Introducing Ask Meredith: the Organic Living Corner!

You've Got Questions, and We've Got Answers!

"Inspiring, educating, and supporting people to farm, garden, and live organically." This is the Organic Growers School's mission statement. It is our entire purpose! We've long had sections of our newsletter geared to our Farmers and Gardeners, and we thought it was high time we started writing for our audience that is seeking ways to live organically, too. Organic Living refers to making life choices that are healthy for people, communities, and the planet. This means those of you who stand in the grocery store, checking ingredients for high fructose corn syrup or anything that looks like it could be a GMO. This means those of you who ask your local farmer what conditions this chicken lived in. This means those of you who see the big picture. Brought to you by our own director and homesteader-extraordinaire, Meredith McKissick, we have something for you! So, send us your questions and tell us what we can be doing for you. Can't wait to hear from you!

Organic Living Corner

Dear Meredith

I have been shopping with a health-consciousness for many years.
Sometimes it is hard on my wallet, and my family protests when I boycott foods from our diet. Because of this, I am always looking for ways to balance my obsession with organic foods as a sort of security. I recently became aware of the "Dirty Dozen" list of foods to always buy organic, and the "Clean Fifteen" list of foods to buy non-organic. What are your thoughts on these lists?

- Hilary, Paducah KY

Hilary,

You’re clearly a discerning consumer, like many of our readers. You check ingredient labels most of the time, shop at the tailgate markets weekly, and read the news on food safety. Still, you find yourself wondering when it is important to buy organic and when it isn’t or how you can manage the best food choices on a tight budget of time and money. The widely publicized “Dirty Dozen” and “Clean Fifteen” lists were developed by the Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org), and they detail produce items that have the most amount of pesticide residue (“dirty”), and which items have the least (“clean”).

The “Dirty Dozen,” which has now been expanded to fifteen items, includes the following: apples, celery, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, grapes, hot peppers, nectarines, peaches, potatoes, spinach, strawberries, sweet bell peppers, kale, collard greens, and squash. For these items, the EWG asserts you should ALWAYS buy the organic option...

Read more at our Blog

Got a question for Meredith? Email it to us at enews@organicgrowersschool.org

Gardener's Corner

Ask Ruth

Stink bugs...

Yikes they eat everything in sight. Besides picking them off daily what can I do? I have never seen so many!!

Dianne Markham—growing organically for 32 years

Dear Dianne,

There are almost 300 kinds of stinkbugs in the USA, and some of them are even helpful stinkbugs. In the upper southeast, four destructive stinkbugs are commonly...

Farmer's Corner

Ask Tom

Dear Tom –

With the recent warm weather we planted peppers in early May but had a scare last week when the temperature dropped to near freezing for one night in a period that had been very warm. I was told our last frost date is May 15. What does that date really mean and when should I set out my peppers?

– Sam in Meadow Fork

Dear Sam –

Our strategy on planting tender summer...
found: Green Stink Bugs (Acrosternum hilare), Southern Green Stink Bugs (Nezara viridula), Harlequin Bug (Murgantia histrionica), and Brown Stink Bugs (Euschistus servus). But there IS a new stinkbug in town, and its reputation precedes it. The new stinkbug is called a Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (Halyomorpha halys Stål) or BMSB. First identified in Pennsylvania, the BMSB is from Asia and apparently slipped through customs undiscovered in the late 1990’s. By 2010 the brown mamorated stink bug was causing severe damage to crops in most mid-Atlantic states, and has rapidly spread to 39 states, Washington, D.C., and Canada – posing serious threats to ornamentals, fruits, vegetables, and row crops, but they are also invading houses...

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Gardeners: Got a question for Ruth? Email it to us at enews@organicgrowersschool.org

Farmers: Got a question for Tom? Email it to us at enews@organicgrowersschool.org

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Questions? Thoughts? Comments?

We want to hear from you!
Email them to us at

jenn@organicgrowersschool.org

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