



## sustainable farming practices

Environmental protection is the primary reason most organic farmers become involved in organic agriculture. Concern for the environment is portrayed in many aspects of organic farming:

- care in the handling of all animal wastes
- protection & fostering of wildlife, including wild bird populations
- avoiding the use of agricultural toxins - pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, chemical fertilizers
- protection of stream banks & watersheds
- researching new ways to recycle agricultural nutrients (closed-loop systems)
- promoting local production for local consumption to reduce the environmental effect of global transportation (reduce food miles)

## grass-fed vs. grass-finished

The definition of grass-fed is not regulated in Canada. Confusing the matter even more is the difference between the terms "grass-fed" & "grass-finished":

- ↳ essentially, any animal that has spent a portion of its life on grass could logically be labeled as a grass-fed animal — at least at some point in its life;
- ↳ whereas, grass-finished animals have been fattened on grass prior to slaughter.

## healthy soil

Soil acts as a filter, cleaning air and water. It exchanges gases with the atmosphere & influences the global climate. Soil receives organic wastes & recycles their nutrients back to plants; it also holds & breaks down some toxic wastes. Because soil plays such a key role in world health, economics & environmental stability, we must conserve it and use it in a sustainable manner.

**"A soil is not a pile of dirt. It is a transformer, a body that organises raw materials into tissues. These are the tissues that become the mother to all organic life."**

William Bryant Logan, 1995

## characteristics of healthy soil

- drains & warms up quickly in the spring
- does not crust after planting
- soaks up heavy rains with little run off
- acts like a sponge, absorbing rain & moisture
- stores moisture for dry spells
- resists erosion & nutrient loss
- is an ideal environment for microbes
- does not require increasing amounts of fertilizer to maintain good yields
- produces healthy, high quality crops



rethink food & waste

## what is food security?

**food security happens when...**farmers & fishers earn a fair income for their efforts...food is produced in a way that is safe for people & the environment...local, regional & community food production is supported...social justice & inclusion are priorities...all people are empowered to work together to create positive change.

**food insecurity happens when...**there are no farms or grocery stores nearby...our food travels great distances to get to us...there isn't enough money...healthy & safe food is not available...healthy foods cost more than unhealthy foods...our rivers are polluted so fish don't survive...our traditional foods are not available or accessible.

## what is urban agriculture?

Urban agriculture (UA) refers to growing food & related activities within cities. It includes urban farms, community & backyard food gardens, edible landscaping, food producing rooftops & balconies, and the policies that allow these activities in our neighbourhoods. UA can reduce a community's reliance on imports & increase access to a local supply of fresh foods.

## why organic?

Organic farming integrates wild biodiversity, agrobiodiversity & soil conservation, and takes low-intensity farming one step further by eliminating the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which is an improvement for human and ecosystem health.

## did you know?

- In BC, we currently produce under half of the food we consume — 45% of vegetables & 25% of the fruit we eat; we also produce 70% of our meat; the remainder is imported.
- About 60% of BC's food imports come from the United States; we are especially dependent on the U.S. for our winter supply of fresh produce, with 70% of our vegetables & 60% of fruit imported from the U.S.
- 20% of our imported vegetables come from Mexico, while China, Mexico & Chile together account for 20% of our imported fruit.
- BC has 442 organic farms, accounting for 2.2% of all BC farms (compared to 4% in Europe & 1% globally).
- We need to increase local food production by 30% by 2025.

Visit [www.ecourbia.org](http://www.ecourbia.org) for additional resources & tools related to food & waste, simple ways to live a more sustainable life + links to local initiatives, our knowledge base & calendar of events.

Special Thanks to Our Contributing Sponsors



a public outreach program of EcoUrbia Network

**EWG'S SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO PESTICIDES™**

DIRTY DOZEN™ <i>Buy These Organic</i>		CLEAN 15™ <i>Lowest in Pesticides</i>	
WORST	1 Celery	BEST	1 Onions
	2 Peaches		2 Avocado
	3 Strawberries		3 Sweet Corn
	4 Apples		4 Pineapple
	5 Blueberries		5 Mangos
	6 Nectarines		6 Sweet Peas
	7 Bell Peppers		7 Asparagus
	8 Spinach		8 Kiwi
	9 Cherries		9 Cabbage
	10 Kale/Collard Greens		10 Eggplant
	11 Potatoes		11 Cantaloupe
	12 Grapes (Imported)		12 Watermelon
	13 Grapefruit		
	14 Sweet Potato		
	15 Honeydew Melon		

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP  
[www.foodnews.org](http://www.foodnews.org)

## about pesticides

Small doses of pesticides and other chemicals can cause lasting damage to human health, especially during fetal development and early childhood.

## why it matters

EWG research has found that people who eat 5 fruits & vegetables a day from the Dirty Dozen™ list consume an average of 10 pesticides a day. Those who eat from the 15 least contaminated conventionally-grown fruits & vegetables ingest fewer than 2 pesticides daily. The EWG Guide helps consumers make informed choices to lower dietary pesticide intake.

