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JOHN'S CORNER:

NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS

by John Ferguson

I ran across a informative website the other day by IRT (Institute for Responsible Technology) at www.responsibletechnology.org. This website is devoted to exposing the dangers of genetically modified foods. They have power point presentations, technical articles, books, DVD's and more where one can learn more about the dangers of eating GMO's. There is also a buyer's guide on how to avoid GMO's when shopping for one's family.

The publication Food and Water Watch (June 17, 2016) found out that many of the fruits and vegetables from California were being irrigated with wastewater from oil field operations. This wastewater even after treatment can contain toxic chemicals like oil, acetone, methylene chloride, and benzene. All are toxic to humans and are known carcinogens (also in Endangered Earth, June 16, 2016). They listed a few brands that sell food treated with this wastewater; Sunview raisins and grapes, Trincherro Family Estates (Sutter Home Wines), Halos (Cuties) mandarins, and The Wine Group (Cupcake and Fish Eye Wines).

A study from the University of North Carolina in the journal Nature Communications found that certain chemicals altered the gene expression in the brains of people with autism or Alzheimer's disease. They found that the class of fungicides called strobiliums; (pyraclostrobin, trifloxystrobin, fenamidol, famoxadone, azoxystrobin, fluoxastrobin, and kresomix-methyl) affected the communication between neurons in the brain. These chemicals also induced inflammation of the nervous system and increased the production of free radicals. These chemicals are found on conventionally grown leafy green vegetables such as spinach, lettuce, and kale. See NaturalNews.com for more information.

A study from The USDA Forest Service (published in Urban Forestry and Urban Greening, June 2016) found that trees just along streets in California produced benefits of one billion dollars per year. By category: carbon storage - \$10.3 million, removal of air pollution - \$18.5 million, interception of rainfall - \$41.5 million, and energy savings - \$101 million. They also bolster property values and home sales



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price to the tune of \$839 million! **For every dollar invested in street trees, the trees returned \$5.82 in benefits.**

A study by the University of Illinois (Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry, 2015; 63 (11)) has found that horseradish contains cancer-fighting compounds called glucosinolates that activates detoxifying enzymes. Horseradish has 10 times more glucosinolates than broccoli. It only takes one teaspoon to get the benefits, as it is 90% absorbable when eaten.

The journal Scientific Reports published a paper by British and French scientists that found striking effects on exposure to pregnant sheep and their female lambs in the womb. When sewage sludge fertilizers are used on pastures it exposes the animals to a cocktail of chemical contaminants found in the sludge. Low-level exposure poses a threat to the human reproductive system as eating meat from animals grazed on land fertilized with human sewage sludge fertilizers (dried sludge, bio solid compost, etc.) affects the fetus. Acres, USA May 2016. Note: Sewage sludge is expensive to get rid of; hence, several companies in Texas (including some in the Houston area) use it to make low cost composts.

A recent issue of Science Daily summarized the work researchers at Texas A&M, Southern Illinois, Carbondale and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment station are doing on nano particles and plant growth. They looked at multi-generational effects (3 generations of plants) and found that exposure to nano particle lowered the quality of seed and reduced the yield in future generations. The plants also displayed more signs of stress than the parent plants growing in the same soils. Nano particles are used in thousands of commercial products; they are unlike many other materials and have unique health and safety impacts on people and the environment. One common source of nano particles in agriculture is through irrigation from wastewater from sewage treatment plants and applying fertilizers made from human sewage.

A study from the Vienna University of Technology (Frontiers of Plant Science, 2016) has found out that trees go to sleep at night and adjust their rhythms to the day-night cycle as animals do. They found that trees "droop" their branches at night.