

Methods of Seed Regeneration – Summary Report

**According to Georg Wilhelm Schmidt with Armin Bechmann,
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Translated from the German original by Reinhard Rosch, March 2015

INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of the work of G.W. Schmidt in the field of seed regeneration. G.W. Schmidt has worked for many years on the development of methods for breeding seed material for cereal crops. His work builds on the research of his father, Martin Schmidt, which was done between the years 1945 and 1964. Martin Schmidt, in turn, received his inspiration from the "Lectures on Agriculture" (Landwirtschaftlicher Kurs) given by Rudolf Steiner.

G.W. Schmidt's strategy for generating cereal seed material is based on making targeted use of the etheric forces as outlined by Rudolf Steiner.

Anthroposophy posits that, for healthy growth, plants need not only the conventional media such as soil, light, water, nutrients and a favourable climate, but also some finer emanations, the so-called etheric formative forces. Steiner describes the four etheric forces, namely Life ether, Chemical ether, Light ether and Warmth ether; these closely relate to the four elements Earth, Water, Air and Fire.

The method of seed regeneration developed by G.W. Schmidt consists basically in guiding and directing the forces of the environment into the plant and then ensuring that their effect persists over the following plant generations. G.W. Schmidt's strategy aims to use the etheric formative forces for the regeneration of seed material so as to arrive at locally adapted seed varieties. In this process, he distinguishes four plant functions, which play an important role in plant breeding and which can be facilitated through the use of four different etheric forces. Etheric forces, as described by Rudolf Steiner, are also called formative forces. These forces work on the plant's basic properties, in particular mass generation (Life ether), structure and resistance (Light ether), reproduction (Chemical ether) and nutritional quality (Warmth ether).

G.W. Schmidt designed the seed regeneration process in such a way that the plants to be used for seed generation are cultivated in different environments so that the plants are exposed to correspondingly different formative forces, for instance by alternating "closer to winter" sowing with cultivation in the mountains and in low altitude locations.

Through this rigorously enforced variation of cultivation conditions, G.W. Schmidt claims to achieve an equally high variability in the resulting seed material. Once he has reached that stage of development, this highly variable seed material will then be cultivated in the ultimately destined locality. Plants best exhibiting the desired characteristics are next selected for the final seed production.