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JOHN'S CORNER:

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

by John Ferguson

Numerous reports from all over the world have shown a tremendous decline in the amount of water in our rivers and streams worldwide. A study in the journal Nature (2020) has found that groundwater pumping to irrigate crops and landscapes are a major reason. Groundwater often contributes significantly to the amount of water flowing in our streams. As a society we are running out of inexpensive and reliable water sources. The cost of water will continue to rise as population grows and a greater demand is placed on our water supplies

For example, The San Jacinto River Authority is looking at the possibility of raising water rates another 14.5% in the near future for the Conroe-The Woodlands area.

Many municipalities are now offering rebates for homeowners to replace water thirsty plants with beautiful low water use native plants (City of San Antonio, The Woodlands Township, etc.). Minnesota is paying homeowners to remove their lawns and plant urban wildflower meadows that not only save water, they do not require mowing, edging, fertilizing, etc. and they provide food for our beautiful butterflies and other pollinators. These pollinators then feed our beloved birds.

For those in The Woodlands, you can go to the [Nature's Way Resources](http://www.natureswayresources.com) website for a list of plants in our nursery that qualify for the rebate.

For more information on the plant purchase rebate please see:

<https://woodlandswater.org/services/rebates>



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Experienced gardeners know that a high-quality compost is the single best amendment one can add to their lawns and gardens to have a beautiful landscape. A 19-year study by the University of California has found that a good compost also raises soil carbon not only on the top one foot of the soil but increased carbon to depths up to 2 meters (6.5 feet).

When they used both compost and cover crops, they found they could increase soil carbon content an average of 0.7 percent annually which is a lot! Journal Global Change Biology (2020)

As a gardener one of my favorite vegetable plants I love to grow is chilies of many types. I enjoy watching them grow and turn colors from green to black and finally a beautiful red. I love these peppers from stuffed bell peppers, to pickled jalapenos, to banana types great for grilling.

It has been known for years that the capsaicin in hot peppers has anti-cancer properties and many other health benefits.

A study published in the journal of the American College of Cardiology (2020) has found that people that eat chilies at least four times per week or more, were 40% less likely to die from a heart attack, 50% less likely to die from a stroke, and 23% less likely to die for any reason.

An important day is coming up on June 23 which is "National Soil Health Day." As pointed out in the organic agricultural magazine Acres, USA, its not national soil fertility day and that difference is critical. The word health is from the old English and old Norse words for something that remains whole, uninjured, sacred.

As they state It is a simple equation: "If we fail to take care of the soil, it will fail to take care of us."



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To celebrate, give your soil some love and apply some leaf mold compost today. If you want to find out more go to www.acresusa.com

I frequently talk about the link between minerals (elements) in the soil and our health. A study published in the journal PLoS Pathogens (August 2019) was on the importance of zinc (Zn). They found that zinc is an essential nutrient for our immune systems to fight off bacterial infections. Zinc has also been found to help the immune system fight viruses like the common cold.

Remember if you eat food with glyphosate (the active ingredient in the herbicide Round-Up) on or in them, (especially GMO products, your body cannot absorb zinc and other essential nutrients like magnesium from the food supply (assuming it is there in the first place).

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans is currently underway. The organization Beyond Pesticides has a short summary of the health benefits of eating organic foods and why they are important. Also included is a link to send a message to congress asking them to include organic foods in the guidelines.

The publication Natural News recently had a good article on health titled "Top 10 all-time immune system CRUSHERS" that United States corporations besieged upon its own people over the last century (that most Americans still suffer from today)"

- #1. [Cigarettes](#) (contain pesticides, formaldehyde, bleach, fiberglass)
- #2. [Canola oil](#) (causes massive weight gain)
- #3. GMOs (pesticides decimate gut flora)
- #4. [Fluoridated water](#) (drains nutrients from body)



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- #5. Vaccines and flu shots (lower immunity and spread disease through shedding)
- #6. [Anti-bacterial everything](#) (wipe out good bacteria and literally spread superbugs)
- #7. Antibiotics (build tolerance and enable viruses)
- #8. [Opioid prescription drugs](#) (most painkillers, addictive)
- #9. [Sodium benzoate](#) (cell-choking preservative that kills healthy cells)
- #10. Bleach (found in most white food – causes bladder and pancreatic cancer)