

JOHN'S CORNER:

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

by John Ferguson

Is Our Food Becoming Less Nutritious? A few weeks ago we discussed some of the issues (hybrid vegetables, mineral deficiency, etc.) of why our modern food supply is insufficient for health and long life. The short video below discusses another reason below. Research has found that the protein content of a common wildflower called Golden Rod has dropped over 30% in the last hundred years.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yl_K2Ata6XY&feature=youtu.be

Mike Papantonio and Author Carey Gillam discuss her new book (White Wash) which reveals how Monsanto viciously worked to cover-up the fact that their weed-killer could cause cancer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f72fEfBTq4o>

I finished an interesting book today called, "The GHOSTS of Evolution - Nonsensical Fruit, Missing Partners, and Other Ecological Anachronisms", By Connie Barlow, Basic Books, 2000, ISBN: 0-465-00552-7. This book is about how different plants evolved various strategies to disperse their seeds and why these strategies are no longer relevant. "It's a fascinating evolutionary whodunit, and the 'who' is us" Dallas Morning News. It does explain why some seeds are so hard to germinate as the required mechanisms no longer are alive.

A study published in the journal Scientific Advances (August 2018) has found that forest conservation in addition to the many benefits provided by trees have found that when children have access to a variety of forest products, including animal, plant, and mushroom species they have greatly improved diets. These forest products provide essential micronutrients that contribute greatly to nutrition. The researchers discovered that the effect is greater for poorer communities.



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Another study in the International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health 2018, has found that the risk of breast cancer is much lower in women whom lived near green spaces however this association is dependent on land use. If the green space is an conventional agricultural farm then the risks of cancer increase. Other studies have found that being in association with green space slows cognitive decline in older humans.

A French wine study has found that our food is so contaminated with pesticides that wine and culinary tasters can now taste them in the wine. Note: The professional tasters preferred organic wines 77% of the time!

The International journal Pedosphere 28(3): 463-477, 2018 had a study on citrus orchards and soil physical quality. They found under organic farming methods the soil had more plant available water holding capacity and saturated hydraulic conductivity. This means the soil could store more water than conventional methods yet drain off the excess very quickly. They also found that the organic soils had greater root penetration. The conventional strategies (toxic chemical methods) unequivocally led to soil degradation (loss of organic matter, soil compaction, reduced structural stability and higher water requirements).

The book above GHOSTS found that for some seeds to germinate, not only did the seeds have to pass through an animal's digestive system the animal had to also eat clay. A study in the International Journal of Antimicrobials by researchers at Arizona State University has found that some clays help prevent infections in wounds including some treatment resistant bacteria (many cultures have used clay mud for wound treatment for generations). I remember when I was a student up at SFA, I would often see poor people eating the red clay from road cuts. So in addition to helping seeds germinate, preventing toxins in some plants from harming mammals, providing needed minerals, clay may help prevent infections. So maybe I should stop complaining about gardening my black gumbo clay as I always feel better after working in some compost and giving a plant a new home.

How often do you notice the unsightly galls on trees that are caused by parasitic wasps. Researchers from Rice University (published in Current Biology, 2018) have found that a parasitic plant (*Cassytha filiformis*) that is known as the Love Vine grows into the galls and



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mummify the wasp larva growing there. This was the first discovery of a parasitic plant and a parasitic gall wasp sharing the same host plant.

I finished a book the other day titled "DEATH by REGULATION - How We Were Robbed of a Golden Age of Health and How We Can Reclaim It", Mary J. Ruwart, PhD, 2018, SunStar Press, ISBN: 978-0-9632336-1-5

Dr. Ruwart was a researcher for a pharmaceutical company for many years helping to develop new drugs. The book is about how corruption in the FDA prevents lifesaving medicines and nutritional therapies from reaching the American public leading to tens of thousands of premature deaths each year. Their abuse has led to drugs costing hundreds of times more than just a few years ago. From the book: "Every day we are discovering how important vitamins, minerals, and other natural substances are to optimal health. Most Americans are, however, are unaware of those discoveries, because manufacturers risk bankruptcy and criminal prosecution if they inform the public about some of the new findings. Most people are unaware that the recommended daily allowances (RDAs) of vitamins and minerals might prevent overt disease, but that much larger amounts of those nutrients are necessary for optimal health."

A couple years ago I wrote a book review by a group of medical doctors on the same issue.

FDA - Failure, Deception, Abuse - The Story of an Out-of-Control Government Agency and What It Means For Your Health , Life Extension Foundation, Praktikoa Books, 2010, ISBN: 978-1-60766-001-9

Growing our own food organically, on mineral rich soils, with heirloom varieties is becoming critical if we want good health.