

Organic Land Care *with*



"We live in a world that has practiced violence for generations – violence to other creatures, violence to the planet, violence to ourselves. Yet in my garden, where I have nurtured a healthy soil-plant community, I see a model of a highly successful non-violent system where I participate in gentle biological diplomacy rather than war. The garden has more to teach us than just to grow food.."

Eliot Coleman, Organic Farmer & Author

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This newsletter is distributed free of charge to all SOUL members. Please feel free to share this publication.

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In the news:

- **Parents worried about pesticides turn to organic food**
Full story: [Environmental News Network](http://www.environmentalnewsnetwork.com) 11/03/2005

[An] increasing number of parents [are buying] organic to keep their children's diets free of food grown with pesticides, hormones, antibiotics or genetic engineering. The concern about children is that they are more vulnerable to toxins in their diets, said Alan Greene, a pediatrician in northern California. As children grow rapidly, their brains and organs are forming and they eat more for their size than do grown-ups, Greene said. "Pound for pound, they get higher concentrations of pesticides than adults do," said Greene, who promotes organic food in his books and on his Web site.

New government-funded research adds to the concern. A study of children whose diets were changed from regular to organic found their pesticide levels plunged almost immediately. The amount of pesticide detected in the children remained imperceptible until their diets were switched back to conventional food.

- **Toronto pesticide ban remains in effect**

Despite pressure from the pesticide industry, Canada's top court has upheld Toronto's pesticide ban. Toronto's council passed a by-law in 2003 outlawing pesticide use on lawns and gardens. The pesticide industry has now exhausted all legal avenues of reversing the ban. A number of other Canadian municipalities say they will follow Toronto's lead and pass similar bylaws.

Learn more: <http://www.organicconsumers.org/school/toronto120905.cfm>

A Favourite Tool

Michael Cowan runs Edibella Landscapes. He can be reached at edibella@islandnet.com

I would like to tell you about one of my favourite garden tools. It has no moving parts, it is made of iron and wood, it has been forged by hand in the same way for thousands of years. It is simple yet so effective at many different tasks in the garden.

It is called the Ho –Mi, which is Korean for ground spear. It looks a lot like a mini mouldboard plough. Its uses include planting, seeding, smoothing, trenching, weeding, breaking up clods of soil, and removing small rocks from the soil. It is literally my right hand tool, since I carry a trowel and a dandelion digger as well, but they are in the left side pouch of my tool belt.



There is also a long handled version available which I find does a wonderful job of maintaining the trough between the lawn and the garden bed. With the straight edge of the Ho-Mi on the turf side of the trough and the plough on the bed side, it carves a perfect furrow, pulls the loose soil or mulch up on to the bed, and maintains the turf's vertical edge (in combination with regular edging done by a string trimmer or other lawn edging imple-

ment). Nothing makes a garden stand out like sharp, clean edges between the turf and beds.

This tool is hand forged so no two are exactly alike, therefore, I won't buy them mail order. I want to compare as many as I can before I choose the one that suits me, though sadly the long handled ones don't seem to be as available in local shops, so mail order may be the only way to find one.

This tool takes some time to get used to. As my employee's will testify, "it grows on you." My irrigation guy won't work without one now; it is the perfect little trenching tool for irrigation work when you are in close to the pipe. The same is true when you are transplanting trees and shrubs, and you want to follow those horizontal feeder roots for as long as possible to ensure the success of the transplant: the Ho-Mi is once again THE tool.

So try it out, paint the shaft red or orange so it will be easier to find, bend it to your needs if you wish... once you get used to this tool you will never want to be without it.

*New Year's Resolution, item # 1: Well that's really up to you...
But here's a suggestion for item # 2: **Renew SOUL membership!***



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