

# ORGANICS, the soil-ution

*"We know more about the movement of celestial bodies than about the soil underfoot"*

- Leonardo da Vinci -

Many cultures creation stories have us coming from the soil. Even the biblical beginning has the first people named Adam (from the Hebrew word *adama* meaning "earth" or "soil") and Eve (from *hava* meaning "living"). Together, they hint to us that life comes from soil or the soil is alive. Literally both are true.

E. O. Wilson, professor of ecology at Harvard University, states that "the soil is a living organism... It's dynamic. It's full of life. And it does not produce anything for human beings unless it's sustained in that living condition." In one gram of healthy soil there can be more than 10,000 species and over a billion living micro-organisms which decompose organic matter and unlock nutrients and minerals so plants can use them.

All food comes from the earth. The economy doesn't produce our food, the earth does, which in turn makes the economy possible. This simple reality has somehow been reversed in our thinking and is the cause of much of the devastation we see today.

The soil is our primary health care system and when healthy, is the source of more than 98% of human nutrition. The soil is the building blocks of life itself. In the words of a Kayapo leader; PaikanIt "the earth is our supermarket and our drug store".

*"The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself"*

- Franklin D. Roosevelt -

Soil loss, and its associated impacts, is one of the most important, yet probably the least well-known of today's environmental problems. According to David

by Alf Orpen

Pimentel, Professor of Ecology and Agricultural Sciences at Cornell University "soil erosion is one of the world's greatest disasters" as "it takes 500 years to form one inch (2.5cm) of topsoil, yet worldwide we are losing 75 billion tons of soil each year". That's an estimated 25 times faster than it can be replaced calculates University of Michigan professor of geological sciences Bruce Wilkinson. We have already lost in the vicinity of 30% of the world's topsoil and much of it caused by human activities such as deforestation, intensive chemical farm practices and development.

In today's world, it is easy to forget that we are as much a part of the environment and as dependent on it as all other living creatures. Organic advocates have long understood the value of healthy soil, knowing that soil is not simply a physical medium for crop growth but the means by which plant nutrition naturally occurs. Healthy soils do indeed create healthy plants and that result in healthy people. To support people that understand AND undertake these activities is indeed the solution. It's that simple, "buy responsibly", knowing that what you choose makes a bigger difference than what you read, talk or protest about. Knowledge can only be considered power, when acted upon!

*"The threat of nuclear weapons and man's ability to destroy the environment are really alarming. And yet there are other almost imperceptible changes - I am thinking of the exhaustion of our natural resources, and especially of soil erosion - and these are perhaps more dangerous still, because once we begin to feel their repercussions it will be too late."*

- The Dalai Lama -

