

The Chronicle

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2002



**Includes a Pull Out Section on
Forestry Your Neighbourhood**

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Karma Co-op Hours of Operation

MONDAY	12-7
TUESDAY	12-9
WEDNESDAY	12-9
THURSDAY	12-9
FRIDAY	10-9
SATURDAY	10-6
SUNDAY	11-5

Mission Statement

Our aim is to:

1. create a community of actively participating members;
2. foster a healthy connection to the food we eat, the people who grow it, and the other organizations who share our beliefs;
3. co-operatively educate ourselves on environmental issues;
4. exercise political and economic control over our food;

**by operating a viable
co-operative food store.**

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The Chronicle is a link between members of this and other co-operative communities; the only viewpoints herein endorsed by Karma Co-op Inc. are those published as reports of the board of directors and its committees.

Submissions

Submissions are collected from the red box. Upcoming editorial deadlines are posted on the bulletin board and the box. All envelopes and articles must be clearly marked with the author's name. Please type and double-space your material. Submissions may also be sent by e-mail, to karmachronicle@canada.com. Send your submission within the main body of the message or save it as a text-only file, then send it as an attachment.

The Chronicle will publish any Karma-related material, subject to editorial policy guidelines. Letters to the editor must contain the writer's full name and telephone number, although names will be withheld at time of publication upon request. All published articles are eligible for work credits (letters to the editor and announcements are not).

Due to issues at press time, this issue has been printed on conventional stock. We are planning on having future issues printed on New Life - Certified 80% recycled including 60% post consumer stock. This stock is certified old growth and chlorine free by Chlorine Free Products Assn; oxygen whitened, union made in Canada by Rolland.

Introducing... The Everyday Activist

By: Lis Soderberg

Not the person, the column. Fellow Karmians, I'd like you to meet the space where you can find and contribute ideas for everyday practice that make a difference, no matter how seemingly (and deceptively) small.

By belonging to a food co-op, we have all taken a step to lessen our strain on the planet, for various reasons and in diverse ways. You have likely already been educated in these pages on the necessity of such things as avoiding additives, buying locally, and insisting on organically grown foods. However, our food and its sources are only part of our impact on Mother Earth. We all make choices in our housing, clothing, transportation, employment, and entertainment that have an environmental price.

I'm sure many will nod in frustrated agreement that the amount of work it takes to try to tread lightly on the planet, in comparison to how easy it is to wreak devastation through the course of an ordinary day, does not seem fair to those of us who are choosing to do that extra work. However, I for one can't go back to the "disposable convenience" model of lifestyle choices—of course, things are not really disposable, just relocate-able, whether underground or shipped off to less expensive landfill sites, and the convenience will be short-lived as we begin to deal with the long-term effects of our consumption—and that "keeping up with the Jones" thing never did work for me.

For the sake of continually educating myself and finding alternatives to what we are fed by our consumer culture, I explore the Web when I can, and one day I came across a vast resource collected and maintained by George Draffan (www.endgame.org), alphabetically listing hundreds of corporations and their profiles (including some of their particular/individual nastinesses). Overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information, I wondered whether there might be a less depressing resource that could point me more immediately in the direction of corporations making an effort. (Like it or not, there are some things we have to buy.)

So I sent an email to Mr. Draffan asking whether there might somewhere be a list of "good" corporate citizens. He responded, at some length, with the answer that a corporation by definition "is a legal device designed to acquire public resources, externalize costs, and privatize profit. These are not incidental side-effects of corporate activity; they are the purposes...My own work doesn't attempt to distinguish between bad corporations and less bad corporations. I have some corporate profiles, but my work is increasingly focused on the bigger picture and the mechanisms of corporate power." He did include some links to organizations who try to rank corporations according to social responsibility; however, some of them listed Walmart, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, AT&T, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Sonoco, Eli Lilly, Microsoft, McDonald's, etc.—I see his point. But frankly, his response was not very useful for someone interested in being a pro-active consumer/citizen (although the information he's gathered certainly is—the problem is finding the time to wade through it all).

And on that note: there is, in fact, a Canadian (!) resource for finding companies that have been certified with the EcoLogo (see logo above), whose mission is: "To encourage the supply of products and services that are more environmentally responsible, and to help consumers and organizations buy "green"." Canada's Environmental Choice Program (www.environmentalchoice.com) and its EcoLogo are internationally renowned because of the program's stringent certification process; information about certification criteria, as well as listings of certified companies, are on the website. The amount and variety of ecologically responsible products is steadily increasing, so this resource will only get better with time.

A year or two ago, I reserved the domain name "everydayactivist.org", not knowing at the time what form the web site would take. It is now my intention to gather ideas and



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Staff Issues Committee

By: Mark Davidson

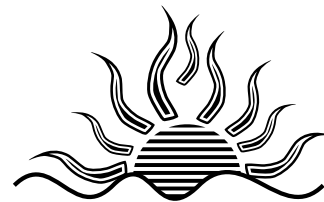
The other day I walked into Karma to do some shopping and something seemed 'off.' It wasn't the half-priced veggies next to the scale. It was the ambiance in the building. The staff seemed tense and agitated, so being the curious (nosy) person that I am, I started asking some questions about what was going on for them. I wasn't too impressed with what I heard. I think we, as a collective, have some thinking to do about how best to ensure the well being of those who work for us.

I should say that none of the staff were badmouthing the co-op. I was the one who was asking questions...hell, I was prying for information. I am, after all, effectively their employer, and as such I (we) have responsibilities for the staff. I suspect that most of the members of Karma believe in workers' rights and dignity, and I can think of no reason why we shouldn't be ensuring that our own employees enjoy their jobs as much as possible. If we fail in this, we would be acting contrary to our belief system.

Karma has numerous committees to look after the needs of our members. But we don't have a committee to look after the needs of our staff. Yes, we have a Health and Safety Committee, but the object of this group is to make sure that Karma eliminates occupational dangers to our employees' physical health, such as leaking freon from freezers, loose shelving, and so on. This committee can, but rarely does, look into things like mental health and job satisfaction. And these are precisely the areas that require our attention. Without a committee to address these issues, there is no formal institutional mechanism for our staff to voice their concerns about their jobs or for the co-op to inquire into the level of job satisfaction enjoyed by our workers.

So why don't we create a Staff Issues Committee? The committee could survey our employees and come up with a list of recommendations. The list could be divided into monetary and non-monetary issues. The monetary issues, I suspect, are fairly straight forward: the co-op has X amount of money with which to pay staff, we need this many staff hours, and so on. But the other non-monetary issues, which I suspect are quite important, could also be addressed. I'm sure our employees will be happy to tell us how we could make their jobs easier and more enjoyable. And even if there aren't any serious concerns right now, we owe it to our staff to give them an official and institutionalized voice in the co-op. They spend more time there than any of us, and without their labour and their hearts, the co-op could not run. And it certainly would not be as successful as it is without them.

Shelf Elf Carries On... By: Louise Longo



Shipping one of The Algonquin Tea Company's wonderful blends, I sit down and attempt to fill the mighty big shoes of Suzanne Molina former author of this column. As those of us who enjoyed reading her know, she did an amazing job here and the popularity of the Shelf Elf column with the membership is due in no small measure to her efforts. But even without her, the Shelf Elf must continue—it provides a key service, informing everyone of the new products on our shelves.

Further to that, we are now carrying three new teas from the aforementioned Algonquin Tea Company. And they must be popular, because I only found one of them actually on the shelf, Awakening Tea, which promises that its blend of nutritious and supportive herbs (including Labrador tea, mountain mint, alfalfa, nettle, astragalus, angelica, joe-pye, calamus and ginseng) produces a balanced, uplifting tea that energizes without the side effects of caffeine.

The other new teas are Peace Tea, blended specifically for calming down (with blue vervain, lemon balm, catnip, oat straw, red bergamot, chamomile, hops, motherwort, valerian, skullcap and St.Johns Wort), and Sacred Blend, for a healing sense of connection, tranquility and focus (containing white pine, sweet grass and sage). The Algonquin Tea Company prides itself in offering organic as well as handpicked wild Canadian herb teas. Over 80% of their herbs are 'wildcrafted'—that is, harvested wild plants chosen with skill and knowledge of when, whether and how much to harvest. In other words, truly sustainable and inspiring. (Delicious, too—I was sipping on their Sweetfern Tonic, a daily immune booster that tastes similar to black tea but contains sweetfern, red clover, raspberry, roots of burdock, echinacea, yellow dock and dandelion.)

Shawla Herbs and Natural Products is another company with a commitment to produce and promote life affirming and/or vibrationally intact goods. They either grow their own organic herbs or source ingredients from other farms that meet their standards. So if you decide to try their Exotic Body Milk, Cleansing Milk, Therapeutic Body Cream or Organic Almond Oil now on Karma's shelves, you can be sure of getting a quality product.

Henry's Gourmet Tempeh is an all organic wholebean cultured soyfood made with soybeans, kasha (or roasted buckwheat) and millet. Karma is carrying it both fresh and frozen and the feedback is positive, which is great news for many members—good sources of protein for vegans aren't easy to come by.

Finally for this issue, if you haven't already found them there are the new Organica Foods cookies. These come in four mouthwatering flavours that include Double Chocolate Coffee Toffee, Peanut Butter Almond Chocolate Chip, Gingered Walnut Cherry Chocolate Chip and Oatmeal Coconut Cranberry Chocolate Chip. Now if those don't set your taste buds quivering, the fact that they are vegan, GMO free and contain no cholesterol, hydrogenated oils or refined sugars should—they sound almost completely guilt free!

zoned ut

By: Margaret Meagher

I'm stuck indoors today. It's a hot, sunny day and the first day of my summer vacation. I'd like nothing more, hot as it is, than to be outside walking, dodging from shade to shade, covering vast distances in a big hat and a tiny dress. But I can't go outside; I can't breathe the air. It started last night. I was fine during the day, but when I came out of the movie theatre after an early show on a fine, warm night, ready for a long evening walk, I suddenly found myself panting, and by the time I got home, I was really wheezing. This is quite new to me. New this summer. So I thought I'd better inform myself about what this is, why it is happening and what I can do to improve what has just become, to me, a very large problem.

The problem, I have discovered, is ozone, the major pollutant in smog. We all thought ozone was our buddy, since we keep hearing about holes in the ozone layer and the danger they bring to life in the sun. However, ozone is only good when it stays in the ozone layer, not when it is close enough to be breathed. In the Earth's upper atmosphere, ozone occurs naturally and provides protection from ultraviolet rays. This layer is threatened by human activity. Ozone near the ground travels in "rivers" up both coasts and is *created* by human activity. Cars, refineries, chemical plants, various industries and, most significantly for us in south-western Ontario, power plants, all emit pollutants (nitrogen oxides, or NOx, in particular) that "cook" in the sun and produce ozone. Ground-level ozone is a pollutant and, for many, a health risk.

It's not certain why some people are adversely affected by ozone more than others, but what is clear is that one in three people, like me, are sensitive to it, and experience difficulties from ozone at lower levels. (However, everyone feels the effects when levels are high.) What you do when you are outside also affects your reaction to ozone; if you are very active, jogging, lifting heavy things, you will be more affected than people walking.

Now, I have a low tolerance, that's clear, but is my health itself affected more than a person with low tolerance? Is ozone hurting me more than others, or just bothering me more? Nobody seems to know.

What exactly is it doing to us that is making some of us suffer? First of all, it irritates our lungs. Ozone burns our lungs, in fact. That burning sensation you feel on a bad day? It's a burn, similar in severity to a sunburn and lasting about as long. After a few days, the burned cells are replaced by new cells, as with a sunburn, but prolonged exposure to ozone and repeated damage of this kind does cause a permanent change in the lungs which may affect health in the long term. Next, it reduces the capacity of our lungs. Due to the irritation, they just don't hold as much air and so we take more rapid and shallow breaths. Just walking may

make us pant. Strenuous exercise outside, then, becomes more difficult and even dangerous. Those sensitive to ozone are told to stay inside on bad days and no-one should do strenuous activity outside when ozone levels are high. Ozone also makes us more sensitive to allergens, making us experience allergies and asthma more severely. How have *your* allergies been this summer? More itchy eyes, sneezy mornings, and asthma attacks? Get an inhaler this summer? Chalk it all up to ozone.

But perhaps you are one of the lucky ones not adversely affected by ozone. Does that mean you shouldn't be concerned? Indeed, who needs to be concerned about ground-level ozone? Well, kids, for one. Kids, you may have noticed, move around a lot. And during the summer, kids move around a lot outside. They are also more likely than adults to have asthma or other respiratory illnesses. And besides all that, they are young and growing. The fear is that their lungs may be permanently damaged and their lung capacity permanently reduced. This will do nothing for their quality of life as adults. On Smog Alert days, active kids are supposed to stay indoors. Also at risk are adults who are active outdoors, joggers and outdoor labourers (as if they didn't have enough to worry about with the heat), and people with respiratory diseases.

There is no evidence yet to show that ozone *causes* asthma or other chronic respiratory ailments, but these diseases make people more sensitive to ozone and ozone exacerbates them. Simply, more people experience breathing problems when ozone levels are high. The alarming thing is that ozone can cause damage without causing discomfort. Symptoms may be absent or too subtle to notice, or may appear on the first day with high ozone levels and then disappear afterward even though levels are still high. The ozone is still there and still causing damage, but our bodies are not alerting us to it. This does not mean we have adapted or are no longer at risk. Damage due to ozone does not necessarily produce symptoms.

Ozone pollution problems are relatively new here. This is the first year I've had difficulty breathing. However, there are some places where ozone and smog problems have been around for generations. Los Angeles began organized efforts to cut smog 50 years ago when it was found to damage human health as well as agricultural products. People there have been fighting and studying smog all that time, but after 50 years of data, nobody, not even the Environmental Protection Agency, seems to be able to answer the questions that seem most important: Does repeated short-term exposure to ozone cause permanent damage? And does repeated exposure during childhood to high levels of ozone cause reduced lung function in adults? Knowing this would be quite handy, and I find it very interesting that the EPA has not seen fit to gather and interpret this information despite 50 years of opportunity.

Even if we don't have numbers to quantify the danger, our own experience tells us that something is wrong with the air. What do we do? This is where things become humorous. Or maybe ironic. To be really careful, we have to know the ozone levels during the day; since sunlight is needed to "cook" pollutants that create ground level ozone, levels are higher in the day and drop in the evening. Most newspapers carry forecasts, which give the day-levels, and there is an online service at www.Airqualityontario.com (with an extensive disclaimer about reliability and liability) which gives updates regularly. These updates tell us whether the air quality is: **Very Good, Good, Moderate, Poor, or Very Poor.** The scale is familiar, but what does it mean to breathe "moderate" air? For that, we need another scale. Below 32, according to the Ontario Air Quality website, "is good and there are no known health effects for the majority of the population". Thirty-two-49 means "adverse health effects for very sensitive people". Fifty-99 "may have adverse effects on the most sensitive people and animals, or may cause damage to vegetation and property." And levels above 100 "may affect the health of a large number of people and animals as well as plant life and property." That leaves a lot of questions, from "how do I know if I'm sensitive considering that ozone can damage my lungs without symptoms" to "Just how is ozone damaging my property?"

But it gives us some general parameters: Good is good enough for most people; Moderate means definite problems for some but okay for most; Poor also means bad for some people, bad for your cat and your stuff, but doesn't mention the rest of you; and Very Poor is bad for most people, your cat and your stuff. It doesn't help a lot, but with the numbers, I can figure out where my comfort levels are. Then what? I'm comfortable to a level of, say, 40. What do I

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People and Planet Friendly Listings

do on the days (15 this summer and counting) when the levels are above that? The answer is always the same: stay inside. This is where the irony comes in; I should also ride my bike, walk or take transit—all of which involve not staying inside—in order to limit car emissions. But then get this: the EPA says that “indoor levels of pollutants may be 2-5, and occasionally more than 100 times higher than outdoor levels.” Staying indoors is really just not the answer. Further, considering that smog days are hot days, “inside” is probably either a) air-conditioned or b) hot. And that brings us to the sticky bit. The biggest cause of ozone-causing pollutants in Ontario is the system of coal-fired power plants that run our air conditioning. Every time we turn it on we make the air worse and as the air gets worse, we need it more. And it has been a hot summer. So what are we left with? **Outside.** **Inside.** Hm.

Solutions? Judge for yourself, but here are a few salient facts about the plants that power our AC: they produce a range of pollutants including sulphur (the acid in acid rain), mercury and lead (both potent neurotoxins); Nanticoke, on Lake Erie, is Canada's single largest source of air pollution as well as the largest coal-burning power plant in North America, and it is only one of several such plants affecting us; it is producing a large part of the pollution that is causing us problems; it is owned by you and me; it can be converted to natural gas, which will pollute less; this conversion will cost us some money.

Now, I don't have a lot of long-term plans, but breathing is one of them and, frankly, it's something I'm willing to spend money and time on. In the long term, we can explain to the Ontario government that breathable air is worth spending money on. But we can do small things on a personal level too. We can drive less, not idle, carpool, drive cleaner cars and fill them at night. We can shop and entertain ourselves closer to home, live close to where we work. We can turn the AC down or off, avoid using big machines during the day and leave the barbecue alone. We can check around for alternative sources of electricity or just use less. We can decide that air quality is worth some effort and figure out other things we can do. Just don't hold your breath for someone to do it for you.

For more information, see the following:

www.cleanairalliance.org for detailed data on the natural gas conversion, benefits and costs, as well as details on the environmental impact of the status quo.

www.epa.gov for details on a variety of environmental issues.

www.airqualityontario for local information including air quality index by locality.

www.energyalternatives.ca a clearinghouse of information about energy.

www.iclei.org: The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. Contains loads of information about energy issues.

www.trec.on.ca: The Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative. Everything you always wanted to know about buying cleaner energy.

(Events directly related to food indicated with a double asterisk**.)

** GREEN ROOF TOURS, Every Wednesday (until Oct 30), 12:30-1pm, Toronto. Free tours of the Green Roof Infrastructure Demonstration at Toronto City Hall every Wednesday (weather permitting). Tour several green roof applications including a bird and butterfly meadow; kitchen garden; permaculture plot; black oak savannah ecosystem; and extensive and semi-extensive plots containing flowers and shrubs. Learn about the many benefits of green roofs, such as storm water management, reducing air pollution, climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency, and cooling the urban heat island. Free. Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St W. Meet in Nathan Phillips Square, at the bottom of the ramp leading to the podium roof. Note: the Green Roof is also open to the public, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. Just visit the security desk in City Hall to obtain access and a self-guided brochure. Info: Aysa September aysasept@cardinalgroup.ca 416-971-4484
www.greenroofs.ca (Green Roofs for Healthy Cities)

BIONEERS 2002 - TORONTO SATELLITE PRESENTATION, Fri Oct 18, 9am-5:45pm, Toronto. The Bioneers Conference is the pre-eminent gathering of visionaries, amateur and professional, with practical solutions for our most pressing environmental and cultural crises. The event includes locally focused workshops and site tours beginning at 9am each morning, and features speakers such as Naomi Klein, John Todd, and Paul Hawken between 12pm and 4pm each afternoon. For more information and to register online visit www.ideasthatmatter.com and click on the link labeled "current discourse". \$30/day, or \$75 for the weekend. Discounts available for student groups, and subsidies for those in financial distress. At the Design Exchange, 234 Bay Street, TD Centre. Info/register if possible: Mark Graham mgraham@avana.org 416-944-1101
<http://ideasthatmatter.com/discourse>; www.bioneers.org

ECOLOGICAL and HEALTHY RENOVATIONS,

Sat Oct 19, 10am-4pm, Hillsburgh. Learn how to choose ecologically responsible and healthy materials when renovating your existing home or planning to construct a new building. Emphasis on roofing, flooring, paints, heating and lighting. \$45 incl. vegetarian lunch and refreshments. At Everdale, a non-profit learning centre, working organic farm, diverse wildlife habitat, and sustainable technology showcase, one hour northwest of Toronto. Let us know if you can offer or are seeking a ride. Bus and train service to Georgetown. Info/register: www.everdale.org info@everdale.org 519- 855-4859 (Everdale Environmental Learning Centre) [links: www.greenbuilder.com www.oikos.com]

CRITICAL MASS RIDE, SKATE and JOG, Fri Oct 25, 6pm, Toronto. Everyone is invited to join this mass ride, part of a world-wide movement to celebrate and promote alternative transport. We're not blocking traffic, we ARE traffic! Bring your bikes, trikes, blades and scooters. Meet at Yonge and Temperance St. at 6pm. (btwn Richmond and Adelaide - near Queen subway). Free. The last Friday of each month. Info: 416-504-2918 x 2
www.semiotek.com/cm/ www.onelesscar.ca
www.walkable.org
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CBN_announce www.city.toronto.on.ca/cycling/
http://directory.google.com/Top/Sports/Cycling/Commuting_and_Advocacy/Critical_Mass/

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**** WILD and GARDEN HERB IDENTIFICATION,**

Sat Oct 26, 10am-4pm, Hillsburgh. Learn to identify herbs for medicine, food and magic, according to the western herbal tradition. In the afternoon, learn to make herbal teas and remedies. \$45 incl. vegetarian lunch and refreshments. Wear outdoor clothes. At Everdale, a non-profit learning centre, working organic farm, diverse wildlife habitat, and sustainable technology showcase, one hour northwest of Toronto. Let us know if you can offer or are seeking a ride. Bus and train service to Georgetown. Info/register: www.everdale.org info@everdale.org 519- 855-4859 (Everdale Environmental Learning Centre) [links: www.herbalists.on.ca]

GREEN POWER TRADE SHOW, Mon-Tue Oct 28-29, Toronto. Canada's 3rd annual Green Power Trade Show. A forum for Green Power producers, retailers, associations and agencies to display their offerings, services and information. Workshops on developing Green Power markets; consumer information; procurement announcements; more. Free admission. www.sierraclub.ca/eastern/campaigns.shtml (under "Energy", click "Draft Program for the Green Power Trade Show"). Info: Christine Elwell, CIELAP 416-923-3529 x25 christine@cielap.org or Jacqueline Sharp, Sierra Club 416- 960-9606 eastern.canada.chapter@sierraclub.org

LEFTWORDS FESTIVAL OF BOOKS and IDEAS, Sun Nov 3, Toronto. A free festival of alternative ideas, ideas about the environment, labour, human rights, community development and more. Over thirty progressive Canadian publishers, bookstores, magazines and journals exhibit. Author readings, workshops, live music, discounts on books and magazines, book prizes, food and organic coffee. Free. New College, south of Harbord and Spadina. Info: Matthew Adams catalystcentre@web.ca 416-516-9546 www.leftwords.org [Highly recommended for anyone interested in social and environmental issues.]

**** GENEACTION, Wed Nov 13, 7:30pm, Toronto.** GeneAction is a grassroots organization supported by concerned citizens and ethically based, environmentally responsible businesses. GeneAction is working with Canadian citizens to ban genetically engineered foods. Monthly meetings the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Free. 348 Danforth, room 212, above the Big Carrot (Chester subway). Alternative location: Timothy's Coffee House, at the west corner of the Carrot Common (same bldg as the Big Carrot). Info: Dave Marshall 416-248-5519 www.geneaction.org www.biodev.org Events e-mail list: info@geneaction.org subject: subscribe.

**** GUELPH ORGANIC CONFERENCE and TRADE**

SHOW, Fri-Sun Jan 24-26, 2003, Guelph. Canada's largest public, organic event. Organic trade show and food-tasting fair with over one hundred exhibitors (free to the public). Over thirty workshops and courses for all levels of interest, novice to experienced grower. Theme: Organic Goes Mainstream. Guelph University Centre. Info, sponsorship: 519-824-4120 x2558 organix@georgian.net New website: www.guelphorganicconf.org Last year's websites: <http://guelph2002.organicfarms.ca> www.gks.com/OrgConf/ Bus service from Toronto: www.gostransit.com/public/access/1stserdt.asp?table=31 www.planetfriendly.net/living.html#transport (To avoid disappointment, please confirm details with the event's organizers. For many more events, courses, films, workshops, job and volunteer opportunities, subscribe to the People and Planet-Friendly e-mail newsletter: www.planetfriendly.net)

How to Forest or Reforest Your Neighbourhood

By: Andrea Dawber

The Importance of Trees

The health benefits provided by trees exponentially increase as trees age. The greater the leaf surface area of a tree, the greater its capacity to produce oxygen, to sequester pollutants in its leaves and roots, and to shade us from the harmful UV radiation of the sun.

Mature shade trees filter 80-90% of air pollutants. The air quality of an unforested street like Dupont or Hallam is 5 to 10 times worse compared to a well-forested street. Friends of Dovercourt Park and the City Forestry Department have begun a 3-year project to reforest the park, which is losing its mature shade trees. We would also like to encourage residents to help reforest our neighborhood, which is losing its 100+ year old silver maples.

Please help protect the young saplings being planted now so that they may grow to provide essential health benefits to all park users and our neighborhood. A small sapling can provide a very minuscule fraction of the oxygen, pollution filtering and shade benefits of a large tree. We need to ensure that they survive these first 5-10 years, so that they may replace our declining mature shade trees. At the moment, the city does plant many trees and many of them do not survive these critical early years. The city can continually replant trees, but saplings that never reach maturity cannot meet the escalating needs of pollutant filtration, cooling and shade. City trees experience many stresses that can retard their growth and kill them. Please keep dogs away from young trees. Urine is essentially salt: it burns young trees' bark and their shallow roots. Keep trees well mulched with a 3 or 4-inch thick large ring or "doughnut" of mulch for water retention and to protect them from harmful cuts by lawn equipment. Avoid piling mulch against the tree trunks, as this can cause rot and fungus. New trees also need water, especially during the increasing heat and drought of Toronto summers. During summer droughts, make sure the water penetrates the deep roots. Place a hose at the base of the tree, inside the "doughnut" of mulch for at least a half-hour or pour 10 buckets of water once or twice per week.

Trees are the lungs of our city: our health depends on their health.

Benefits Provided by Trees

Cleaner Air

Trees filter out 80-90% of airborne pollutants with their leaves.

Cleaner Water

Trees filter out water pollutants with their roots and reduce rainwater run off into our sewer system that empties into Lake Ontario.

Higher Oxygen Content in Air

Trees produce oxygen for us to breathe. Many countries around the world are intensively planting trees in urban areas such as Havana, Cuba (18 million trees), and Beijing, China, to improve air quality and grow food for the public.

Protection from Ultra Violet Radiation.

Trees shade us from the sun's harmful UV radiation. Australia has predicted a 100% rate of skin cancer and is busy building UV protective domes over all of its playgrounds. We also need to ensure sun safety for our children by providing shaded playgrounds and schoolyards.

Pull out this centre section of the Chronicle to use as a handout or reference piece in your neighbourhood.



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Moderate Climate and Temperature Changes

Trees shade and cool our city in summer and provide sheltering windbreaks in winter.

Urban Heat Island Relief

Urban heat island effect is caused by our city's large proportion of paved and dark colored surfaces like roofs, roads and parking lots, which absorb, rather than reflect, the sun's heat. Temperatures can be 8 degrees hotter than suburban and rural surroundings. Toronto needs more trees to modify the intensity of Toronto heat days. Toronto used to have 1 or 2 days with above 30 degree Celsius temperatures without cooling temperatures at night; last summer we experienced 20 heat days of plus 30 degree weather without any cooling night relief. By 2020, it is predicted that we will experience 50 heat days of plus-30 degree temperatures and no cooling relief during the nights. However, this may happen sooner since Toronto area population increases by 100,000 people per year with the accompanying urban heat island development and escalating number of cars on our roads.

Grow Healthy Food

Fruit trees and vines provide the health benefits of trees plus food for you.

Save Up To 40% Off Heating and Air Conditioning Bills

3 medium sized trees can save you up to 40% off bills to heat and cool your home.

Drought Protection

Forest cover is extremely important to maintaining water cycles. Trees protect our soil, gardens and land from drought. Trees shade us from the baking sun, providing shelter from wind and its accelerating evapotranspiration of moisture from soil and plants.

Absorb Heat Trapping Carbon Dioxide

Trees absorb carbon dioxide just as we breathe in oxygen. One of the most prevalent greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide, which intensifies the summer heat and humidity in our city.

Moderate the Deadly Combination of Heat and Humidity

Trees moderate our city's summer temperatures through shade, evapotranspiration and absorption of heat-trapping gases. Heat and humidity are deadly, especially to those with cardiovascular, pulmonary and respiratory problems, people on medication or with addictions. People with emotional difficulties are also vulnerable: suicide and homicide rates escalate during heat waves. Social problems also escalate. A rise in temperature is met with a rise in tempers. For more info regarding heat and health, please see the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment's Briefing Paper on Global Warming at www.cape.ca, which references 113 medical research papers focused on heat's harmful impact on our health.

Biodiversity in the City

Our urban forest provides habitats for birds and animals.

Increase Property Values and Beautify Neighborhoods

Trees add value to properties and neighborhoods. Studies show an approximate 15-20% increase in value from an unforested neighborhood to one that is well treed.

To Get Started

Don't Stand Alone: Enlist the support of your City Councillor, City Forester, Parks Department, Conservation Authority, etc. Create a Neighborhood Network of Allies. The frustration and disappointment that people experienced in my neighborhood (myself included) was due to our single voices not being understood as representative of community concerns. As a group, community consensus gets results which we could not achieve when we each stood alone.

1. Hold a public meeting for the neighborhood to discuss community or park improvements such as reforestation. Enlist the help of your Councillor, and ask that the neighborhood be notified of the meeting by flyer. Include key points on the importance of trees as well as contact info for free front yard trees through the city and LEAF's subsidized backyard tree planting program. Out of the meeting, form a residents' group to work on the issues and funding.

2. Create a map for new plantings. Walk the site for reforestation with your group to develop a plan. Discuss native species, number of trees, check existing trees for signs of rot, infestation, disease and general decline.
3. Meet with your neighborhood City Forestry supervisor. Give them a copy of the proposed planting map for new trees and info on preferred species and planting priorities. Discuss a timeframe, revise planting locations and species. Set a date for the first tree planting.
4. Tree Planting Event. Ask the Councillor's office to send out flyers to the community inviting everyone to the event. Invite school children and families to the neighborhood tree planting. Most schools have a newsletter that goes home with the children to their families; use it to advertise your event. Ask the school principal if two classes would like to join you at a tree-mulching event in honour of the new trees. (The large diggers and trucks for large calliper tree planting make the tree planting area unsafe for children. So, events need to occur after the large equipment has left the site.)
5. Encourage as much involvement as possible at the time of the event. Ask the park's supervisor to drop off compost for the planting and for the community to take home. If there are beds for planting, ask the park's supervisor to provide perennials or bulbs for the planting as well. Ask Forestry for a load of mulch, so that people can mulch all the new trees as well as any beds that may get planted. There will be more than enough mulch for folks to take some home, too!
6. Provide flyers on tree planting programs for people. 80% of our urban forest is on private land and residents' efforts in reforestation of our city are necessary. Forestry will give out the city's free front yard tree program forms and LEAF will provide brochures for their subsidized backyard program. Put "The Importance of Trees" info sheets out for people in the languages that are spoken in your community. Provide sign up sheets for people to join your group, to attend upcoming meetings or be on a neighborhood email list.
7. Continue to communicate with the neighborhood after the planting. Ask the park's supervisor for a bulletin board to keep the community in touch with upcoming events and meetings. Post "The Importance of Trees" info sheet.
8. Work in the schools to encourage young stewardship of our urban forest and to diminish the risks of vandalism to new park trees. Contact: Richard Christie, Environmental Education Director with the Toronto Board of Education, to request a tree workshop in conjunction with neighborhood plantings. Tel. 416-394-7495. Or ask your Forestry supervisor or LEAF contact to come to your school to provide information and a hands-on workshop with the neighborhood trees.
9. Continue to Communicate and provide subsequent planting opportunities.
10. Care for trees after planting. City trees experience many stresses that can retard their growth and kill them. For park trees, ask folks to please keep dogs away from young trees. Urine is essentially salt: it burns young trees' bark and their shallow roots. Help keep trees well mulched for water retention and keep a large ring of mulch around trees to protect them from harmful cuts by lawn equipment.
11. Water trees during summer droughts. New trees need water, especially during the increasing heat and drought of Toronto summers. When drought hits, check to ensure that the water penetrates the deep roots. Place a hose at the base of the tree for at least a half-hour or pour 10 buckets of water once or twice per week. Replace mulch after watering to ensure minimal loss of surface moisture through evaporation. For park trees, work with your park supervisor to come up with a water source for the trees. For street trees and others, ask your Councillor to send out flyers reminding people to water new trees twice per week during summer heat waves and drought. Just as humans are most susceptible to disease when weak, so are trees. Drought-weakened trees are most vulnerable to insect infestations and disease.

A Few Words on Tree Species and Urban Agriculture

Native trees are the best suited to our climate, require the least work, have the highest survival rate, play an important role in maintaining our native species heritage and contribute to our city's biodiversity.

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Native trees to consider include sugar maple, black maple, silver maple, freeman maple (not Norway maples!), red oak, bur oak, white ash, green ash, black walnut, basswood, tulip tree, kentucky coffeetree, hackberry, serviceberry and skyline honeylocust.

Some urban agriculture choices to consider include sugar maple (though we need winter frost to tap a tree and that is becoming increasingly rare for Toronto), walnut, chestnut, serviceberry, mulberry, apple, pear, plum, peach, cherry, quince, etc. The Northern Nut Growers' Association has a website (<http://www.icserv.com/nnga>) with useful information for large and small nut growers.

Medicinal urban agriculture trees to consider are the Ginkgo Biloba that has been around since the age of the dinosaur and is very pollution and heat tolerant. Also, horse chestnuts are used for homeopathic medicine. Further info on medicinal trees that can be grown in Toronto, contact the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine at tel. 416-498-1255.

Urban Agriculture Initiatives naturally grow out of increased community participation. As your neighborhood forestry group, park group or residents' association develops through its reforestation projects, community pride and involvement rise. Often folks find they also want to start a community garden or plant edibles in new beds along with the perennials, herbs and annuals.

In our park, I provided seeds and seedlings from The Stop Community Food Centre for the resident daycare children to plant. The tomato and pumpkin seedlings are growing wild with abundance. The corn they grew from seed has formed ears on the plants, which are almost ready for harvest. Next spring, they want to plant berry bushes in the garden area with the children. The edible part of the large mixed bed will expand and so will the levels of community involvement and the young stewardship of the garden bed.

Three Keys to Accelerating Greening Efforts

Road and Sidewalk Resurfacing/Reconstruction and Front Yard Trees

When the streets in your neighborhood, around your park or school are to be resurfaced or reconstructed (check with your Councillor or Public Works), you can request city Forestry people to drop off tree cards (ask for the Councillor Pantelone proactive ones). These are for front yard street trees to be planted on the city-owned frontage (usually 10 feet in from the sidewalk) between the sidewalk and your true property line. Later Forestry will come back to plant and mulch the new street trees.

Boulevards and More Trees

If roads and sidewalks are being reconstructed, and there is sufficient space, you can request a boulevard, a grassy strip between the sidewalk and the road along which the city will also plant trees. Your Councillor's assistance in getting the street's feedback and the 25% support for the project will be necessary. Getting a boulevard at the time of resurfacing is harder to accomplish because it essentially will demand the much costlier total reconstruction.

Are You in One of the Seven Designated Cultural Routes? Yes, you likely are.

Check with the city's Culture Division or your Councillor. I live in the Garrison Creek watershed and people east of me in the Annex, live in the Taddle Creek watershed. At the time of road resurfacing or reconstruction, you can ask for some other improvements as well as the boulevards, trees and bump out curbs to slow traffic and provide better pedestrian safety. For the Garrison Creek watershed, there are bronze medallions of native plants, birds and animals which can be laid in the sidewalk around a park as well as special benches, seating walls and bronze lettering for the park name. To contact the Garrison Creek Steering Committee for more information, call Berndt Baldus, Committee Co-Chair, at 416-978-3413, or Councillor Pantelone's office at 416-392-4009.

How To Get a Tree For Your Home, Street, Park or Neighbourhood

To Order a Free Front Yard Tree or Park Tree, Call Forestry at 416-338-TREE (338-8733)
To Order a Substantially Subsidized \$30-70 Back Yard Tree, Call LEAF at 416-413-9244.

The Death of Frankenfoods (August 2002)

Reprinted from "BioDemocracy News #40" of the Organic Consumers Association
By: Ronnie Cummins, Organic Consumers Association

Death of Frankenfoods: Nailing the Coffin Shut Quotes of the Month:

"Beggars can't be choosers." An unnamed State Department official, commenting on Zimbabwe and other nations' resistance to accepting shipments of US food aid containing genetically engineered ingredients. Washington Post 8/2/02

"Mandatory labeling will only frighten consumers. Labeling implies that biotechnology products are unsafe." Tommy Thompson, US Secretary of Health and Human Services. Associated Press 6/10/02

Contrary to the claims of a literal army of public relations flacks, indentured politicians, and scientists, the first wave of genetically engineered (GE) foods and crops have apparently suffered a fatal hemorrhage. Future historians will likely record Tuesday, July 30, 2002 as the beginning of the end, the day of irreversible decline for Monsanto and the Gene Giants. On that day, facing mounting global opposition from farmers, consumers, and even major US food transnationals such as General Mills, Monsanto was forced to announce that they were backing off "indefinitely" from plans to commercialize herbicide-resistant Roundup Ready wheat, the most important new billion-dollar crop in the biotech pipeline. Previously, Monsanto had promised Wall Street that the first GE wheat would hit the market in 2003. Earlier this year, facing heavy opposition, they pushed the date back to 2005.

Now Monsanto's highly-touted GE wheat joins the growing list of obituaries of Frankenfoods and crops: the Flavr Savr tomato (RIP 1996); the Endless Summer tomato (RIP 1996); Bt potatoes (RIP 2001); GE flax (RIP 2001); herbicide-resistant sugar beets (RIP 2000); and StarLink corn (RIP 2000). Other controversial crops such as GE rice have been put on indefinite hold. Monsanto's controversial recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) has been banned in every major industrialized nation except for the US, Mexico, and Brazil. Recombinant pig growth hormone (rPGH) has been approved in only one industrialized nation, Australia. Other biotech crops, including squash and zucchini, are grown by so few farmers that it's difficult to determine if they are even commercially available.

For the first time, major US food corporations, like their EU and Asian counterparts, are telling the biotech industry to back off. As Austin Sullivan, senior vice-president of General Mills told the Chicago Tribune June 28, "Candidly we have told the biotech industry that we are in a perilous situation." When asked why General Mills and other large food makers don't just stop using genetically engineered ingredients altogether, since consumers don't want them, Sullivan admitted, "That's a question we ask ourselves from time to time." Shortly before Monsanto's latest capitulation, a large EU grain miller bluntly told wheat industry leaders that his company would "stop buying US or Canadian wheat at once" if GE wheat was allowed on the market. Other leading EU, Japanese, and US buyers have echoed the same sentiment. Farmers in the US and Canada have also made it clear that bringing GE wheat to market would lead to a billion dollar meltdown in North American wheat exports. Desperately trying to downplay its defeat and prevent its stock from falling even further, Monsanto characterized their surrender on wheat as a "delay" until sometime beyond 2005, when consumers and industry are ready to accept gene-altered wheat, and strict grain industry segregation procedures are in place. But as Monsanto, and even Wall Street, now recognize, consumers are never going to accept GE wheat. Frankenwheat, for all practical purposes is dead. RIP. The Bush administration, for PR reasons, may still try to approve it for commercialization, but it will never be sold on the market.

Compounding this crushing blow to Monsanto and the biotech industry, whose earnings and stock value since the first of the year have plummeted, a US Federal District court in Maine approved a settlement July 29 that prohibits a major factory fish farm, Heritage Salmon, from bringing its GE salmon onto the market. The Maine ruling, resulting from a lawsuit filed by the US Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG) and the National Environmental Law Center,

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sets an important legal precedent that threatens to block any future commercialization of GE fish—until now the second most important biotech blockbuster being readied for market. The Maine court settlement will likely impact future legislative deliberations as well, such as the recent debate in the California legislature on a moratorium for GE fish.

Cutting off Frankenstein's Life Support

Leading up to agbiotech's late-July disasters were a series of other significant blows:

- On July 3, the European Parliament moved to tighten labeling requirements for genetically engineered foods, lowering the threshold triggering mandatory labeling from one percent to one-half of one percent and declaring zero tolerance for shipments of conventional food containing GE ingredients not approved for sale in Europe. US bureaucrats in Brussels complained that the labeling requirements "will seriously impair trade in agricultural biotech products," while the pro-biotech US Farm Bureau characterized the move as "a slap in the face." Few analysts believe that the US will actually follow through on its often-repeated threat to use the World Trade Organization (WTO) to challenge the EU's labeling laws, since this move would set off a trade war that could destroy the WTO.
- According to the recent Greenpeace report "Risky Prospects," more than 35 countries have laws in place or planned which require the mandatory labeling of food containing GE ingredients, or else laws which restrict the import of some gene-foods. These countries comprise more than half the world's population. Although the Bush administration adamantly opposes labeling, recognizing that this will be the death of agbiotech, major polls conducted last year by Rutgers University and ABC News both found that 90% of American consumers support GE labels. Even in Texas, Bush's home turf, a 2001 poll carried out by Texas AandM University found that 90% of Texans want mandatory labeling, and that 60% "strongly supported" labels.
- Monsanto announced, June 12, that its second largest customer for GE soybean seeds, Argentina, was bankrupt, and that its soybean farmers would no longer be able to receive seeds on credit. With this announcement, Monsanto was also forced to admit to investors that its global profits would decline by as much as 20% this year. Over the past three years, Argentina has become the world's second largest producer of GE crops (their only crop being Roundup Ready soybeans), accounting for more than 16% of all global GE acreage—largely due to Monsanto selling GE soybeans on credit, as well as offering the beans at bargain basement prices. Argentina's economic meltdown means that global acreage of GE crops will level off and start to decrease this year, contrary to claims made earlier by Monsanto and the USDA.
- For the first time in US history, voters at the state level will get a chance to vote on mandatory labeling for GE foods. On July 23, Oregon's Secretary of State announced that a ballot initiative organized by anti-biotech activists, Oregon Concerned Citizens for Safe Foods, www.labelgefoods.org has successfully gathered almost 100,000 signatures from the state's 3.3 million residents—more than enough to place it on the ballot November 5. Although powerful biotech and agribusiness lobbies such as the Farm Bureau, the Grocery Manufacturers of America, and the Biotechnology Industry Organization have vowed to defeat the initiative, the basic fact is that 90% or more of US consumers have consistently supported mandatory labeling of GE foods. According to Jean Wilkenson of the Oregon Farm Bureau, an agribusiness front group, industry views the measure as "an attempt to stop all biotechnology by running up costs." If Oregon voters pass the initiative, anti-GE campaigners have vowed to place similar measures on the ballot in a dozen states, including Colorado, Washington, and California.
- On June 8, the Organic Consumers Association, Greenpeace, and the Genetic Engineering Action Network carried out coordinated protests in over 100 cities against US supermarkets, pressuring major grocery chains such as Shaw's, Safeway, Food Emporium, Food Lion, Publix, and Albertson's to remove all GE ingredients from their brand name products. Coalition spokespeople pointed out that three major natural food supermarkets, Whole Foods, Wild Oats, and Trader Joe's, with combined sales of over five billion dollars,

have already responded to consumer pressure and gone GE-free for their house brands, while even larger chains such as Shaw's and Safeway are coming under grassroots pressure to do the same. An even larger GE-Free Markets national mobilization is planned for several hundred US cities the week of October 30 (see www.organicconsumers.org for Canadian events).

- Last spring activists from the OCA and the Genetically Engineered Food Alert leafleted and protested outside supermarkets in 200 US cities, part of a national campaign against Kraft and other food giants. On Earth Day, GEFA activists staged a protest outside Kraft's annual shareholders meeting in East Hanover, NJ. Similar protests in 200 cities are planned for Oct. 5-12. (www.gefoodalert.org)

Good Science Displacing Mad Science

For the past decade, biotech's mad scientists have been telling consumers not to worry about Frankenstein foods. They tell us GE crops such as Bt corn are non-allergenic and safe for human health and the environment. They say bovine growth hormone (rBGH) injected into dairy cows doesn't increase your risk of getting cancer. Gene-altered mutants are the same ("substantially equivalent"), they say, as traditional foods. Gene-splicing is an exact procedure, sort of like laser surgery. Gene transfer or genetic pollution is nothing to worry about. Antibiotic resistant marker genes, embedded in nearly all Frankenfoods, pose no health risks. They say GE companies like Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow, Dupont, Bayer, and BASF are not just bottom line companies, obsessed by quarterly profit reports, stock options, and stock prices. They say the real bottom line of the Gene Giants is to help feed the world, eliminate the use of toxic chemicals in agriculture, and make us all healthier and happier.

For five years BioDemocracy News and the website of the Organic Consumers Association www.organicconsumers.org have had another story to tell. The biotech industry and governments have done almost no safety testing of GE foods. No serious animal feeding studies (with the exception of Dr. Arpad Pusztai's experiments in Scotland in 1996-98, which found that GE potatoes devastated lab rats) have been carried out. No volunteer human feeding studies have been conducted (except for the rather alarming British study described below). Obvious risks like human allergenicity to foreign proteins spliced into GE foods, and transfer of antibiotic resistant genes into the human gut have been, for the most part, ignored. Millions of acres of GE crops are spreading genetic pollution, creating superweeds and pests, disrupting the balance between pests and natural predators, and killing butterflies and beneficial soil microorganisms. The more we learn about Frankenfoods and crops, the scarier they appear.

As recent developments show, good science is starting to undermine the credibility of mad science. Even mainstream, pro-biotech institutions like the National Academy of Sciences in the US, or publications such as *New Scientist* and *Nature Biotechnology*, are starting to speak out against the dangers of rushing headlong into risky territory like biopharming—gene-splicing drugs, vaccines, and industrial chemicals into common food plants such as corn, which in turn spread pollen throughout the environment. In an unprecedented move, even the Bush Administration's own Food and Drug administration is finding the need to tone down its rhetoric—no doubt preparing to insulate itself from the massive liability lawsuits which loom on the horizon after biopharms pollute the human food chain or after every variety of Bt corn turns out to be allergenic, not just the StarLink variety. Among the most significant scientific revelations over the past three months are the following:

- Frankengenes are getting into the human gut. On July 17, the British Food Safety Standards Agency released a scientific study indicating that herbicide resistance genes from Roundup Ready soybeans have been found in the bacteria of the small intestines of three out of seven people in an experimental feeding test who consumed a soy burger and a soy milkshake containing Monsanto's GE soybeans, the most commonly used GE food ingredient in the world. The biotech industry has long maintained that gene-altered material is destroyed during digestion and that engineered DNA will not combine with

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bacteria found in the human gut. The British study, conducted by researchers at Newcastle University, has set off alarm bells throughout the medical establishment. If the antibiotic resistant marker (ARM) genes found in most gene-foods (such as kanamycin in herbicide resistant soybeans and ampicillin in Bt corn) are getting into the human gut and combining with preexisting bacteria, which this study suggests, then doctors and their patients may find that serious infections no longer respond to antibiotics. The findings are especially worrisome for infants and children, as well as those with compromised immune systems, whose digestive systems are weaker and more permeable than mature, healthy adults. In 1999, the prestigious British Medical Association called for a global moratorium on GE foods and crops, citing, among other risks, the threat of antibiotic resistance marker genes combining with bacteria in the human gut. Even the World Health Organization and the rabidly pro-biotech American Medical Association have called for a phase-out of ARMs in GE foods.

- Biopharming is out of control. Friends of the Earth and the Genetically Engineered Food Alert (GEFA) coalition released an explosive report on July 16, which revealed that secret biopharm crop experiments are being carried out at over 300 undisclosed locations across the US. On these farms, powerful pharmaceutical drugs, vaccines, viruses (some related to the AIDS virus), and industrial chemicals, gene-spliced into common food plants, are being grown in the open environment. In at least 200 test plots, powerful drugs and chemicals have been genetically engineered into corn, a plant notorious for spreading its pollen (and its altered genes) far and wide. As Larry Bohlen of Friends of the Earth warned: "Just one mistake by a biotech company and we'll be eating other people's prescription drugs in our corn flakes." The USDA must prohibit the planting of food crops engineered with drugs and chemicals." Even pro-biotech scientists in the journal *Nature Biotechnology* recently warned that "current gene containment strategies cannot work in the field," and that potent biopharm chemicals could end up in the food supply. ProdiGene, the industry leader in biopharming, has predicted that millions of acres of US corn will be laced with drugs and industrial chemical by the year 2010. But of course one incident like the StarLink corn contamination crisis will likely spell the end of biopharming.
- All varieties of Bt corn are likely allergenic, not just the StarLink corn variety. As Friends of the Earth and the other members of the Organic Consumers Association's GEFA coalition have pointed out, StarLink is similar in composition and characteristics to other Bt varieties grown on millions of acres in the US. As indicated in recent issues of *BioDemocracy News*, there is mounting evidence that Bt corn may be harming the immune and digestive systems of animals and humans.
- As Dr. Michael Hansen of the Consumers Union told a gathering of farmers and academics (in a lecture delivered at Universidad Autonoma, Chapingo, Mexico on August 2, 2002), "There is increasing evidence from both epidemiological studies and lab studies that the various Bt endotoxins—including those from maize, cotton, and potatoes—may have adverse effects on the immune system and/or may be human allergens."
- Pesticide residues on GE corn and soybeans may be carcinogenic. A chemical component of Monsanto's Roundup Ready herbicide, sprayed on millions of acres of herbicide resistant soybeans and corn, has been linked to increased risks for cancer. Recently the World Health Organization issued a warning that a potent nerve toxin and carcinogen, also linked to birth defects in animals and humans, was turning up in a variety of vegetables. At first the WHO suggested that the presence of the chemical, acrylamide, probably arose from cooking the vegetables at high heat. Now according to a Canadian scientific expert, Dr. Joe Cummins, another, perhaps even more basic explanation is that the acrylamide in foods is actually a residue of a surfactant, or chemical additive, routinely used to enhance the effectiveness and reduce spray drift of a number of herbicides including Monsanto's Roundup herbicide, the most widely-used pesticide in the world. According to Cummins, frying foods containing acrylamide residues would then likely increase their concentration even more. This is yet more bad news for Monsanto, who derived 70% of their profits last year from sales of Roundup herbicide. It's also bad news

for the animal feed and meat industry, since non-organically raised animals are now ingesting record amounts of Roundup (and acrylamide) residues in the soybean hulls and other soy and corn-based feeds they are consuming.

- Gene-splicing foods is imprecise and unpredictable. In a recent paper circulating on the internet, Professor David Schubert of the Salk Institute in San Diego, California, points out that the current crude and imprecise nature of gene-splicing foreign DNA into common foods is inherently troubling and potentially dangerous because (1) introducing the same gene into two different cell types or body parts in an organism can cause very different proteins to be produced, with radically different activity; (2) introducing new genes into cells significantly disrupts inter-cellular activity and processes; and (3) introduction of foreign genes can produce new biomolecules which can be toxic or carcinogenic. Recent advances in gene chip technology are enabling scientists such as Schubert to quantitatively measure cellular disruption caused by gene-splicing. In one experiment, the introduction of a foreign gene caused a disruption of a full 5% of all genes in single-cell bacteria. In layperson's terms this means that 15,000 of the 300,000 genes in a plant could be disrupted by a single routine act of gene-splicing. This means that plant genes could be turned off, amplified, or turned up more, either producing more or fewer proteins (some of which are beneficial to humans, some of which are toxic) and chemical activity.

Frankenstein Rising: Nailing the Coffin Shut

Frankenstein appears to be mortally wounded, but of course this beast has the ability to rise from his coffin unless we nail the lid shut. Farmers and consumers, joined by a number of brave scientists, have now, for the first time in modern history, stopped a new and dangerous technology dead in its tracks. Public acceptance and farmer use of agricultural biotechnology has peaked and is now moving down in a slow but inevitable decline. No new blockbuster Frankenfoods or crops are likely to gain approval for commercialization on the global market. Those already approved (such as Bt corn) will come under increasing pressure as scientific evidence mounts that they are dangerous for human health and the environment, and as labeling becomes mandatory in most nations. This is grounds for celebration and reason for hope. The battle against genetically engineered foods and crops over the past decade has shown that the global Civil Society can stand up to transnational corporations and indentured science and government and literally change the dynamics of the marketplace, alter public perceptions, and eventually transform public policies. Congratulations to all of you. This is our common victory.

We've turned the tide of the battle, but there are still major tasks that lie ahead. Specifically we need (1) mandatory safety testing and labeling of all GE foods and crops in all nations, especially the United States, Canada, and Argentina, where 96% of all GE crops are produced; (2) marketplace pressure campaigns for removal of all GE soy, corn, canola, and cottonseed from animal feeds; (3) pressure on major clothing companies to stop using gene-altered cotton in their garments; (4) pressure on major supermarket chains and food makers, especially in North America, to remove all GE ingredients from their brand name products; and finally (5) continuing public education and pressure to prevent new Frankenfoods and crops (animals, fish, pharm drugs, lawn grass, trees) and human genetic engineering from being commercialized.

In North America we have a special obligation, and now an opportunity, to do what our counterparts in Europe, Japan, and other nations have already done: to put so much pressure on major supermarket chains like Shaw's, Safeway, and Loblaw's (Canada), and food and beverage giants like Starbucks and Kraft, that they voluntarily ban the use of all GE ingredients in their products.

For more information, including actions/campaigns in Canada, please visit our website at: <http://www.organicconsumers.org>.

In the Raw

By: Siue Moffat

Summer can be a time for lighter foods, exercise and having lots of energy. But summer also brings ice cream, picnics, alcohol on the patios, french fries at special events, corn soaked in butter and all kinds of tasty enjoyments that, although yummy, aren't especially good for you. A great way to prepare you for the fall and the upcoming sluggish winter is by raw food/fasting. (I've tried the Master Cleanser—only maple syrup, lemon juice and cayenne for 10 days—and it made me realise that these things aren't for everyone. I didn't feel any better after the Master Cleanser—it just made me think about all the good food I missed during those 10 days!)

Fasting for more than 3 days should be supervised by a health professional. Diabetics and hypoglycemics shouldn't fast at all unless under the care of someone knowledgeable. Fasting on water alone is out of the question. That said, here are some ideas and recipes taken from "Prescription for Nutritional Healing" and "Raw: The Uncook Book".

A lot of people feel energized and refreshed during and after fasting. It makes sense. Think about all the work your body has to go through when it separates toxins from nutrients, breaks down food, eliminates waste. When you start to feel bad, your body is going through a low cycle where it's trying to detoxify. Instead of giving it more work, maybe let it have a break. Perhaps a three day break is all you need—fasting for three days will help rid the body of toxins. (Epsom salt baths are another good way to get rid of toxins. Use 3-4 cups of salt per bath, and make sure you drink a glass of water before and after.)

During a fast, even though I'm only drinking juice (and peeing like crazy), I still find I get thirsty (it's all part of the process of flushing everything out). In terms of getting hungry (which I do), I've found the best cure is to fast during a time when you're busy—the less time you've got to sit around thinking about food, the better. I even conducted a vegan baking workshop while on fast and got through it. If you really must eat, watermelon is okay, but don't eat anything else with it.

It's important to take some sort of fiber supplement during your fast in order to clean things out. Juices should be watered down and chewing is a no-no; it will start up production of stomach acids, and if there's nothing for them to break down they can cause ulcers and other unpleasant things. Beneficial juices are fresh lemon juice, cabbage, beet, carrot, celery, grape, apple, cranberry and "green drinks" like Greens Plus or fresh spinach. Use pure juices without sugar or other additives. Don't drink tomato or orange juices, which are highly acidic. Garlic is very good on a fast either in a drink or in capsules. Herbs which are good to drink are pau d'arco, echinacea, rose hips, dandelion, red clover, alfalfa, chamomile.

I'm not much of a vegetable juice drinker, never really could get into drinking a carrot. When I juice, I'll often have a base of fruit like apple and add lemon, carrot, beet, cucumbers etc. (It's really good to have a juicer! If not, Karma has some great bottled fruit and veggie drinks ready to go.) I find I can only drink onions or beets when I know there's a yummy fruit drink next in line (like blueberry juice), a treat that keeps me going.

It's a good idea to eat raw food for two days before and after the fast. If you go too quickly from watered down juices to cooked food, everything you've accomplished during the fast could be undone. Originally, coming off the fast and back onto raw foods was often hard for me, but during my last fast I found two cookbooks which inspired me to be more creative with raw food (you can only eat so many salads with avocado dressing before you just want pizza) and enjoy the time spent creating dishes that didn't need cooking.

Juliano, the author of "Raw: The Uncook Book", may be a bizarre character but his cookbook is really interesting and creative. There are some dishes which mock cooked food like Mashed

Potatoes and Gravy and some which are concoctions all their own, like Portobello and Papaya Sushi. A lot of the recipes use nuts, and although there's no cooking involved, there is quite a bit of preparation, as nuts are often soaked for at least two hours. (Some recipes, mostly the bread ones, require a dehydrator. So unless you've got this specialized machine in your kitchen, you'll be out of luck to try "real toast" or baklava.)

I find it's pretty important to enjoy your raw food, especially coming off a fast. Use lots of natural flavouring and get a bunch of different textures and food combinations going. Before you know it, your two days will be up and you'll secretly be wishing you were still raw fooding in order to eat huge amounts of nuts, dried fruit and expensive produce! Here are some recipes from "Raw" which were particularly tasty (modified because Juliano really loves salt and sugary foods).

"Tuna" Salad

1 c sunflower seeds
1 c almonds or walnuts
water for soaking the nuts and seeds
1/8 c fresh lemon juice
1/2 tsp garlic
1/2 tsp powdered dulse (I just used extra kelp)
1/8 c organic tamari
1/4 c chopped onion
1/4 c chopped celery
1/4 c fresh chopped parsley
1/2 tsp powdered kelp
1/2 tsp minced garlic

Soak the nuts and seeds for at least two hours. Blend the seeds, nuts, lemon juice, garlic, dulse, tamari until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and mix in onion, celery, parsley, kelp and garlic. (I ate this in a lettuce leaf with tomato.)

Mashed "Potatoes"

3 c chopped cauliflower
1 c cashews
1/2 c fresh lemon juice
1/2 c fresh thyme, chopped
1 tb garlic
1 tsp salt

Blend the cauliflower using the lemon juice. Add the rest of the ingredients. (This is a "must eat" with the "Gravy" recipe.)

Gravy

1/4 c miso
1 tb red wine
1/2 c chopped onion
1 minced shallot
1 tb minced garlic
1/4 c orange or carrot juice
1/4 c olive oil
1 tb dates
1 tb organic tamari
1 tb minced ginger
1 tsp apple cider vinegar
1/2 tsp sesame seed oil

Blend all together.
Pour onto Mashed Potatoes and you're in for a yummy surprise!

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The Everyday Activist

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information of the sort discussed in this column and put them on the site as an ever-growing resource free for the use of anyone, everyday. And so, I invite you now to read and submit whatever suggestions you have for taking it a little (or a lot) easier on the Earth and its resources. I will present a theme for each column, with varying degrees of actions you can take in your daily life, from the easy and obvious/Newbie stuff like buying in bulk instead of products with unnecessary packaging, to the more difficult and complicated actions/Advanced Tips, which might include making your own soap, or finding recycled/recycleable flooring for your home.

If you would like to contribute ideas to this column and/or the web site (which will take some time for me to get up and running), please email me at: soderberg@goodmedia.com. (Please be patient if your submissions are not used immediately, since they might not fit into the current theme.)

In the Raw ...continued from page 10

Marinated Onions

1 large onion, thinly sliced
1/4 c organic tamari
2 tb olive oil

Marinate onions for 10 minutes or up to eight hours. Drain and serve.

Marinated Portobellos

4 c diced portobello mushrooms
1/4 c miso
1 c orange juice

Marinate mushrooms for 10 minutes or up to six hours. Drain and serve.

Raspberry Tiramisu

1/2 c dates
1/2 c dried figs
water to soak dates and figs
1/4 c maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla
1 1/2 tsp carob powder

Soak dates and figs in water for two hours. Drain. Puree dates, figs, maple syrup, vanilla and carob. Put into four small bowls.

1/2 c raw walnuts
2/3 c frozen raspberries
1/4 c maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla

Blend all the above and spoon into dishes. Garnish with fresh raspberries, strawberries, and mint.

NOTICE BOARD

Mark your calendar...

Karma will hold its Annual General Meeting on Monday, October 22, 2002 at Friends House, 60 Lowther Avenue (near St. George). Please come out to hear what's been going on for the last year, elect new board members, and discuss member labour. \$250 in door prizes will be awarded. Watch the store for the AGM agenda in September.



"Organic Opportunity" Directory

Amazing directory of links to everything organic! For consumers/eaters, gardeners, farmers, students, job-seekers. Everything from where to get organics...to gardening tips and information...events, courses and educational programs...jobs and volunteer opportunities. Includes permaculture; biodynamics; sustainable living; sustainable agriculture; Wwoofing; learning centres and ecovillages; books and magazines; organizations and websites; lists of farms and gardens; more.

www.planetfriendly.net/organic.html (Planet-Friendly is a not-for-profit information service)

Tired of sweeping floors? Want to make our Web Site sing?

Karma member to join the Web Committee as Web Designer. This is your creative opportunity to help make the www.karmacoop.org Web site look great, and get work credit! Please contact webmaster@karmacoop.org to express your interest.

