



NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

By John Ferguson

A study from the University of Maryland confirms that US beekeepers are still losing bees. They found that beekeepers lost 45.5 % of their honey bee colonies from April 2020 to April 2021.

Honey bees are essential to our food production in the US, pollinating \$15 billion worth of food crops each year. Science Daily 2021

Every day it is becoming more essential that we use modern methods in our lawns and gardens based on biology that are often referred to as organic methods. This means do not use toxic chemicals that kill bees or purchase plants that have these dangerous pesticides on them.

It is also important to plant flowers that produce quality pollen and nectar for our pollinators. As we hybridized flowers for longer bloom periods, uniform height, etc. the quality of their pollen was often reduced. This means the best pollen and nectar is from old fashioned heirloom varieties, open pollinated plants and native plants.

Researchers at the University of Tsukuba in Japan have found the flavor of tomatoes is directly influenced by their growing conditions. They analyzed 157 varieties of tomatoes and found that pigments controlling their color also played a role in their flavor.

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Chemicals called carotenoids and chlorophylls along with sugars had the largest effects even though they had no direct effect. It was when these chemicals were changed into other chemicals that the improved flavor occurred. Journal Metabolites, 2021

Other research has tied the better flavor of vegetables and fruits to soils rich in minerals and organic matter. The minerals provide needed elements that most soils are lacking in and the organic matter is home for beneficial microbes that produce flavonoids. Taken together they increase the flavor of our foods like tomatoes.

This means use a good quality leaf mold compost, Re-mineralizer and a good organic fertilizer like Microlife™ for best results.

A multi-university study on apples has found that compost has a strong influence on soil ecosystem functioning. Some of the benefits were better soil quality, less fertilizer required, increased levels and diversity of beneficial bacteria and other microbes, and increased the potential for larger yields. Journal of the Soil Science Society, 2021

Occasionally I get asked, “Why are there so many reported illnesses from eating food purchased at grocery stores?” There are many reasons from improper handling, pesticide residuals, to being stored at the wrong temperatures, etc.

However, one of the largest reasons is covered up by the media, and that is the use of sewage sludge as a fertilizer. Farmers are often paid to apply this toxic sludge to their

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farms. This results in the food grown on them, to have harmful chemicals from antibiotics, hormones, to heavy metals, PFAS, and more.

PFAS is a group of fluorinated chemicals numbering over 8,000 that causes harm to humans. Research has found the most common PFAS chemicals, PFOA and PFOS, have probable links to high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, and pregnancy-induced hypertension.

Many other health problems have been linked to these toxic chemicals. When sewage sludge is applied to the fields the vegetables absorb these toxins which we then eat, where they may accumulate in our bodies and cause harm.

The reasons to grow our own food (fruits, vegetables, and herbs) organically or at least purchase organic foods continue to increase.

The Bible tells us: ***“If we do not obtain knowledge about a subject, we will not be able to make wise decisions and will suffer the consequences”***. Paraphrase from the Book of Proverbs

Note: Products like Hou-Actinite, Milorganite, etc. are just dried and pelletized sewage sludge full of toxic chemicals.

For more information on the dangers of sewage sludge and products derived from sewage sludge like “Dillo Dirt” see links below.

- <https://usludgefree.org/information/farm-risks>
- <https://celdf.org/sewer-sludge/>
- <https://bioscienceresource.org/sewage-sludge-biosolids-land-application-health-risks-and-regulation-2/>

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- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2094820/>

Note: There are several soil/compost companies that sell sewage sludge products to gardeners in the Houston area.

Speaking of food, a study from the University of Tsukuba in Japan has found that those whom eat higher levels of fiber are at a reduced risk for developing dementia.

Soluble fiber like that found in oats, legumes and vegetables were important for the beneficial bacteria that live in our guts. *Nutritional Neuroscience* 2022.

Note: Heirloom varieties of plants often have higher levels of good fiber in them.

Along the same lines, a study published in the journal *Cell Host & Microbe* (2022) by researchers at the University of Pompeu Fabra -Barcelona has found the presence of Caudovirales (a type of bacteriophage), in our gut microbiota, leads to an improvement in cognitive functions and memory in humans (also mice, fleas and fruit flies).

Higher levels of Caudovirales were associated with people whom consumed higher levels of dairy products.

This part of the world often consumes dairy products where the health benefits of organic grass-fed dairy are available as they have not been destroyed by pasteurization and homogenization. I wonder if there is a correlation.

In summary the old saying “**We are what we eat**”, becomes truer every day.

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