



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

A new plant database (sPlotOpen) is now available to the public as reported in the Journal Global Ecology & Biogeography (2021). The database was compiled by an international team of researchers from Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenburg, the German Center for Integrative Biodiversity Research and the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

Data from over 100,000 vegetative plots from 114 countries have been entered into the database. Each data point contains information on all of the plant species occurring at that location along with other information and covers the entire plant community.

A new study by researchers at Rice University suggests that some networks of mycorrhizal fungi embrace economic theory (Walrasian equilibrium behavior in nature), trading nutrients for carbon from plants. Proceedings of The National Academy of Science (2021)

Mycorrhizal fungi networks globally, sequester 5 billion tons of carbon per year. When we till the soil, use toxic chemicals like fungicides we lose this benefit.

The non-profit organization Beyond Pesticides has a free e-newsletter on the dangers of pesticides and other toxic chemicals (www.beyondpesticides.org).

Their website has a tremendous amount of information on these dangerous chemicals and how we can protect our families from children to pets.

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A study by Emory University have isolated a chemical from the leaves of the European chestnut tree, that has the power to neutralize dangerous drug resistant staff bacteria. Traditional folk remedies in rural Italy inspired the research. *Frontiers in Pharmacology* 2021.

Other researchers have found that compounds from the Brazilian peppertree also have the ability to detoxify staph bacteria.

When I read an article like this the bible verse “study nature and let it teach you” always comes to mind.

Last week we mentioned the danger of fluoride in products used in gardening and the harm to our health. Fluoride is found in many pesticides and other toxic agricultural chemicals, toothpaste, cosmetics and drinking water to name a few. Together these fluoride-based chemicals are called PFAS.

The Eco Watch e-newsletter had a summary of many studies published in peer reviewed journals that was on the many negative health impacts associated with per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances ([PFAS](#)) which is immunosuppression.

Now, evidence is emerging that exposure to these toxic forever chemicals may increase a person’s risk of contracting COVID-19 and experiencing a serious or potentially fatal case.

More reasons to garden organically.

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The last couple of years the interest in growing vegetables and fruits in our backyards has exploded. To achieve maximum benefits, one has to take care of their soil.

The organization "Eating Well" had a nice non-technical paper by Michael Behar on the relationship between microbes in the soil and our health. As the author states, "[Nutritious Food Starts with What's in the Soil](#)"

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