

JOHN'S CORNER:

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

by John Ferguson

I was listening to a lecture on mycorrhizal fungi the other day and the speaker had a few tips:

1. One ounce of spores will inoculate between 2,000-3,000 square feet of lawn or landscape bed.
2. Do not mix spores into compost tea during the brewing, only add at application time, as the brewing process will kill the spores.
3. Weeds do not like soils high in fungus levels in general, and especially those with mycorrhizal fungi.
4. Mycorrhizal fungi have the ability to absorb heavy metals from the soil and convert them to an inert form so plants cannot absorb them.

We have talked about the toxic chemicals in our municipal water supplies that kill microbes and hurt plants numerous times and why one needs to filter their water.

Eric D. sent in this tip: "I did some searching on Amazon and did run across this filter. It is a bit expensive (\$57.98), but might be helpful.

It is also available direct from the manufacturer for \$56.99.

The literature states that the Plus model will treat 45,000 gallons of water removes chlorine (99%), chloramine (87%), fluoride, mercury and other heavy metals, DDT, and some other pesticides.

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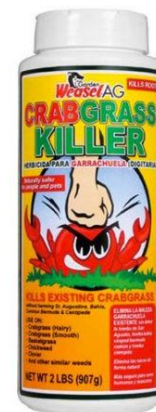
I often get asked about sustainable methods of weed control. One now has several options:

1. There is a new class of soap-like organic herbicides introduced in recent years based on fatty acids. The most common is from beef tallow. Basically, they smother and seal the pores so the plant cannot breathe, essentially suffocating them. The one I use around the house is a brand called Mirimichi Green which works well on a wide range of weeds. It is also available in 2.5-gallon jugs of concentrate that can be mixed into a pump-up sprayer that is far cheaper to use. San Jacinto Environmental is the distributor for our area.



2. Agricultural vinegar (20%) kills all plants and is very effective. In cool weather use full strength, in hot water it can be diluted down a little and still be effective. There are several brands on the market. The ones that contain molasses tend to work even better.

3. Made from cinnamon bark, AgraLawn Organic Crabgrass Killer is an all-natural herbicide used as a spot-treatment to control crabgrass, basket grass, chickweed, clover and other similar weeds. Safe for use around people, pets and the environment. It also has a nice cinnamon scent.



Applying this product with dew on the leaves or after wetting the grass helps the powder stick better. It does not kill St. Augustine or Bermuda lawns; however, it may yellow them for a few days.

I have found that a very effective tool to apply powdered products like crabgrass killer, diatomaceous earth, etc. is the Dustin Mizer shown below. Turning the crank generates the airflow that quickly propels the dust out in an even cloud and quickly covers large areas.



4) Corn gluten meal can be a very effective pre-emergent natural herbicide and also provide some fertilizer benefits due to its nitrogen content as it biodegrades. Corn gluten meal only works well within a certain range of soil temperatures in mainly cool soils.

5) Flame weeders are becoming very popular and available in many sizes. I have been using one at my house for many years. It uses a standard one-pound propane bottle that screws into the handle as shown below. It has an electric spark to ignite the propane. The intense heat kills small weeds in only 1-2 seconds, as the weed gets bigger it takes longer.

I use it on the cracks of my brick patio and on the joints on the side walk. Often during the winter when weeds like chickweed sprout everywhere, in the morning with dew on

the ground, I can just stick it into my flowerbed between the plants and zap them. I can clear a 100' x 6' bed in just a couple minutes.

From my camping days I have a device from Northern Tool that lets me refill my 1-pound canisters from my big 5-gallon propane tank. I purchased my hand-held flame weeder from them also. When one does their own refills, it is very inexpensive to use.

TIP: If one places the empty 1 -pound propane bottle in the freezer overnight and then refills it when it is still cold, it will allow you to transfer more liquid propane into the bottle so it lasts much longer.



The one I use looks like the picture above without the propane bottle (canister).



This advertising above came in as I was writing this article from another company that has a handheld torch that attaches to a large propane bottle. However, it does not have the electric start but a striker is included.

For larger areas there are weeders with a bigger head that connect directly to a 5-gallon propane cylinder as shown below. They can be placed on a dolly or just sat in the back of an RTV. Many places will refill the propane cylinders for you for a small fee.

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For large acreage there are tow behind units that work great for keeping fence-lines cleared. Just use after a light rain or early in the morning while there is still dew on the ground and high humidity to prevent wildfires.



6) It is well established that many of the species of plants we call weeds require soils that are bacteria dominated hence most weeds do not like soils high in fungus levels in general, and especially those with mycorrhizal fungi. Using a composted (aged) Native Mulch, if made properly, is very high in good fungi, thus is a natural deterrent for many weed species. This type of mulch is loved by earthworms and many of them eat weed seeds in addition to producing chemicals that suppresses the germination of some weed seeds. Additionally, this type mulch over time will turn even heavy clay into beautiful rich loam.



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7) The newest weed control method is called Weed Blasting. This is done using tiny pieces of abrasive organic grit. The grit is applied by using an air compressor that supplies the air pressure similar to how a sand blaster works. A study at the University of Illinois found they eliminated 69-87 percent of the weeds on a unit towed behind a tractor! The grit comes out at a high velocity and just shreds the plant it hits. Grit sources include walnut shells, granulated maize cob, soybean meal, greensand, etc. The smaller the seedling the more effective is the treatment.

Numerous times we have talked about the extremely poor quality of our food supply (one of the worst in the entire world), and why it is important for gardeners to grow as much food (fruits and vegetables) for their families as they can.

Mike Serant, the owner of San Jacinto Environmental and the makers of the great Microlife™ line of organic fertilizers shared this article from CNN (see link below) and his comments.

“A thoughtful article that looks at America’s food policy and why America has the most deaths due to covid of any country in the world. Poor diet, foods filled with fats/sugars/salts/pesticides/GMO virus/MSG/preservatives/dyes, the huge reliance on white flour to satisfy us all; as made America the most chronically ill nation in the world. In all categories, not just covid.

Advocating for Organics must be viewed as a necessity for human civilization to continue”.

From the article below:



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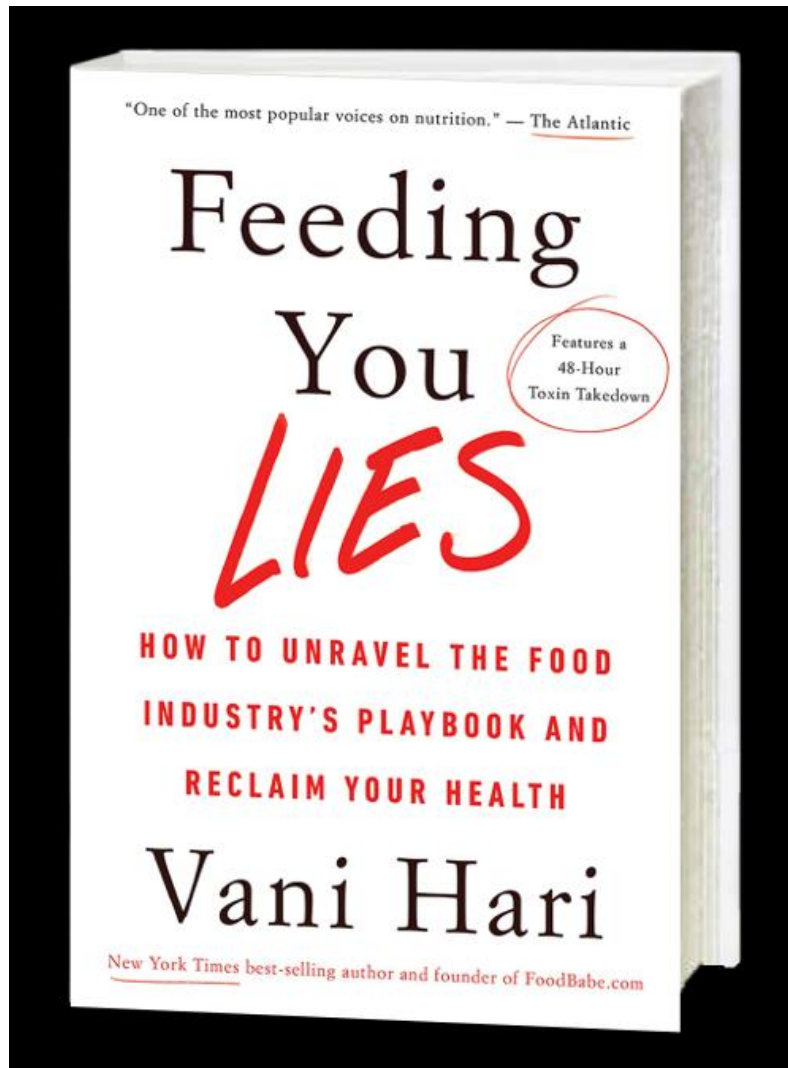
“The American food system is not broken -- it is functioning as designed, [a system optimized for efficiency, not one optimized for resilience and nutrition](#). But our food system is killing us, and that happened long before Covid-19. It is bound to continue unless we take steps now to leverage food as medicine”.

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- From the “Food Babe’s” newsletter by Vani Hari: “To explain, look at what’s happened in the past (and this is just the tip of the iceberg...)
- The tobacco industry paid doctors to lie to us that cigarettes are healthy. They also paid scientists to counter science showing cigarettes cause cancer.
- The sugar industry paid Harvard scientists to publish a paper in The New England Journal of Medicine to say that fat (not sugar) was triggering heart disease.
- Coca-Cola’s paid scientists to blame obesity on lack of exercise, rather than on drinking sodas full of sugar. They also paid professors to form a front group to downplay the link between sugary drinks and obesity.
- Monsanto (maker of GMO seeds) paid scientists who claim GMOs are safe to eat them and say chemicals like the Roundup weed killer don’t cause cancer. Now it’s known to cause cancer, and lawsuits are being settled in the billions.

History repeats itself, right? These shameful practices continue today.

The book she authored below is a very informative book on how we have been deceived by corporations and the politicians and scientists that work for them.



I recently ran across this website that uses data from the millions of people worldwide that have been infected with the Covid-19 virus, hence our medical community has

very good data to work with. With a few simple questions this link will give one your statistical risk factor of getting covid.

After the short quiz it will take one to a link where you can download this booklet. There is a condensed version however I recommend the full version.

Numerous studies have now shown that people with high levels of vitamin-D in their blood, do not have or have very minor symptoms of Covid-19. For vitamin-D to work it must have certain elements like magnesium, zinc and a few others. If you remember from our study of the herbicide Round-Up a few years ago, when one eats foods with glyphosate (Round-Up) on them, it prevents the body from absorbing these essential nutrients (this almost any non-organic food today).



You have pesticides in your body. But an organic diet can reduce them by 70%

A new study shows that most US families consume cancer-linked glyphosate in their food. The good news: going organic rapidly reduces the levels of this toxic chemical AND it helps reduce your risk of getting covid-19. See the article below from the Guardian newspaper.

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