 304-558-2208, Ext. 4105 rwickline@ag.state.wv.us Call first, ask for mailing address and how to mail.	Journal Email to Myra Photos Journal result>Email lapaix@frontier.com
Step 3. Pot and Label tomatoes in larger pots if indicated	April 25 On or about – just document dates.	Select 40 of the hardiest seedlings and pot in 4 – 6 inch pots. Continue under grow light. Water as needed. FYI: You will be putting 9 tomatoes in 4 separate rows. Rows will be about 3 feet apart. In one row, the tomatoes will be treated with hydrosol, in another, no treatment, the 3rd row will be compost tea (formula to follow using your dried stinging nettle), and the 4th a commercial, hopefully organic fertilizer. Your use of method in rows may vary – that's fine.	Journal Photos Email to lapaix@frontier.com
Step 4. Harden off tomatoes	May 1st	Move potted tomatoes to greenhouse or outside bench in sun (which can be covered if weather turns frosty) to harden off.	Journal Photos Email to lapaix@frontier.com
Step 5.	April 18 to May 15	Send hydrosol sample to Dr. Wickline for analysis	Journal Photos email.
Step 6.	April 18 to May 1	1. Select 30 by 30 foot area on farm. Till or prepare ground as needed. 2. Take soil sample and send for analysis: Get kit from your local Extension office, follow directions and mail to WVU Extension Lab. Two copies of the analysis will be produced, one will go to the Extension office and the other to you. Email results to Myra. Thanks. 3. Make four (4) raised bed rows each 3 feet wide with 5 feet between beds. Rows will be 25 feet long each. Label row clearly on which method you are using in it. 4. If deer are a problem surround with fencing to keep them out. Note: try to plant on level ground for best research results.	Journal Photos email lapaix@frontier.com
Optional: Prepare new area for research	May – June 1 month after application	1. Select one new area on farm. 10 x 10 feet 2. Apply stinging nettle tea undiluted to 1/2 the area; hand weed the rest. c.. Take count of # of weeds and identify type in each research plot 1 month after application of compost tea	Journal Photo Email lapaix@frontier.com
7. Prepare compost tea & Hydrosol mixtures. 8. Stinging Nettle Tea:	May 1 Make 14 days before tomatoes are planted	1. Stinging Nettle Tea: To make the liquid tea, first gather some water tight containers- anything from buckets to barrels depending on what's available and how many nettles you have access to. <i>Rather than using fresh nettle leaves, you will be using the dried nettle leaves.</i> This is from www.frenchgardening.com : "Take 10 oz. dried leaves and place them in 2.5 gal. of water. Cover container partially for a week and 1/2 to two weeks." During this time, a sort of fermentation will take place and liquid will froth. When this has died down, just strain off the remaining stems and leaves – you could use a soil sieve on top of the bucket and just tip the mixture in. And there you have it – a bucket of free, natural concentrated plant food. Throw the strained out solids on the compost pile. To use this liquid, dilute one part to ten parts of water. From 101 Uses for Stinging Nettle by Piers Warren available from Amazon.com. Spray on each tomato plant in the row you have dedicated to Stinging Nettle Tea application. Using hand held sprayer (see sample – want translucent container so you can mark 10 oz. On outside of container) Spray each plant to cover each leaf (more tea will be used as tomatoes grow). 1. For hydrosol of stinging nettle: Take 2 oz. of hydrosol, dilute with 3 qts. Water (48 oz.) (20 to 1 concentration) Spray on tomato plants in Hydrosol Row to cover each leaf. If you want to do a 5 th row (I will be) use a concentration of 10 to 1 also. 2. Pump Spray Plastic Bottle bought from Amazon.com for \$17.49. 2 qt. capacity – measured on outside with ounces or liters – suitable for this project. In order to Do all applications at same time, you might have to wait to start treating your plants until the compost tea is ready. Be sure and rinse out your sprayer between various applications.	Journal Photos Email lapaix@frontier.com
8. Plant tomatoes in research rows and apply first treatments with research materials.	May 15th	1. Select 9 plants for each row from the 40 plants you have potted making sure plants are similar in size and leaf #. Use your home grown compost in the bottom of each hole before planting. It is better to take a few leaves off each tomato plant before you put it in soil, as more roots will grow from each stem that way. 2. Plant 9 selected plants in each row. 3. Using hand held sprayer, apply diluted stinging nettle tea to one row; diluted hydrosol to the second row. To 3rd row, commercial organic fertilizer as label stipulates and nothing to the 4th row (control). You may switch the rows around any way you like. Just be sure and label them. Note: To keep into account size of plants, just foliar spray to cover each leaf. 4. Begin taking daily notes on weather.	Journal Photos Email lapaix@frontier.com
9. Every 2 weeks (on or about) apply solutions as indicated in 8. above.	June 1st, June 14th, 28th, July 12th, 26th, Aug. 9th, 23rd, Sept. 7th, 21st, Oct. 4th.	1. Using hand held sprayer, apply diluted stinging nettle tea to one row; diluted hydrosol to the second row. To 3rd row, commercial organic fertilizer as label stipulates and nothing to the 4th row. Foliar spray each leaf in each plant. 1. As tomatoes mature, note date and count mature tomatoes in each row. Weigh each tomato and record in journal. Photo in basket or on blanket so differences can be seen. 2. We may be able to do a tissue analysis of each row of tomatoes – Alexandria Straight will let us know about this soon... This is particularly important as it will be done by an outside source for all our plants... If this is available, take 1 leaf from each plant in all four rows – labeling Row 1 Row 2 Row 3 Row 4 (9 leaves each row) in separate containers. Details will be posted on website journal, by email and as an addition to this Table.	Journal Photos Email to lapaix@frontier.com
1. Weed between plants as indicated. Water as needed.	June-October	1. Suggestion: pine needles or grass clippings between plants. Weed eat between rows. 2. Note watering date and amount in journal. Note climate – temperature and rainfall daily.	Journal Email to lapaix@frontier.com
1. Take soil sample	Oct.	Take soil sample each row. Send to: Using kit from local Extension office, mail to WVU Extension lab. Record results.	Journal Email to lapaix@frontier.com
12. Final Report	Oct. 30	Send any information not previously forwarded to Myra	Journal

Urtica dioica. Perennial weed.

as well as iron, nitrogen, and many trace minerals. Acts as an immunostimulant for plants.

A Action. Strongly stimulant to both microbial and plant growth, thus a compost activator as well as fertilizer. Insectifuge and sometimes insecticide against aphids, mites, and other pests.

Preparation. Use of the whole plant before flowering. Studies have shown that including the roots adds a fungicidal action to the extract. In fermented extract (the famous *purin d'ortie*), 2 lbs. of fresh plant in 2.5 gal. of water, fermented for a few days only. Dilute to 20% before using as soil drench or foliar feed. Use full strength as a natural herbicide (it kills with 'fertilizer burn because it is so rich).

The nettle reigns supreme among plants for fermentation in France. The fermented extract is sold commercially in garden centers, and clubs and associations of nettle fanatics exist throughout France. Needless to say perhaps, but **wear gloves when handling nettles. It's not for nothing they're called 'stinging.'**

- Research Participants; Myra Bonhage-Hale, La Paix Herb Farm, Lewis County, www.lapaixherbfarm.com**
- Eva Ristl and husband, Left Fork Farm, Roane Co.,**
- Alexandria Straight, Ronan Straight, Hans Straight, Bare Creek Farm, Ritchie Co.,**
- Robert & Busie Barbour, Thistlenook Farm, Upshur Co.,**
- Dean McIlvaine, Carmella Massara Twin Parks Farm, West Salem Ohio,**
- Bart and Andrea Lay. Hidden Hollow Farm, Mineral County, WV., Bio:** Bart and Andrea Lay are stewards of Hidden Hollow Farm, located in Mineral County, WV, and are growers of culinary and medicinal herbs and select heirloom vegetables. Andrea teaches classes and workshops on medicinal plants and herbs, and offers herb and plant identification walks. They use organic and sustainable growing methods, and their off-grid homestead uses solar panels for electricity. Their website is www.hiddenhollowfarmwv.com.
- Melissa Dennison & husband, Garden Treasures, Roane Co.,**
- Chef Dale Hawkins, Fish Hawk Acres, Upshur County.**

Step 1. Seed tomatoes

Myra Bonhage-Hale, La Paix Herb Farm, Lewis County: Type: Tappy's Heritage from Baker Seed Heritage: Back up Tomatoes: Cherokee Purple and Chocolate from saved seed. Seeded: March 9th under lights in house. (detailed info. on [March Journal](#) and [April Journal](#).) [Photos](#).

Bart and Andrea Lay, Hidden Hollow Farm, Mineral County: We will be growing Flame tomatoes, also known as Hillbilly, which is supposed to have originated in WV. We started our seeds (from Baker Creek Seeds <http://rareseeds.com/hillbilly-or-flame-tomato.html>) on 3/18/11 using Jeffrey organic seed starter mix, and the seeds germinated on 3/26/11.

Eva and Emil Ristl, Left Fork Farm, Roane County: Seeding Rutgers tomato.

Step 2. Harvest stinging nettle

Myra: Fresh stinging nettle harvested for two distillations 4-29-11. Too wet to harvest for drying – will try in May. Two more distillations May 3, 4th. Stinging nettle drying in shop on flats with de-humidifier on during day. For details see [Journal](#). [photos](#) and [May – photos](#)

Step 3. Repot and Harden off Tomatoes in Greenhouse

Myra Bonhage-Hale: Repotting completed: April 25th. In greenhouse April 21st through 25th.

Step 4. Harden off tomatoes

Myra: Hardening off tomatoes begun in open unheated greenhouse (weather is quite warm) April 21st –

Step 5. Send Hydrosol & fertilizer samples, dried stinging nettle sample to Dr. Wickline

Myra: Sent May 9th, rec'd May 10th testing begun. May 18th rec'd analysis. [See May journal](#)

Step 6. Choose 30x 40x area and till.

Myra: Area was increased to 35 x 45 feet to add an extra research bed of 20-1 hydrosol concentration. Tilling began mid April but due to almost continual soaking rains not completed until May 10th.

Send soil sample to WVU Extension

Myra: May 20th.

Step 7. Prepare compost tea and hydrosol mixtures

Myra: Stinging Nettle tea begun May 4th.

Step 8. Plant tomatoes in research rows

Myra: May 11th. Area fenced: May 11th.

Myra (helper Mike): Mulched all but first two tomatoes in each row with saved grass clippings. I planted 43 of the 45 tomato plants (see [May Journal](#) for details and photos)

Andrea: we put our tomatoes in the ground on May 22nd. Lots of nice rain after we did, and they are doing well.

Step 9. Every two weeks apply mixtures. Document

Myra: May 18th: Applied all four fertilizers to tomatoes in Rows 1-4. [See photos](#)

Step 10. Weed as Indicated Mulch – document