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## **JOHN'S CORNER:**

### **NEWS FROM THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SOIL AND PLANTS**

*by John Ferguson*

For years, experienced gardeners swore that when they talk to their plants they grew better. This was confirmed by research done at Bell labs many years ago. The August 2016 issue of American Nurseryman had an article on talking to your plants. The researchers divided the plants into three groups. Group 1 had silence, group two had compliments and encouragement, and group three has insults. The group in silence performed the worst. The two groups that experienced sound did the same whether it was good or bad and grew far better.

A study in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene by researchers at Texas A&M and Emory University's found that West Nile Virus around Atlanta was very low. When mosquitoes fed on Robins it helped spread the disease. However when mosquitoes fed on Cardinals it suppressed the disease. Other birds have also been found that are "super suppressors" including gray catbirds and brown thrashers. There was less evidence of the disease in old growth forests. More reasons to protect our forests and practice habitat gardening to attract cardinals. A great book on the subject is: "Bringing Nature Home - How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants" by Douglass W. Tallamy, Timber Press, 2014, Edith Printing, ISBN-13: 978-0-88192-992-8.

A 26-year study in Scientific Reports from the University of Nottingham has found that the sperm quality of dogs has decreased significantly. They found environmental contaminants were the cause. The same chemicals were found in some brands of dog food. This adds insight to the decline in quality of human semen.

Another study in Scientific Reports (via Science News Daily) found that bacteria in the soil can pump electrons (energy) directly into solid magnetic minerals. This offers an exciting understanding of how microbes are able to access substances for growth and respiration over long distances.



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In the August 10, 2016 newsletter by Mercola.com they reported that common lawn and garden chemicals interfere with fertility, cause birth defects, endocrine disruption, neurological disorders and cancer. Note: These same chemicals are found at high levels on GMO food crops at many times the levels of conventionally grown crops. This is another reason to buy organic whenever possible, and to garden organically.

A study by the University of California Berkeley found that pregnant mothers whom live within one kilometer (about 0.6 miles) of a field sprayed where certain pesticides were used experienced children with lower IQ's.

All gardeners know that sunflowers face east in the mornings and west in the afternoon. Researchers at the University of California have discovered one of the reasons why this occurs. They found that when the flowers faced the sun there were five times more insect pollinators visiting the flowers. Apparently, insects like the warmer flowers.

Another study reported in Science News Daily found that the toxic blue-green algae grows faster at high levels of CO2 allowing them to out compete other plant life in the water. The toxic algae bloom in Lake Erie has been found to be caused by the spraying of glyphosate (Round-Up) on crops. In the presence of iron oxide-hydroxide minerals in the soil the phosphorous is released poisoning the waterways with this chemical feeding the algae bloom.

A study in the medical Journal "The Lancet", has now classified fluoride as a neurotoxin that has a negative effect of brain development along with extremely toxic compounds like arsenic, lead and mercury.

In the Journal of Cancer, another study by St Louis University has found that curcumin from the spice turmeric prevented colon cancer cells from multiplying and spreading. They found that silymarin a component of milk thistle was even more effective when combined. As we learn more of the wonderful world of plants, it reminds me of a couple bible verses:

**Proverbs 3:19 (NIV)** By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; 20) by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.



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**Job 12:7 (NIV)** "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; 8) or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you.

A study by Food Safety News found that 75% of all honey sold in stores contained no honey at all! Most of the rest of the products was filtered to remove all the bee pollen that is rich in proteins, vitamins, lipids, minerals, enzymes, and carbohydrates. These are all the nutrients that make raw unfiltered honey a super food for our health. Buy honey from local beekeepers and they can be found at many of the farmers markets in the area.