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NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

By John Ferguson

A new study by the University of Bristol has found that artificial fertilizers limit pollination by changing how bumble bees sense flowers. They found that both toxic chemical sprays and artificial fertilizers altered the electric field around the flowers.

Flowers use a wide range of clues to attract pollinators from color to fragrance, and pollinators use these clues along with sensing the electrical and magnetic fields the flowers produce.

“Its much like how a motorboat noise hinders the ability of fish to detect predators or artificial light at night that confuses moths, the artificial fertilizers are a source of noise to bees trying to detect floral electrical fields.” Journal PNAS Nexus, 2023

We have often talked about the benefits of re-mineralizing our soils from a plant health benefit. Studies have found that re-mineralizing soils with one ton of basalt sand captures 0.3 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Re-mineralizer has basalt sand as one of its major components, hence it is a good way to remove carbon dioxide and convert it into humus (carbon chains) in one’s soil. This is in addition to its huge mineral nutrient content.

Some tidbits of information from a paper last year on greenhouse gas emissions. High rates of artificial fertilizers increase greenhouse gas emissions. Excess irrigation also causes excess emissions.

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They also found that organic matter accumulation was greater in soils when organic fertilizers were used as compared to artificial fertilizers. Journal of Environmental Quality (2022)

On many occasions I have talked about the dangers of sewage sludge (biosolids) and the compost made from it. The polio virus has been found in sewage sludge in both the USA and Europe. The researchers found that the weakened virus used in vaccines can be reactivated and infect people as it is passed from the human manure that composes the sludge.

The researchers speculate that is another way the virus spreads. Another reason not to use these dangerous products (fertilizers made from dried and pelletized sludge or biosolids compost made from them) in our yards and gardens.

Another reason to grow our own food organically and avoid typical processed food has been found. A study published in the journal JAMA Neurology (2022) found that people whom consumed only 20% of their diet from processed foods experienced a 28% faster rate of cognitive decline globally.

A paper published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry (2023) found that two common fungicides used on strawberries reduced the flavor and sweetness of the berries. The fungicides also reduced the vitamin-C content along with several amino acids. Another reason to grow one's own strawberries organically.

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Strawberries grow well in our area. I remember reading an article many years ago that stated the Pasadena area was once the strawberry capital of the world.

I used to grow strawberries in a full-size used whiskey barrel. I drilled twenty plus 2-inch holes all around it. As I filled the barrel with soil, I would lay in my transplants then cover with soil until the barrel was full. It worked very well and grew lots of wonderful strawberries every day. Since there was no perch for birds to land on, they left the berries alone. Snails did not like the old whiskey barrel hence they were not an issue. The only problem I had was my two children whom would eat all the ripe strawberries before I got home from work.

The journal Cell (2023) had a paper where the researchers discovered that dry (water stressed) tomato and pepper plants emit distinct ultrasonic clicks. If the sounds were scaled down into the range for human hearing it sounds like someone popping bubble wrap. Additionally, sounds were produced when the fruit was cut off or stems were trimmed. When the plant was in good condition, they did not emit any sound. They have discovered that corn, grapevines, and cactus also emit sounds.

Maybe there is some truth that the plants talk to us. The bible teaches that if we do not praise God then even the plants and trees will cry out.

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