

## JOHN'S CORNER:

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

*by John Ferguson*

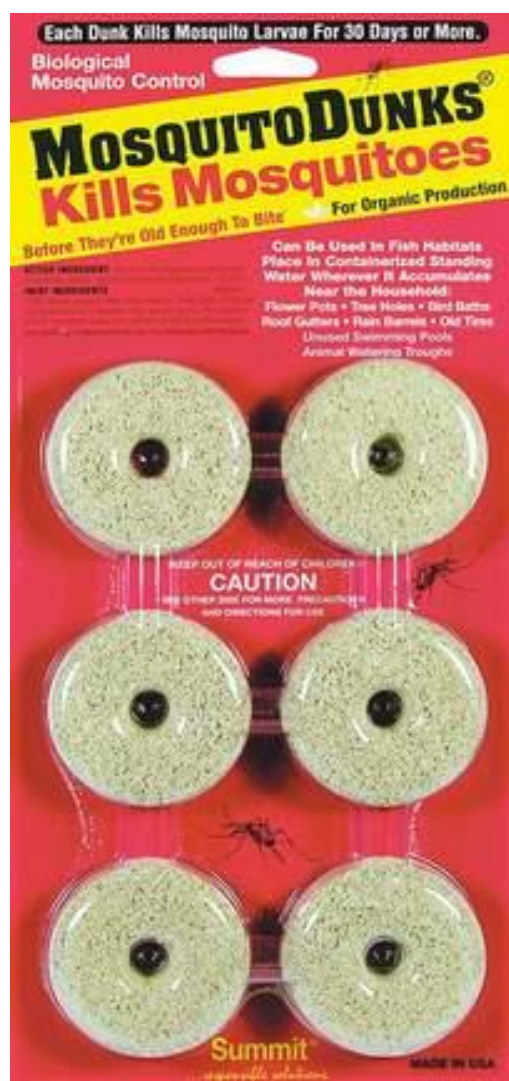
I was listening to a lecture the other day which included a very effective homemade mosquito trap. It works better than misting systems and does not have the environmental consequences. Best of all it is far less costly.

Take a bucket, pail, dishpan or whatever you have and fill with water. Add some old hay or even grass clippings and let sit for a few days.

It will quickly grow protozoa and algae which are food for mosquito larva. Hence it will act like a magnet and encourage all the nearby mosquitos to lay their eggs in it.

After a few days add a piece of a mosquito dunk, the active ingredient in Mosquito Dunks® is *Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *israelensis* or B.t.i.i..

A Mosquito Dunk® looks like a small, beige donut which floats on standing water. As the Dunk® slowly dissolves, it releases a bacterium which is toxic to all species of mosquito larvae. Each dunk® covers up to 100 square feet of water, regardless of depth for 30 days or more, hence only a small piece is required for you trap. Periodically, empty the trap and repeat for maximum control.





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This summer with all the rain we have had an explosion of slugs and snail in our gardens. On the same lecture it was mentioned that firefly larva eats baby snails and their eggs. They are also predators of several other pests.

Spraying for mosquitos and mosquito misting systems kill far more beneficial insects like fire flies than mosquitos, hence increasing total problems in the garden and environment.

As gardeners we are learning how to become more ecologically active in our garden design and care. To encourage stewardship of our lawns and gardens we are seeing more and more incentives.

The same lecture stated that the state of Pennsylvania is offering grants of \$5,000 per acre to replace lawns with native plants. California is offering rebates of \$2 per square foot for every square foot of grass removed. Minnesota is offering homeowners \$400 each to replace lawns with wildflowers and lawn herbs.

The city of San Antonio has also offered residents incentives to plant low water use drought tolerant native plants. Even The Woodlands is offering residents a 50% rebate up to \$300 per home to plant drought tolerant natives.

Speaking of native plants, the Woodlands, Conroe, and Montgomery County area has a new Native Plant Society of Texas chapter called "Pines and Prairies", where one can learn more. [www.npsot.org](http://www.npsot.org)

The Ecological Landscaping Association had a post the other day that I found interesting and



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spot on titled, “Five Reasons Synthetics Are No Longer Considered Best Practices.”

1. Stormwater runoff entrance to water bodies-rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and the ocean
2. Groundwater contamination
3. Children’s health
4. Human health
5. Nonproductive influence on the creation of healthy turf systems that include the plant, the soil, and most importantly, the soil biomass.

For the full article and explanation please see:

<http://www.ecolandscaping.org/04/installing-and-maintaining-landscapes/lawn-care/five-reasons-synthetics-are-no-longer-considered-best-practices/>

**A**nother article stated that using toxic chemicals is causing \$3 trillion in environmental damage each year. We continue to destroy our soils, pollute our waterways, clear cut our forests, poison our food, etc. It just makes me think of a statement in the bible, “...the earth will wear out”.

**I** have often talked about the importance of growing our own fruits and vegetables. A new study has found that eating meals away from home is significantly associated with increased risk of all-cause mortality. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (2021)

The book I reviewed a few weeks ago does a great job of explaining why this is true.

**Metabolical** – The Lure and Lies of Processed Food, Nutrition, and Modern Medicine by Robert H. Lustig, MD, MSL, Harper Collins Publisher, 2021, ISBN: 978-0063027718

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Speaking of food quality and health, the Environmental Working Group has released their list of the most chemically contaminated foods for 2021, titled “The Dirty Dozen”.  
<https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/dirty-dozen.php>

Researchers have discovered that genes from GMO cotton have escaped into the environment changing the DNA of native cotton plants.

One of the escaped genes makes cotton produce less nectar in their flowers hence it no longer attracts ants to protect the plant resulting in more pest issues. In other areas another escaped gene does the opposite causing excess nectar to be produced which causes lots of ants to be attracted preventing bees and other pollinators from doing their work.

These changes were found over a thousand miles away from where the nearest GE cotton was grown. Remember we were promised this could never happen by the USDA and EPA. Science News (2021). Now the same agencies are saying it is safe to modify our own RNA/DNA with vaccines.

The more I study, I understand why some government agencies have unflattering nick names that have showed up in the environmental literature:

FDA – Failure, Deception, and Abuse, or Federal Death Administration

EPA – Enhanced Profit Agency

CDC – Center for Deception & Corruption, or Cancer Development Corporation

or

GMO – God Move Over, you’re not needed anymore

Speaking of GMO’s, I was dismayed to read that Girl Scout cookies are made with GMO ingredients to increase their profit margins and they do not disclose that to customers. I sure will miss my chocolate Thin Mints.