



[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)

## **JOHN'S CORNER:**

### **NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS**

*by John Ferguson*

Over 23,000 Americans are killed each year by antibiotic resistant bacteria created by feeding antibiotics to chickens and beef at factory farms. Yet people still purchase junk food at the fast food restaurants like McDonalds' that buy from these factory farms. If people would not buy it, they would not use and sell it.

We all know that junk food is bad for us. What about junk food for plants? Last week when David Montgomery was speaking at the OHBA event in Houston he gave me this link on junk food for plants: <http://nautil.us/issue/34/adaptation/junk-food-is-bad-for-plants-too>

One of the reasons we garden is for health benefits. Misinformation continues to spread. Mega companies that own pharmaceutical companies are buying up websites like WebMD and Google based information sites so they can provide you with fake medical news that promote their products.

Many of us are familiar with the term "sick building syndrome". A gardening method called Vertical Gardens is becoming a very cost effective method of removing toxic chemicals from the air inside of buildings. These green walls (gardens) are also very good at creating indoor green space that reduces stress on workers whom get to see them.

There was a very interesting article in the Dr. Mercola newsletter a couple weeks ago titled "Can You Taste Pesticides in Your Food". In addition to the herbicide Round-Up in our bodies the CDC reports that the amount of organophosphate pesticides in our urine has increased to 75% of the American population and we wonder why we are so sick and have so many health problems. Fruits and vegetables are among the healthiest foods we can eat but they are often contaminated with pesticides, herbicides, and other toxic chemicals. Researchers at the University of Caen Normandy had wine tasters do a taste test for pesticides. In 85% of the cases the professional taste testers were able to recognize all the glasses of wines that had pesticides in them. Fifty seven percent (57%) of the taste testers could even identify the exact blend of pesticides.



[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)

A 40 year study published in the Agronomy Journal (March 2017) found that organic farming improved all aspects of the physical properties of the soil. They found that organic practices *increased cumulative water infiltration by 10 times* as compared to toxic chemical methods. Water stable soil aggregates increased by over 50%, bulk density of the soil was less, and the soil had more pore space.

Modern methods in gardening and agriculture use nature (biology) to correct problems we encounter in growing plants. This may be beneficial insects to microbes to treat and correct problems. One of the great educators of our region is Dr. Bob Randall whom sent me this link the other day. This is an interesting article on the growing use of predator birds in orchards to control unwanted guests:

[http://www.ehn.org/back-to-basics-tackling-farm-pests-with-predator-birds-2546940909.html?utm\\_source=EHN&utm\\_campaign=4d254659c9-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_03\\_25&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8573f35474-4d254659c9-99399949](http://www.ehn.org/back-to-basics-tackling-farm-pests-with-predator-birds-2546940909.html?utm_source=EHN&utm_campaign=4d254659c9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_03_25&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8573f35474-4d254659c9-99399949)

An article in the march Acres USA magazine, is on the University of California Extension Service developing robotic weeders to eliminate the need and expense of hand weeders. The weeders use tiny blades that pop out and dig up the weeds without damaging the crops. These robotic weeders use pattern recognition software to tell the difference between a weed and the crop.

A report by the EWG (Environmental Working Group) has found that the drinking water for more that 170 million Americans (all 50 states) contains radioactive elements. Radium was the most common element found in the tap water. The levels were low, however we are exposed to other sources of radioactive elements and the combination add up to a much higher risk. Many of the dyed or ashen mulches use coal ash (which contains several radioactive elements) as the agent to make the mulch black, most artificial fertilizers use mined phosphorous that contains radioactive elements, etc. All these exposure levels add up to place one at an increased risk of cancer.