

CHEMICAL FREE YARDS

A Presentation to the
Sustainable Living Symposium 2007

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PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

- Discuss pest & disease prevention and control
- Accept that we don't have to eradicate all weeds & pests – some have beneficial effects
- Understand the need to achieve a balanced ecosystem
- Discuss easy, natural methods to discourage certain pests & diseases

THE BALANCED ECOSYSTEM

1) Use diversified plant material

- Include some weeds and a few pests to encourage beneficial insects
- Helps prevent situation where a pest can rapidly devastate a large group of identical plants
- Utilize companion planting to affect the environment of adjacent plants (herbs, garlic, tomatoes, nasturtiums, etc emit strong smells that confuse insects and keep them away from adjacent plants)

THE BALANCED ECOSYSTEM

- 2) Make sure plants are not out of place
 - Don't be tempted to grow plants ill-suited to your climate or soil conditions
 - Such stressed plants are easy targets for pests and disease
- 3) Do not plant out of time
 - Perennials planted in heat of summer, or evergreens planted late in fall will struggle
 - Again, such stressed plants will be easy targets

THE BALANCED ECOSYSTEM

4) Ensure healthy soil

- An abundant population of earthworms, fungi and bacteria keeps plants vigorous and resistant to attack
- Compost is the best soil conditioner & builder
- Also try Rock Phosphate, Greenstone, Kelp & Gypsum to help re-mineralize depleted soil
- Mulching adds organic matter, protects soil from compaction, keeps soil temperature balanced, maintains soil moisture, serves as a barrier for pests & disease spores, and slows weed growth

THE BALANCED ECOSYSTEM

5) Proper watering

- New plants require “watering in” – but after that, watering should be restrained
- Don’t use municipal chlorinated tap water – it will kill all micro-organisms
- Automatic irrigation systems make plants too dependent – they develop shallow roots and dry out faster
- If watering is required, try to use rain water

EASY RECIPES FOR PEST & DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- Stinging Nettle - excellent fertilizer, deters aphids
- Comfrey tea - rich in minerals, deters aphids
- Elder Spray - effective against mildew & black spot
- Chive Tea - combats powdery mildew on roses
- Garlic Spray – controls fungal disease, nematodes, aphids, mites, white fly, bacteria, ticks & scab

EASY RECIPES FOR PEST & DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- **Chili Pepper Spray** - targets ants, aphids, caterpillars and slugs
- **Oak Leaf Mulch** - discourages slugs
- **Neem** - controls insects, nematodes, fungi & viruses
- **Basil Spray** - targets fruit flies, leaf miners, red spiders, slugs, snails and mites

EASY RECIPES FOR PEST & DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- **Baking Soda Spray** - has fungicidal properties, prevents black spot on roses, prevents powdery mildew on monarda & phlox
- **Horsetail Spray** - fungicide
- **Seaweed Solution** - adds potash and trace elements to soil, helps against aphids, potato scab and botrytis

SUMMARY

- There are lots of ways to keep your yard healthy, pest and disease free, without using chemicals
- To find out more about natural treatments for your gardens, check resources in your local library, in bookstores, and on the internet
- Check out:
 - Ecological Farmers' Association of Ontario
www.efao.ca
 - Canadian Organic Growers
www.cog.ca