

# Overcoming plant disease in the Shumei Natural Agriculture system of cultivation

## Background

I have practised Shumei Natural Agriculture for 16 years.

The principle of Shumei Natural Agriculture is an overriding respect and concern for Nature. Nature can teach us everything.

Shumei Natural Agriculture does not use chemicals, pesticides, fertilisers or animal manures. It focuses on saving seeds from the crops grown. I produce about 40 varieties of vegetables and have succeeded in saving more than 80% of their seeds. Although many people worry about adding nutrients to the soil, we believe that soil has the ability constantly to enrich and revitalise itself. Therefore, I have not applied anything at all to the soil at my farm in Wiltshire for 9 years since I moved here and yet vegetables are growing very well year after year.

## Why is it that insects and diseases come to vegetables?

Mokichi Okada, the founder of Natural Agriculture, who lived in Japan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, found that if soil and seeds are contaminated by the addition of fertilisers, then insects and diseases would come to the plants and would purify them.

In my view, insects are not our enemies but are in fact our friends. After their work, plants become stronger and if you save the seeds from these plants, you will get purer seeds than before because seeds have 'memories' of the particular insects and diseases. Our own collected seeds are of course the children of the parent plants that overcame the diseases, and will consequently have inherent resistance in the future when grown out as plants themselves.

We think if soil and seeds are pure enough, plants become strong and have the power to prevent insects and diseases. Our soil and seeds get purer each successive year.

Let me share one of my experiences.



2 Disease

This year I planted 800 kales, which is in the 9th year of growing this kale variety on the same plot of land, a practice known as continuous cropping. In July they all suffered from a disease and their leaves started withering and turning yellow. A



1 Disease

week later, not only the disease but also insects came and started eating the kales. Some farmers said the kales would die. However I did not think so and I had a very positive feeling because I knew that this

disease and these insects came to purify the kales. I was sure that after this process, the kales would become stronger and purer. Some organic farmers might use organic spray, but I did not use it.



3 Insects

Instead I spoke to the kales and the soil, and to the disease and the insects. I said to the kales and soil, "Kales, thank you very much for growing, now please produce healthy kale leaves to heal people", and "Soil, please help the kales". Then I said to the disease and insects, "Disease, thank you very much for coming to purify the kales",

"Insects, thank you very much for coming, you are welcome here and please do stay as long as you like".

I spoke to them for one minute every day. Around two weeks later, the disease stopped and the insects disappeared. All the kales started producing new



4 Revive

beautiful leaves and became much stronger plants.

I really appreciated both the diseases and the insects coming and purifying the kales and the soil.

If you are interested in Natural Agriculture, please feel free to visit our organic stock free farm (veganic farm).

Natural Agriculture learning courses and open farm days take place every year. Please visit our website at <http://shumei.eu/yatesbury>.

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