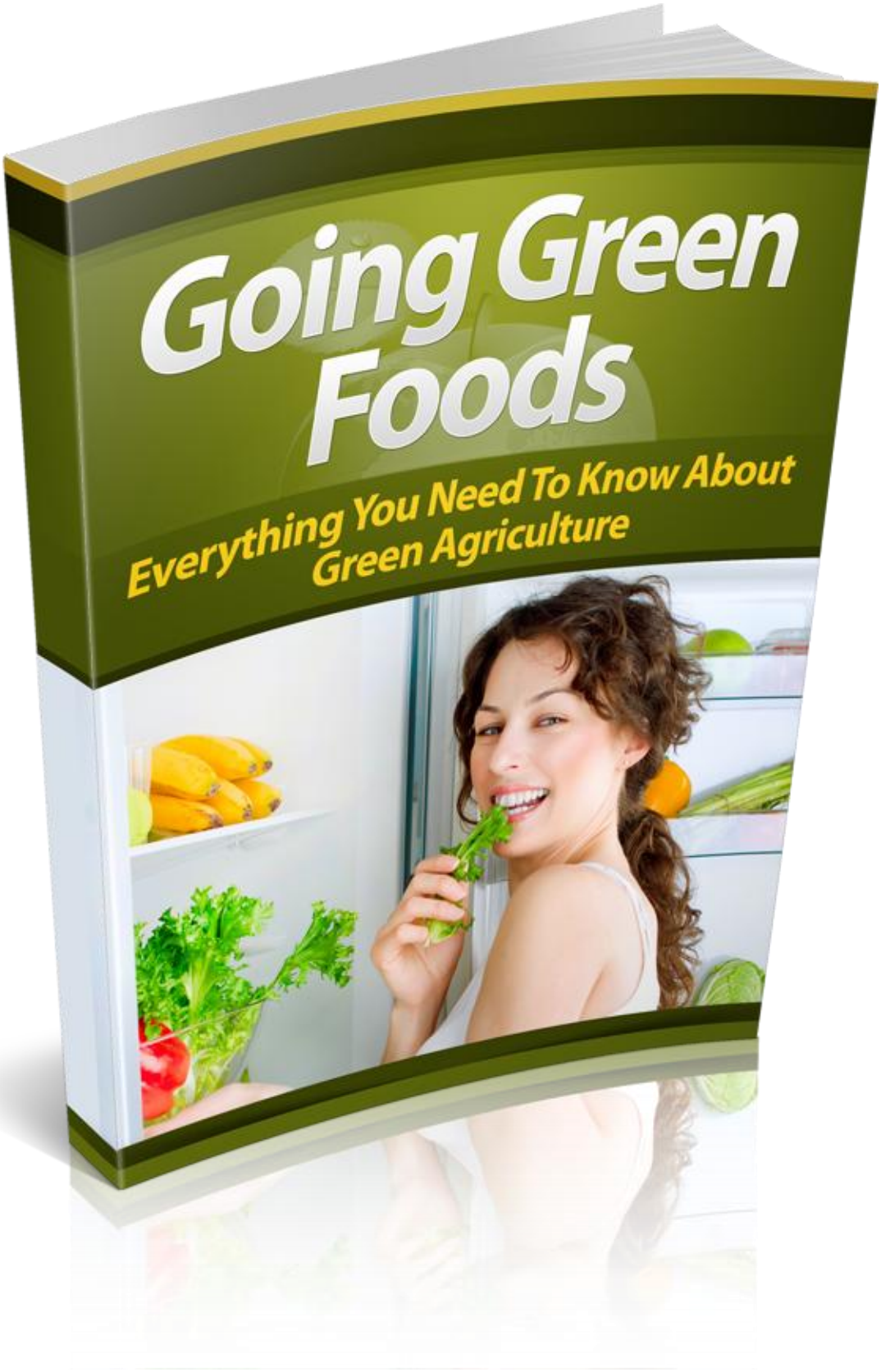
Going Green Foods
Everything You Need To Know About Green Agriculture

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Foreword

Organic agricultural techniques blend scientific knowledge of environmental science and modern technology with traditional agricultural practices based on naturally happening biological processes. Organic agricultural techniques are examined in the field of agro ecology. Although conventional agriculture utilizes synthetic pesticides and water-soluble synthetically purified fertilizers, organic farmers are limited by regulations to utilizing natural pesticides and plant food.

Going Green Foods

Everything You Need To Know About Green Agriculture

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Synopsis

The chief techniques of organic agricultural include crop rotation, green manures and compost, biologic pest control, and mechanical cultivation. These measures utilize the natural surroundings to enhance agricultural productivity: legumes are set to fix nitrogen into the soil, natural insect predators are promoted, crops are rotated to confound pests and regenerate soil, and innate materials like potassium bicarbonate and mulches are utilized to check disease and weeds. Sturdier plants are generated through plant breeding instead of genetic engineering.

The Basics

Although organic is basically different from conventional because of the utilization of carbon based fertilizers compared with extremely soluble synthetic based fertilizers and biologic pest control rather than synthetic pesticides, organic agricultural and large-scale established agricultural are not totally mutually exclusive. A lot of the techniques formulated for organic agriculture have been adopted by more established agriculture. For instance, Integrated Pest Management is a many-sided technique that utilizes assorted organic techniques of pest control whenever conceivable; however in conventional agricultural might include synthetic pesticides only as a last resort.

Crop diverseness is a distinctive feature of organic agricultural. Conventional agricultural centers on mass production of one crop in one place, a practice named monoculture. The science of agro ecology has disclosed the advantages of polyculture (multiple crops in the same place), which is frequently employed in organic agricultural. Planting a assortment of veggie crops backs up a broader range of advantageous insects, soil microorganisms, and additional factors that add up to total farm health.

Organic agricultural trusts to a great extent on the natural breakdown of organic matter, utilizing strategies like green manure and composting, to replace nutrients taken from the dirt by previous crops. This organic process, driven by microorganisms like

mycorrhiza, allows the natural production of nutrients in the soil throughout the growing time of year, and has been referred to as feeding the soil to feed the flora. Organic agricultural utilizes a assortment of techniques to better dirt fertility, including crop rotation, cover cropping, decreased tillage, and application of compost. By cutting back tillage, dirt isn't inverted and exposed to air; less carbon is lost to the air resulting in more dirt organic carbon. This has an additional advantage of carbon sequestration which may cut back greenhouse emissions and aid in reversing global climate change.

Organic weed management advances weed curtailment, instead of weed elimination, by heightening crop competition and phytotoxic effects on weeds. Organic farmers incorporate cultural, biologic, mechanical, physical and chemical maneuvers to handle weeds without synthetic herbicides.

Organic criteria calls for rotation of annual crops. Meaning that a single crop can't be grown in the same location without another, intervening crop. Organic crop rotations often have weed-suppressive cover crops and crops with different life cycles to deter weeds affiliated with a certain crop. Research is in progress to acquire organic techniques to boost the growth of natural microorganisms that curb the growth or sprouting of common weeds.

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Chapter 2:

What Does Going Green With Food Mean

Synopsis

Regrettably, your tasty burger and perfectly salted fries might be part of a bigger and much bigger damaging effect on the environment. Here's how the industrial food creation procedure harms Mother Earth:

- Water supply pollution: if agricultural chemicals, hormones, pesticides and plant foods soak up into the water table, fish perish and the drinking water gets dirty, among additional issues.
- Dead areas: Water runoff likewise carries tons of nutrients from plant food. This runoff fertilizes gigantic algae blooms in water like the Gulf of Mexico, Chesapeake Bay and Puget Sound. These blooms cover miles and choke all surviving life in the water below by messing up oxygen levels.
- Air pollution: if farm animals are confined, as they are with industrial meat products, harmful gases like sulfur dioxide, CO2 and ammonia are discharged into the air.
- Power: Scientists calculate that about forty percent of the power utilized in our industrial food scheme goes towards the production of (polluting) plant food and pesticides

What Is Safe

You've heard it time and again: purchase local. Here's wherefore: purchasing local cuts back on something known as "food miles," or how far your food has been transported. The berries you purchase at the market might have been air-freighted from Chile, which implies those yummy treats have a huge carbon footprint. Even food with a "Made in the USA" tag has in all likelihood been transported a long way. On the average, produce in the U.S. travels anyplace from 1,300 to 2,000 miles from the farm to the market. If you wish to compute your foods' carbon footprint, use a "carbon footprint calculator".

You'll likewise find that blueberries and additional fruits and vegetables taste better when they've only journeyed ten or so miles to your local market. Plus, purchasing local may supply some health advantages you wouldn't anticipate. For instance, a lot of allergy specialists recommend purchasing local honey. Because the bees live in your region, the honey contains the immune-stimulating ingredients that help your body adjust to your surroundings.

Purchasing out of season food is the same as gulping gas. Here's how:

Let's suppose you want a tomato, however where you live it's not the right time of year. You'll have to get a tomato from the market, and if you live in the U.S., your store probably sells tomatoes that came from either Florida or Mexico. This tomato was harvested green, so it wouldn't go bad in transit, and traveled to your market via a semi.

When it arrived in your region, it likely was put in a storage warehouse where it was gassed with ethylene to force it to ripen unnaturally.

But, if you purchase a tomato in season from a local farmer, it probably ripened on the vine prior to it being picked and traveled a small distance, saving gobs of carbon emissions. Your tomato likewise tastes better. How come? Tomatoes require sunshine to make sugar, which gives them their signature sweet, robust taste. If your tomato was harvested when it wasn't ready, it will taste different.

If you consume beef products, you can't do much better ecologically speaking than grass-fed. Grass-fed means the cows are raised and fed on grazing land as opposed to feedlots, where they're fed grains and antibiotics. Consuming too many grains may boost the total of E. coli in a cow's abdomen, which may occasionally lead to damaged meats and large-scale health scares.

So how come farms even bother to feed cattle grain? Factory farms feed their stock grain because the government supplies big subsidies to farms that farm grains like soy and corn. These grains are ample in protein, which means they plump out the animals. But the meat from grain-fed beasts tends to be lower in "good fat" and elevated in "bad fat."

Research indicates that grass-fed beef has more nutrition than grain-fed, particularly more beta-carotene, vitamin E and omega-3s. Cattle

have naturally evolved to consume grass, not grains. Most cows mature in the springtime, and as their bodies grow, they consume newly-grown grass, which is full of seeds and nutrition. These same nutrients are available in the meat you purchase from grass fed cows.

However grass-fed isn't simply healthier. As the cows eat grass instead of corn or soy, the fertilizers and pesticides commonly used on the farm to raise the feed aren't utilized at all. Farmers rotate their cows through assorted pastures every year, which gets to be a natural way to utilize and repurpose land. If animals graze in a particular area, their manure fills up that pasture. The manure breaks up into the dirt at a slow rate and naturally fertilizes it, making the dirt sound to grow more grass. The cattle may then return to that pasture to eat.

Health experts tell us to consume fish for its omega-3s, which are heart-healthy and help diminish the risk of cardiovascular disease. Salmon particularly is known for being high in omega-3 fatty acid. But, if you wish to be ecologically conscious, you ought to look into how your salmon arrived at your market before you buy it.

If salmon is dubbed "sustainable," that means that capturing it won't put a gouge in the salmon population and that the habitat isn't negatively affected. Conservationists agree that wild Alaskan salmon is your most beneficial choice ecologically, as this sort of salmon isn't overfished and capturing it won't negatively affect the salmon population or the sea.

But, farmed Atlantic salmon makes a lot of issues for environment and fish populations and here's how come: In fish farms, 1000s of fish are jammed into little areas, resulting in lots of fecal matter and the easy transfer of disease. As many of these fish farms are ocean based, the waste spills over into the surrounding waters and disease may be sent to the wild fish population. If the raised fish are fed any kind of chemicals or hormones, those likewise leak into the surrounding waters. In a few cases, the pollution is so awful that investigators have actually noticed the decomposition of the ocean floor.

Organic farming aims to downplay environmental impact with techniques like crop rotation, compost, biological instead of chemical pest control, and green instead of synthetic fertilizers as well crop rotation is used. If crops are rotated, there's no need for additives.

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Chapter 3:

What Is Sustainable Agriculture

Synopsis

In easiest terms, sustainable agriculture is the production of food, fiber, or additional plant or animal products utilizing farming strategies that protect the environment, public health, human communities, and animal wellbeing. This sort of agriculture enables us to grow healthful food without compromising next generations' power to do the same.

What Makes It Better

The basic advantages of sustainable agriculture are:

Environmental conservation

Sustainable farms make crops and produce animals without banking on toxic chemical pesticides, synthetic plant foods, genetically altered seeds, or things that degrade soil, water, or additional natural resources. By producing an assortment of plants and utilizing strategies like crop rotation, preservation tillage, and pasture-based farm animal husbandry, sustainable farms protect biodiversity and further the development and sustainment of sound ecosystems.

Care of Public Health

Food production ought to never come at the expense of human wellness. As sustainable crop farms prevent the use of hazardous pesticides, they're able to produce fruits and veggies that are safer for consumers, workers, and nearby communities. As well, sustainable farm animal farmers and ranchers raise animals without life-threatening practices like the utilization of nontherapeutic antibiotics or arsenic-based growing promoters. With heedful, responsible management of farm animal waste, sustainable farmers likewise protect humans from being exposed to pathogens, toxins, and additional risky pollutants.

Maintaining Vibrant Communities

A vital component of sustainable agriculture is its power to stay economically feasible, supplying farmers, farmhands, food processors, and other people employed in the food system with a livable earning and safe, fair working situations. Sustainable farms likewise boost local and regional economies, producing great jobs and constructing strong communities.

Carrying On Animal Welfare

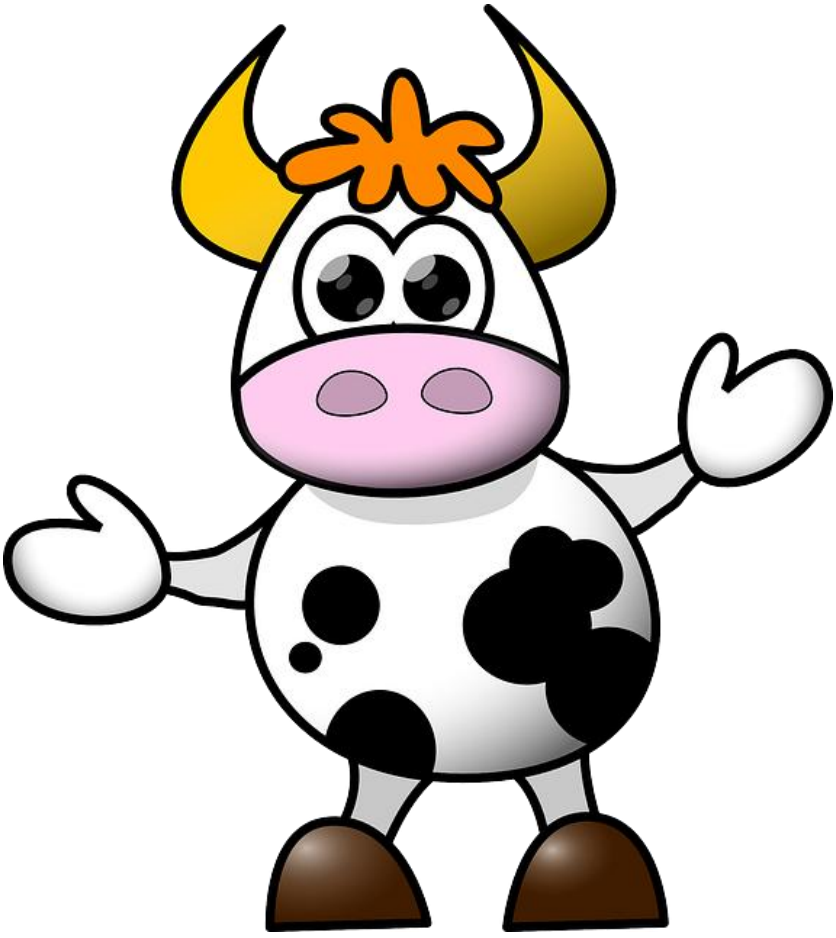
Sustainable farmers and ranchers treat creatures with care and respect, implementing farm animal husbandry practices that protect animals' wellness and good health. By bringing up livestock in the pasture, these farmers enable their creatures to move freely, engage in instinctive actions, consume a natural diet, and avoid the tension and illness affiliated with confinement.

Chapter 4:

What Is Organic Agriculture

Synopsis

Artificial bovine growth hormone -- rBGH. Partially hydrogenated. Monosaturated fat. Low fat. Reduced fat. As if label decoding wasn't already hard, we're now facing labels claiming an assortment of organic messages, a lot of them with happy, smiling cows.



Organic Agriculture

The organic food trend seems to be a mainstream life-style for some -- which translates into huge business. So where do organic foods and fibers come from, and what makes them organic?

Organic agriculture is founded on holistic, ecologically balanced farming principles affecting soil fertility, crop rotation and natural pest control. It might sound like an evasive concept; however the basis for organic agriculture is actually really simple: Allow nature to accomplish what nature accomplishes best.

A lot of day-to-day products give the sack be raised on organic farms, including veggies, grains, meat, dairy, eggs and fibers like cotton. What makes these items organic is how close to their state of nature they stay.

If raising organic goods, farmers don't utilize synthetic pesticides or fertilizers on crops, and they pass up the utilization of synthetic hormones, antibiotic drugs or additional medicines in their livestock. Animals are supplied with organic feed and allowed to access the outdoors.

In '94, there were about 2,500 to 3,000 certifiable organic farmers in the U.S. In '05, all 50 states had a few certified organic farmlands. Nowadays there are more than 10,000 certified organic farmers who create 2 percent of the U.S. food provision.

Organic farming techniques accent the utilization of renewable resources and preservation of soil and water. However this isn't a new idea, in the U.S. or worldwide. The term "organic farming" may be followed back to 1940.

Chapter 5:

The Difference Between "Natural" Foods And "Organic" Foods

Synopsis

Look around the grocery these days, and you will see a lot of food marked as "natural" and "great for you" or "green." However is "all natural" the same as "organic"?

The Differences

The answer is a bluntly no. Whenever possible, select "certified organic" beverages and foods. Certified organic foods and beverages have met the accompanying FDA standards.
What sorts of fruits, veggies, and grains may be certified organic?

Only those that have:

Been raised in safe soil, free of sewage sludge, lead salts, and potassium chloride, amongst a lot of additional substances, for at least 3 years prior to the first organic harvest.

No alterations: Genetically altered organisms, irradiation, and additives are banned.

Been stored individually: Handlers, food processors, and food manufacturers have to separate organic products from nonorganic ones and take measures to guarantee that organic foods don't come into contact with disallowed chemicals or substances.

What sorts of meat, milk, eggs, and additional animal products may be certified organic?

A number of prerequisites factor into this certification, including:

- Timing – animals have to be raised organically from the last 3rd of gestation (for livestock) or no later than the 2nd day of life (for domestic fowl).
- Organic feed – livestock feed products have to be a hundred percent organically grown.
- Hormone- and antibiotic-free – sick animals have to be treated, however if an animal has been handled with a prohibited medication, it can't be marked and sold as organic.
- Outdoor access (including grazing land for animals that graze) – every animal has to have shade, shelter, fresh air, direct sunshine, and room to move around appropriate for its species.
- No commingling – organic animal wares have to be separated from nonorganic products. Organic animal products must not come into contact with banned chemicals or substances.

Bear in mind that even if a producer is certified organic, the utilization of the "USDA organic" label is voluntary. As well, not everybody goes through the stringent procedure of getting to be certified, particularly smaller farming operations. If shopping at a farmers' market, for instance, don't hesitate to ask the vendors how your food was raised.

Chapter 6:

The Benefits Of Growing Your Own Food

Synopsis

Among the most rewarding activities you and your loved ones may enjoy is to grow your own food. Besides being able to savor delicious fruits, veggies, and herbs from your own backyard, raising your own food positively affects your health, your loved ones and the environment.

Grow Your Own

A lot of studies have demonstrated that organically grown food has more minerals and nutrients that we need than food grown with man-made pesticides. There's a great reason why a lot of chefs utilize organic foods in their recipes-they taste better. Organic farming begins with the nourishment of the soil, which finally leads to the nourishment of the plant and, at last our bodies.

Raising your own food may help cut the cost of the grocery bill. Rather than dropping 100s of dollars and month at the market on foods that don't truly nourish you, spend time in the garden, outdoor, exercising, learning to raise your own food.

The average youngster receives 4 times more exposure than a grownup to at least 8 widely utilized cancer-causing pesticides in food. Food selections you make now will affect your youngsters' future wellness.

The Soil Conservation Service approximates more than three billion tons of topsoil are eroded from the U.S. croplands every year. That implies soil erodes 7 times quicker than it's built up naturally. Soil is the base of the food chain in organic farming. But, in conventional farming, the soil is utilized more as a medium for containing plants in a vertical placement so they

may be chemically fertilized. As a consequence, American farms are bearing the worst soil erosion ever.

Water comprises two-thirds of our body mass and covers 3/4 of the planet. The EPA estimates pesticides - a few cancer causing - contaminate the groundwater in thirty-eight states, polluting the primary source of drinking water for more than one-half the country's population.

American farms have shifted drastically in the last 3 generations, from family-based small businesses depending on human energy to mass factory farms. Modern farming utilizes more crude oil than any other single industry, eating up twelve percent of the country's whole energy supply.

More energy is now utilized to produce synthetic plant food than to till, cultivate and harvest all the crops in the U.S. If you're growing your own food in the city, you're cutting back on transit and pollution costs.

A lot of pesticides approved for utilization by the EPA were registered long before extended research linking these chemicals to cancer and additional diseases had been founded.

Now the EPA considers sixty percent of all weedkillers, ninety percent of all antifungal agents and thirty percent of all insecticides carcinogenic. The bottom line is that pesticides are

poisons configured to kill living organisms and may likewise hurt humans. As well cancer, pesticides are implicated in congenital abnormality, nerve damage and chromosomal mutations.

Besides being utilized to grow food, community gardens are likewise a great way to beautify a community, and to bring pride in ownership.

Chapter 7:

Planning An Environmentally Friendly Garden

Synopsis

It all begins with great soil. The correct mix of soil leads to healthier crops, reduces their susceptibleness to disease, and increases the overall productivity. Common strategies utilized by organic gardeners to manage soil quality -- which regards not just the soil itself but likewise water, weeds, disease and pests -- include the utilization of animal manure, compost, cover crops, green manures and crop rotation.

A Garden

Compost is organic material utilized with success in both home gardens and farms. It's made of disintegrating and decayed organic wastes and is spread on garden beds and organically farmed fields. Examples include:

Yard clippings -- wood chips, grass cuttings and leaves
Scraps -- coffee grounds, tea bags, and fruits and veggies
Manures -- fowl, cow and horse

Utilizing compost may encourage advantageous bacteria and fungi to grow, helping to produce nutrient-rich, moist soil while likewise eliminating or cutting back the need for chemical fertilizers.

Green manures and cover crops also better soil quality. Plants are raised specifically to benefit the soil and the main crops -- people select from an assortment of cover crop plants depending upon the needs of their gardening areas.

Cover crops in general are utilized to protect the soil's surface from water and wind erosion, help sustain soil structure, and help sustain the level of organic matter of the soil, all of which keeps soil sound. Green manure is a sort of cover crop raised specifically to add nutrients back into the dirt; manure is mixed together with the dirt, positively bettering the soil's organic matter.

Cover crops are likewise utilized in place of conventional pesticides to keep weeds at bay and as a distraction to bugs. Have you ever noticed that weeds always appear to take over a naked patch of your lawn?

They flourish where no additional plants are growing in their way. Cover crops take over space where weeds would like to make their home. The idea behind utilizing cover crops in pest control is to both entice beneficial pests, like ladybugs, to the area all year round and to discourage unwanted pests from the crops by providing an attractive and savory option.

Chapter 8:

Finding "Green" Farmers In Your Area

Synopsis

At the farmers market, you are able to meet the individuals who grew your food. They may answer questions about how the corn was grown, or whether there were any pesticides utilized on the cucumbers. Commonly, they will even let you sample the produce before you purchase it.

Farmers Market

While this might sound like an oddity in today's supermarket culture, farmers markets are getting to be more and more popular each year. The products come from your local "foodshed", the atmosphere is fun and will lift your spirits, and the food tastes fabulous. By buying at your local farmers market, you're cutting back the number of miles that your food journeyed to get to you, providing more of your food dollars directly to the growers, and protecting local agriculture and the green spaces that it supplies for our communities.

Hints:

Discover a farmers market close to you. Search for these markets in your area at www.localharvest.org,
or
www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm.

Do some comparison of prices at your supermarket and farmers market. You might discover that you are able to get a better deal at the farmers market. If a few items are particularly pricy at the farmers market, you are able to save those for your supermarket shopping list.

Bring reusable bags to the farmers market. You are able to preserve resources by bringing reusable canvas or cloth bags to carry all the goodies you bought, as well as plastic produce bags to hold individual

veggies you purchase. This helps the Earth and it likewise helps the farmer by cutting down on their expenses.

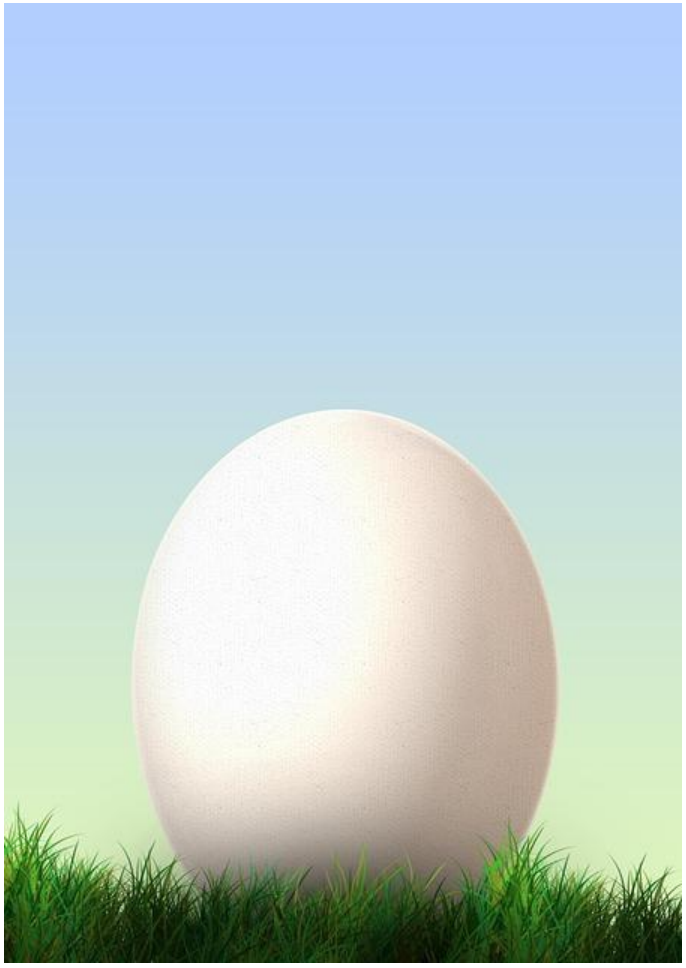
Have a blast at the market! Make your weekly farmers market trip a sort of an "outing" for your whole family. A great deal of the time there is music playing, booths where you are able to purchase a meal and even games for youngsters.

Chapter 9:

Final Tips

Synopsis

The essentials you know -- milk, bread, eggs. These are the things you consume that you find yourself running out every week to buy. Now, you spend a lot of cash on these purchases, so it's crucial that something worth so much cash is chosen cautiously.



Hints

Purchasing seasonal, local food is a blessing for the environment for many reasons. As most food travels a lot of miles to reach your table, locally sourced food curbs the climate-change affects of shipping. Local food likewise typically uses less packaging, is fresher and more mouth-watering, and comes in more assortments. It likewise supports little local growers and lets them acquire more for their produce by not being forced to spend so much on boxing, processing, refrigeration, promoting, and transportation. The most beneficial way to track down local food is at farmers markets or with community supported agriculture (CSA), which frequently provide home delivery.

Rather than purchasing foods that come in wide packaging (most of which is petroleum-based plastics) seek unpackaged or minimally packaged foods, try out bringing your own containers and purchasing in bulk, or pick brands that utilize bio-based plastic packing. And naturally try and reuse or recycle any packaging you wind up with.

Greening your meals isn't simply about the food that end up on your plate--it's the whole procedure, the entire lifecycle. Composting leftovers will alleviate the load on the landfill, give you amazing soil, and keep your kitchen trashcan from smelling. Apartment livers and yardless people can do it as well!

Even as purchasing locally grown food cuts on "miles per calorie," purchasing from local sellers cuts down on emissions, fuel use, and unneeded traffic.

Putting some additional planning into the amount of food you fix will cut down on waste. If it's something that will spoil fast, attempt to avoid making more than you or your loved ones can consume. If you've got extra, make an acquaintance happy with a home cooked surprise. If it's a larger affair, give the leftovers to those who might need it more.

A lot of individuals swear by the advantages of eating raw. Whatever the health benefits might be, preparing raw food eats up less energy and as raw food is generally fresh by definition, it's more likely to be locally raised.

Meat is the most resource-intensive food on the table and consuming less of it may be the single most green move an individual makes. Producing meat calls for vast amounts of water, grain, land, and additional inputs including hormones and antibiotic drugs, and leads to defilement of soil, air, and water. A lb of beef demands around 12,000 gallons of water to create, compared to 60 gallons for a lb of potatoes. If you're a meat eater, for starters, attempt scratching out a serving of meat every week. Going vegetarian or vegan is a deeply meaningful environmental choice.

Wrapping Up

And it's not simply about cash; as we all do it many times a day, eating green is possibly the most impactful single act we engage in.

So, how do you navigate all of these choices? Read on.

If you eat organic, don't simply picture the healthy food you're placing in your body, picture the sound ecosystems which raised that food, the workers who are safer from chemicals, the land, water, and air that's getting protected, and the wildlife that's being allowed to prosper. Organic veggies, fruits, grains, juice, dairy, eggs, and meat, are produced and processed in ways that support healthy individuals and a healthy Earth.