

Natural Health News

June 2012

EVERGREEN SPA & WELLNESS
ELY, MN

EAT DIRT AND LIVE

Sonja Jewell

NTS, CMT, CCWFN

Evergreen Cottage
146 E. Chapman

Ely, MN 55731

Phone: 218-365-2288

Retail Store Hours

Monday-Saturday

10am-6pm

(Closed Sundays)



Listen to Sonja's
"Natural Health
& Wellness Hour"
EVERY
WEDNESDAY
from 6-7pm on
WELY (94.5 FM)
or
listen on-line at
www.wely.com

Spring is here, and if you haven't planted your garden, it's not too late. And if you are not planting a garden, I strongly encourage you to start visiting the farmer's market. There are many more benefits to eating locally grown foods than most people realize. In this month's issue I would like to share an article with you by Dr. David Williams on this interesting subject. It will give you profound reasons and explanations why many of our health problems are linked to the fact that the foods we eat these days have no connection to our local environment.

"Ancient healers viewed the planet as a living organism. Chinese medical textbooks written as far back as 200 B.C. describe the human body as a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic universe. A healer's focus was to maintain the body's harmonious balance, both internally and in relation to the external environment. The digestive system was what connected the body to the earth. In fact, it was part of the earth. While at first this might seem sort of far-fetched or even mystical, the more we learn about the human body, this certainly seems to be true. Every inch of dirt on the planet is teeming with bacteria, fungi, and other microbes that break down minerals and nutrients to support plant life. Soil is the digestive system of the planet. And every form of bacterium and microbe in our digestive tract is a direct reflection of what exists in the soil. The microflora is the binding link between our body and the soil. The transfer of microflora takes place as we consume various plants, animals, and liquids. To understand the importance and ramifications of this, we have to consider how plants grow and survive. Plants that grow in a drier, hot climate won't survive in the wet, cool climate, and vice versa. As plants have acclimated to certain environments and soil types, they also had to develop "immune systems" of their own that could fight off local pathogens. They build their own immunity with various compounds and microbial flora that allows them to survive. When we eat these plants, portions of their immunity is transferred to us. The bacteria, fungi, microorganisms, and compounds they have created become part of our flora and digestive system. It's not much of a stretch to see how eating plants and foods grown in local soils could influence how our body might react to local pollen, allergens, and microbes. It's also easy to understand how irradiation, sterilization, pasteurization, herbicides, and other techniques used to "cleanse" our food and water can contribute to a disruption of our intestinal flora. Combine that with medications, food preservatives, pesticides, dental fillings, and all the other items I have mentioned before, it is no wonder problems like asthma and allergies are so widespread. It is nice to go the grocery store any time of year and have a choice of fruits and vegetables from all over the world. But the downside is that we may be sacrificing a vital connection to our local environment. It is not a sentimental connection but, rather, a connection that can help boost our immune system and other far-reaching effects that researchers have just started to understand. *Mycobacterium vaccae* is a nonpathogenic species of bacteria that is naturally found in soil. Researchers have found that when it is inhaled or ingested, it triggers the formation of neurons that produce additional serotonin and norepinephrine. Serotonin is the compound that acts as a mood elevator—the body's natural anti-depressant.

- OVER-

One animal study from England confirmed that when the pulverized bacteria were injected into the windpipe, serotonin-producing neurons in the brain were more active. Christopher Lowry, who did the research, called the bacteria “Prozac without the side-effects.” (*Neuroscience* 07;146(2):756-772)

The ingestion of *Mycobacterium vaccae* helps explain why gardening can be so relaxing and mood enhancing. You can ingest the bacteria by eating plants from a garden, as well. Simply playing in the dirt works too. Schools in the country still have dirt playgrounds, unlike many of those in the inner cities, where they are paved with concrete. It would be interesting to monitor children’s serotonin levels after recess in the two different areas. Soil microbes don’t just influence mood. They can also affect your weight. There are two primary categories of bacteria that inhabit your digestive tract—the *Firmicutes* and the *Bacteroidetes*. You will recognize many of the *Firmicutes* since they include *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, *Clostridium*, and *Helibacterium*. The *Bacteroidetes* are not as well known. Both categories are found in the soil, sediments, water, and in the gut of humans and most animals. The ratio of *Firmicutes* to *Bacteroidetes* appears to have a major influence on whether you are thin or obese. Researchers have found that obese individuals had a lower percentage of *Bacteroidetes* and relatively more bacteria from the *Firmicutes* family. An obese individual has 10 times the amount of *Firmicutes* as does a healthy lean adult. It appears that the bacterial imbalance increases appetite and leads to insulin resistance, high blood pressure, and elevated levels of cholesterol and triglycerides—all characteristics of metabolic syndrome. It also leads to food cravings. When food is restricted severely, the individual might not continue to gain weight, but the insulin resistance persists and can lead to type 2 diabetes. When you combine this with the sedentary lifestyle that is so common in our society, along with a diet rich in high-calorie, sugar-laden foods, you have the perfect storm that is creating our obesity epidemic. Researchers are looking into ways to use antibiotics to change the ratio of bacteria categories. It won’t work. And worse, it is dangerous. It would be like killing a mosquito on you arm with a shotgun. The “cure” would be worse than the problem. We barely have a clue about the numbers and varieties of bacteria necessary for optimal health. The same is true for our knowledge about the microflora of the soil. From the reports I have read, it appears we have been able to culture less than 1% of the bacteria and fungi found in soil. The answer is—changing our lifestyles (cut out drugs, sugar, etc.), consuming more fermented foods, and taking advantage of the produce, livestock, and food products produced naturally in your area. If you don’t have your own garden, visit the local farmer’s market.”

I hope that this article by Dr. Williams will inspire you get your hands in the dirt.

JUNE SPECIALS

Rising Moon Organics—Organic Pizza (frozen) variety	30% OFF
Woodstock Farms—Organic Mixed Berries (frozen) 10 oz.	30% OFF
Woodstock—Organic Tofu 14 oz.	30% OFF
Good Health—Potato Chip 5 oz. variety	30% OFF
Mt. Vikos—Spreads, variety	30% OFF
Terra—Organic Veggie Chips—Exotic variety only	30% OFF
Woodstock—Hardwood Lump Charcoal, natural	30% OFF
Woodstock—Organic Pickles, Mustard & Ketchup	30% OFF
All Terrain—Herbal Bug Repellent, variety	30% OFF
Kiss My Face—Sun Blocks, variety	30% OFF
AND MANY MORE ITEMS!	

You will observe with concern how long a useful truth may be known, and exist, before it is generally received and practiced on.

- Benjamin Franklin



To help you make your garden grow, we have certified-organic **GARDEN SEEDS** by **BOTANICAL INTERESTS**. All of their seeds are **100% safe** and are not genetically-engineered or genetically-modified. Plus, the germination rate of every seed is tested before it is packaged. We have a great variety of **SHORT SEASON VEGETABLES, HERBS AND FLOWERS** in stock. We will also have **ORGANIC VEGETABLE TRANSPLANTS** available from **CHELSEA MORNING FARM** in Two Harbors. The transplants will need to be pre-ordered. A sign-up-sheet will be available for you at the **EVERGREEN COTTAGE**.

Organic Roots  *Bistro*

New Spring Hours:

Tuesday—Saturday 10 AM—8:30 PM

Closed Sunday and Monday

TRY OUR NEW SPRING MENU!