

DAILY BREAD

“Grain of Hope : Slice of Heaven”

TILLERING

“... is all about orienting the whole plant to the light.”

Wheat is a type of grass and therefore has a long, thin morphology. Tillering is all about orienting the whole plant to the light.

Each part contributes to this while respecting every other part's **Right to Light**. First, each rolled leaf (whorl) unrolls as it emerges to produce a leaf blade (lamina) flat enough to turn a face to the sun, but not so broad as to get in the way of others.

Second, each new leaf forms on the opposite side of the stem to the previous one, face-to-face but socially isolated. And third, the plant produces extra leafy stems (tillers) at the leaf-forming nodes all the way up the stem.

If water or nitrogen is lacking at the time when a new tiller is ready to unfurl, it will not grow. This represents a loss to the plant's capacity to photosynthesise, and ultimately a reduction in grain yield. Later in the year we'll be able to 'read' the wheat's watering regime by looking for missing tillers.



Wheat plant at the three-leaf stage, showing tillers forming from the base of the plant and from first leaf node.

Unfurl

When market bustle disappears, a courtyard can stretch and re-arrange itself round a container crowded with green life-thrusts.

Each one new-emerged from dark, but months away from its destiny of seeds unfurls in the light.

We humans watch from our peepholes of windows, peer out from our separate cells, as the drooped origami

of chestnut stiffens into layer on layer of outstretched green; as tight-clenched buds discover they are flowers.

We shrink away from land we tamed, concreted, colonised. Now goats career and browse through a Welsh town;

a port weighted with huge hulls begins to dart and shimmer with tiny fish. Opening everywhere are spaces of freedom.

Suddenly trapped in a human winter, in survival-struggle, self-conscious hands, pent steps, bombarded minds, we try to re-attune:

as our traffic-growl becomes a memory, sleep-drowned ears awake to wren and robin, blackbird, thrush chorusing a day's creation-song.

Deadened by centuries of being centre-stage, of doing-to, we step back. We let our earth-companions do for us

what we cannot do ourselves: unfurl with grace, flow into being, even as humankind is fighting for its breath.

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