

Sounds Crazy
By Bridget Haworth

Several experiments conducted in the 1950s concluded that harmonic sound waves affected the growth, flowering, fruiting and seed yields of plants. Dr. Singh, head of botany at Annamalai University in southern India studied this phenomenon. In one of his experiments he played music to six varieties of rice grown in the fields of seven villages. His results showed harvests ranging from 25 to 60 percent higher than the regional average.

Singh concluded that, "The musically stimulated plants are energized to synthesize greater quantities of food which leads to greater yields." These favourable results were also reproduced by other scientists, students and farmers through out North America in the 1950s. One Ontario farmer produced wheat crops 66 percent greater than average, in an inferior soil, by playing Bach on the violin.

A series of experiments in North America discovered that not all music or sound create increased yields. Some plants preferred classical rather than rock music and string rather than percussion instruments. In laboratory experiments with rock music the plants bent away from the speakers and many even died.

At the time, even an employee of the Canadian Department of Agriculture, Peter Belton, took this line of experimentation seriously. Belton used ultrasonic waves to control pests. Belton claimed that the man-made sounds emulated bat like noises. He compared plots that were subjected to ultrasonic waves and ones that were not. The sound exposed plots had a 60 percent reduction in moth larvae and the corn was three inches higher.

Why is it that the knowledge from these extraordinary experiments of the 1950s is not being put into practice today? We could be employing musicians to sing and play instead of buying chemical pesticides and fertilizers. We could be growing yummy food while having more fun. Perhaps regular barn dances could be used to grow bountiful crops while creating happy communities. But instead, this knowledge sits dormant in a few dusty books.

In fact this knowledge can be traced even further back in time. The Hopi, who live in what is now called Arizona, sang to their corn crops. This was a traditional way to look after one of their main staples. The Hopi must have had a motivation for this activity, otherwise why would it have been specifically mentioned in their history.

It sounds crazy, yet let us dream for a moment. Imagine hearing beautiful music drift over the happily growing fields or your garden plot. It is a romantic image. It changes the paradigm of man against nature and replaces it with a symbiotic relationship. The new paradigm is a relationship of harmony where plants feed us and we show our appreciation by singing for our supper.

