

# Peat: An Answer to Today's Stress-Related Illnesses

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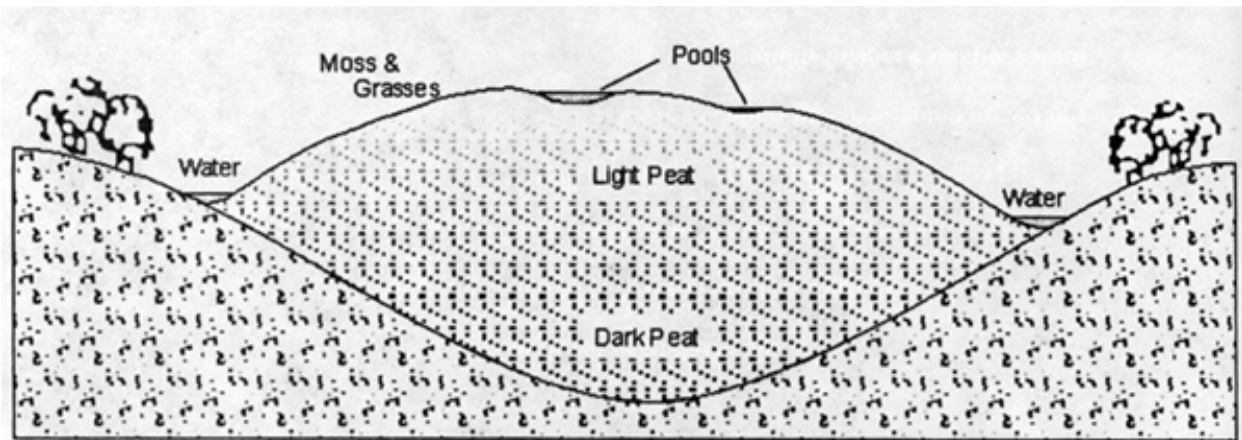
For ten years I have been carrying the question, "what is special about peat that garments are made from its fibers and extracts like *solum uliginosum* produced from its fluids?" During this time, while practicing as an anthroposophical nurse, I have observed *solum uliginosum* (moor extract) to be increasingly significant as a therapeutic remedy for many of today's illnesses and life stresses. People live life in the fast lane, families live far from friends and country, and children are caught between today's haste and constant change. Following a rhythmical body oiling (*einreibungen*) with *solum uliginosum*, people experience a sense of inner calm and equanimity accompanied by an improved sleeping rhythm. Vitality and joy in life is restored along with the awareness that one's physical boundary with the surrounding world is strengthened. Long held physical and social pains are relieved. Anecdotal evidence suggests a light layer of *solum uliginosum* on the back and or front two-three times a week or a light silk or wool singlet soaked in *solum uliginosum* is an additional support for today's environmental stresses.

Since visiting Camphill Village, a farming community for developmentally disabled adults, in Copake, New York, I have valued the peat scarf worn on the long plane trip back to New Zealand and when working on my computer.

Following is a discussion of peat bogs, where peat fiber and fluid are processed, leading on to the health aspects of peat products and *solum uliginosum*.

## **Raised Bogs and Peat**

Raised bogs are waterlogged mounds of partially decomposed plant materials, which have accumulated naturally over time. Dr. Rudolf Steiner stated mounds are especially effective at absorbing positive cosmic forces and rejecting disruptive forces. 1 Raised bogs are areas where predominately sphagnum moss (*sphagnum cymbifolium*) and cotton sedge grass (*eriophorum vaginatum*) grow on the watery decomposing vegetation underneath.



Over many decades of decay and regeneration of moss and grass, a spongy decomposing mass develops. As the raised bog increases in thickness and moisture content, peat develops underneath. Raised bogs are generally found in the cool far Northern latitudes where there is acidic matter, a slow oxidation occurs and partially decayed plant materials build up. Peat is plant material at the start of a process of carbonization leading to black peat and coal. For coal to form, the sunlight and warmth from plant life has been transformed, whilst for peat this process is arrested and there is a blocking and holding of warmth and cosmic forces. Plant life becomes suffocated and is unable to decay fully. 2,3

### **Health and Peat**

Dr. Rudolf Steiner, in the 1920s, gave indications that clothing and substances from peat could offer protection and healing to humanity in the future, especially in relation to environmental stress including electromagnetic radiation.4

Dr. Rudolf Hauschka, in the early 1940s, developed on these indications whilst studying the elemental beings or nature spirits involved in the plant kingdom. Normally when plants die in autumn, the digestive processes of the earth cause the plant life to form humus for future regeneration and the elemental beings are released into the surrounding cosmos. In a peat bog, the elementals remain connected and trapped with the partially decomposed plant substances for decades and even centuries. Each year's new growth partially dies and falls mummified on top of the previous layer. Years of accumulated plant matter results in the forming of peat.

The proper activity of the elementals is to care for the natural world until humans develop to the stage that they can creatively and responsibly carry this task. In the moors, the elementals are bound to the peat such that over time they become hostile and angry towards a positive evolution of the cosmos. A sense of this angry, somber nature is in the atmosphere of all moors due to these aberrant elemental beings.

Rudolf Steiner considered releasing these elementals as a task for humans today. Through the right biological care peat can be enlivened, the fiber spun for clothing and the fluids used medicinally, enabling people to be strengthened physically and protected from the destructive environmental changes in the future. What a release comes when these beings are liberated in the manufacture of peat products to protect and care for people. Dr. Hauschka says this is the reason peat helps people who suffer under chaotic environmental change. 5

## **Solum Uliginosum and Peat Products**

Peat products in themselves do not cure us; rather they can be used to form a protective layer around us, allowing our own life forces to sustain, strengthen and heal us.

Dr. Hauschka researched the therapeutic use of the fluid extracted during processing of the peat substance. It was known over thousands of years in England, Ireland and Europe that organic substances from the moors could be used therapeutically for many illnesses and ailments. These histories lead towards the development of solum uliginosum as both an oil and internal medicine for modern illnesses. Solum uliginosum was first developed in the late 1940s by Wala in Bad Boll, Germany, out of the research and experiments of Dr. Rudolf Hauschka. Peat fluid is collected and prepared over months to produce solum uliginosum. Initially the substance is stored in a dark incubating chamber and over seven days rhythmically exposed to sunrise and sunset. Then for a further two-three months it is stored, enabling the loss of the sulphurous odor. Today solum uliginosum oil is available from Wala in Bad Boll, Germany.

In Sweden peat is harvested using sustainable environmentally protected systems for alternative biofuel and horticultural use; it is the by-product in this process that is used for the peat products discussed. 6 The peat used is obtained from the light-colored peat near the surface of a peat bog and moor extract (such as solum uliginosum) is obtained as an aqueous solution in the separation/production process of the peat fibers. For thirty years, Johannes Moss has worked to manufacture peat products, developing a technical process that uses the peat scraps left over from peat harvested for gardening/energy production, thereby enabling fibers to be extracted, carded and spun with wool or silk. His factory is in Rydoebruk, a small villa in Sweden. 7 It is the fiber formed at this factory that is woven to make garments at Camphill in Copake, New York.

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