
You can learn a lot from a worm

Posted by redhen - 2005/11/18 10:21

After 5 years of working with worms in bins, I realize what an incredible journey I have been, and am still on. What a great science lesson I've had. Looking in with kids and adults, at the bins we have made, discussing what is going on, how necessary all the creatures are, working on their own specialty. How they all have to be there, and that no one creature can do it all. There is a new understanding of diversity and community. Talking about how things work in nature, it becomes very clear that we humans are the fly in the ointment. We like our conveniences and we like our food and yards to look perfect and pretty, (to a fault). We spray herbicides and pesticides, helter skelter, so we have an easier time growing our vegetables, fruits and yards. In doing so we destroy the soil with chemicals and then eat, breathe and walk around in all those residues. We spend way too much time and energy trying to exclude ourselves from the not so pretty side of a natural process or cycle. We should, I think, be spending much more time trying to learn how we humans fit in.

I believe, also, that things happen for a reason. I have been asked many times how/why I got started doing this vermicomposting business. I am beginning to think that there is something greater that I am going to learn and be part of as I read articles on reasearch being done. My family , as I am sure many families are, dealing with cancers of many types. My family, in particular, has 3 members with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. Immune diseases give me great pause. I am of the opinion that we humans are obsessed with cleanliness. Antibacterial soap is one point. We do not like to think about bacteria being on or in our bodies. We are "above" that stuff. Fact is we are swimming in bacteria and it must be there for our health. They are altering our foods, to make them disease resistant, so production will be greater.

If these foods we eat are modifyied to rid plants of disease, and make them look pretty, I am wondering what price we pay, when what we are eating no longer has the nutrients and living enzymes it was supposed to have. I just read the article in "Latest News" about enzymes and worms. Very interesting! (This is actually really "old news", if you look at the dates of some of the research.) I am starting to think, I was meant to start this little project at my daughter's elementary, working with worms, dirt and kids. I might have never met some of the folks doing such interesting work/research, read any of these articles or even been making this very long post, hoping to start another interesting conversation.

Re:You can learn a lot from a worm

Posted by sauce man - 2005/11/18 23:15

Hey Redhen, You make some great points about all the chemicals. I feel like we live in a chemical society these days. I just saw on the news tonite a story about how the manufacturers of paper to wrap food products have been putting Teflon in their recipes for over 35 years. It was stated that it is used to keep the oils and greases from soaking through the paper and on to your hands. Isn't that just great one more thing to think about while your eating your big mac. They also showed a pizza box as being one of these products. I'll bet the list is endless. I think it's great that your very involved with kids and vermiculture. My two are getting involved with my worms to. I hope they take this knowledge and carry it on into their lives. We used zero pesticides and had a bumper crop this year and it felt good to eat vegetables that only needed a rinse first. Carry on the great work. Tom

Re:You can learn a lot from a worm

Posted by Bob Ingram - 2005/11/19 00:43

Tom, it's admirable that you're involving your own kids...getting them involved and interested can be the start of a great ripple effect..from you to them to their friends on to their friends, passed down to their kids....on and on and onnnn.....

Re:You can learn a lot from a worm

Posted by Wormbinning Mama - 2008/06/03 21:07

Wow, RedHen, I know this is a really old post but I just read it and the words could have come from my own mouth! Especially the antibacterial soap thing and obsession with cleanliness. I think there is definately a link with many of the immune deseases. Scrubbing everything from nature off our bodies with a vast array of chemicals and then slathering on the the deoderants, hairsprays, perfumes, powders and lotions and potions. Years ago we played in the dirt ALL DAY and were lucky to get completely wet fighting the bath. And people were a heck of a lot stronger, I believe.

During my years of "wormbinning" (this is what my toddler always called it and it seems to have stuck around here...) I have always encouraged those who want the compost to see the process, and handle the worms and to make their own

bins. It amazes me that so many people want to spend so much money buying chemical junk from the stores because it looks "cleaner." When I first give my VC to someone, I try to have it very clean-looking-- pretty much just castings. Have to give them what they are used to as far as looks go. Then from there try to educate more. People are so afraid of dirt. Its like we've lost our collective senses.

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Re:You can learn a lot from a worm

Posted by redhen - 2008/06/03 21:58

Wormbinning Mama..Thanks for resurrecting this post(probably for myself mostly). I had forgotten about it and it takes me back to another place in my life (familial CLL 2005), and shows me how far I have come, with the help of...yes, the worms.

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Re:You can learn a lot from a worm

Posted by Paratrooper - 2008/06/05 00:04

Funny that you should mention chemicals along with clean . Some years back I had cause to converse with 2 chemists working for a company in Houston regarding "tricks of the trade". Two of them stuck with me until now . One is that if they puts a lemon scent into a cleaner people walking into the recently cleaned area quickly assumed that the place had been well cleaned . Did it smell clean ? YES . Was it clean ? Who knows . Second was what is called a sudsing agent . When people go out to clean equipment on site the owners and employees are sure to notice the abundance of suds . Do they think the equipment is getting a "really good" cleaning ? YES . Is the equipment getting a "really good" cleaning ? Who knows .

We have been programmed to accept the industry standards as our own . You MUST use the expensive bacteria killer if you "love" your family . The list is endless . I will tell you one thing that I am rather sure of . If a person from the year 1200 could be brought into todays culture a drink of water would probably kill them . I think we are introducing more toxins than we are protecting against . We are able to personally immunize ourselves against so many things that the industry seems to think that we need to protect ourselves against (with THEIR products) BUT we readily accept poisons in our food and water because the Gubmint has determined that they fall into the "allowable" level .

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Re:You can learn a lot from a worm

Posted by Wormbinning Mama - 2008/06/05 20:54

Hey Paratrooper, move over on that soapbox and let me back up.....;)

Lemon scents and sudsing! Exactly!! Most cleaners have sudsing agents added JUST so people believe it is cleaning better-- and it doesn't do a darn thing. Shampoos come quickly to mind. I was once on a cleaning crew where I learned this-- clean a bathroom and you don't need to cover any smells with an air freshener. The "fresheners" in a bathroom are enough to kill a person. We are so afraid of our own bodies anymore.

Besides the compost, besides the kitchen scraps diverted from stinking up the trash can, besides the smaller load to the landfill, one thing that I really like about the whole worm thing is that you can learn so much from the worms and their environment. I think it really changes people.

Haha-- I just realized the title of this post....

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