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NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

By John Ferguson

Subject: Bees & GMO's, Monarch Butterflies, Earthworms

We all know about an issue with our honey bee populations called colony collapse disorder, where we lose 50% of our bee hives each year. Less bees means less pollination then less yields of crops, which then raises the price of our food.

I was reading the other day about systemic Neonicotinoids also known as neonic pesticides used on genetically modified crops (GMO's). *One corn seed treated with this pesticide can has enough toxicity to kill 250,000 bees!* This does not include other insects.

As we lose insect populations, we lose our bird populations as they require lots of insects when they have eggs and babies in the nest.

A report in the Organic Consumers Association newsletter states that today's agricultural environment is 48 times more toxic to bees than it was just 25 years ago.

These chemicals are not only killing birds they are hurting many animal species, contributing to their decline.

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Most gardeners love our butterflies, especially our Monarchs. A report by the World Wildlife Fund found that Monarch populations wintering in Mexico this recent season was the second lowest in history.

We can plant all the Milkweeds we can and it will help, but to rescue the Monarchs we must quit exposing them to these toxic chemicals.

IF consumers would not purchase GMO crops, then prices would drop and farmers would quit planting them. By only buying organic foods instead of GMO's one can be part of the solution.

In addition to killing bees and insects, GMOs are loaded with the carcinogen called glyphosate found in Round Up and other herbicides. The American Academy of Pediatrics now advises that we avoid GMO foods do to the contamination.

Note: Ultra processed foods and animal feed have the highest levels of these toxic chemicals. Fast foods are also very high in these chemicals.

Another report by the American Chemical Society and published in the journal Environmental Science and Technology Letters (2024) has found that earthworms are also affected by the small amounts of pesticides that leach out of pesticide treated seeds like those mentioned above.

Exposure to non-lethal amounts of pesticides and fungicides resulted in poor growth and caused mitochondrial DNA damage in the worms. Earthworms aerate our soil, eat weed seeds, produce plant growth hormones, and provide food for birds and other animals.

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Note: Neonicotinoids poisons have been banned in Europe due to their extreme toxicity.

The reasons to use modern organic methods in our gardens, in the vegetables and fruits we grow and eat, in our landscapes, and the food we buy, increase every day.

The modern organic methods work much better, at lower cost, and do not destroy God's creation.

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