

Organic Gardening

Glen McDaniel

One way to reduce toxins in my community is to practice organic gardening. This past summer, I became a member of the River Valley Master Gardeners, an organization which works with the University of Arkansas Extension Agency to provide education on gardening to the public.

Although I am new to the organization, I have already learned that in order to grow flowers and vegetables, you have to have good soil. In addition, you can grow almost anything by using commercial fertilizers. This is much like baseball players who use steroids to help them play better. In the long run, steroids are bad for the players, and commercial fertilizers are bad for the garden. In organic gardening, we try to build up the soil so that it gets better each year instead of destroying it. We use composting, crop rotation, and natural fertilizers to build the soil.

It is common for gardeners to use insecticides to control insects, but not all insects are bad. We need bees and other insects to pollinate the crops. If you kill all of the insects, you will not have a good crop of fruits or vegetables. Also, some of the good insects eat the bad ones.

Too many insecticides, herbicides, and commercial fertilizers can be toxic. They can stay on the fruits and vegetables when we consume them, and thus make us sick. As a member of Master Gardeners, I try to grow my garden naturally. The practice is good for the soil and for those who consume the produce.



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Is it TruGreen or Truly Toxic?

Around the U.S., homeowners use pesticides on their trees, roses, and lawns. TruGreen ChemLawn is the number one lawn care provider in the U.S., servicing more than 3.5 million households. Use your percent and fraction sense to fill in the blanks below. Then use what you've learned to complete this statement:

"I believe ChemLawn products are [mostly safe/mostly unsafe] because ..."

