

REAL FOOD RESPECTS NATURAL RESOURCES

Food does not actually grow out of the plexiglas and lineoleum in a supermarket--it requires natural resources like soil, seeds, and water, as well as the maintenance of biodiversity--all of which are increasingly threatened by the expansive industrial, chemical agriculture that is destroying ecosystems and accelerating the impacts of climate change around the world.

BIODIVERSITY

essentially means, **the more the merrier!**

The myriad tangled and interconnected webs of plants and animals and places on our planet create strength and **resilience** in the face of changes, like the huge ones that are occurring because of climate change. Destruction of biodiversity for monoculture (one-or-few-crop) agriculture is happening at an alarming rate. For example, **we lose about 100,000 acres of tropical rainforest everyday**, meaning that where there once were who-knows-how-many different plants and animals (and people!) there are now essentially just cows and grass, or soybean fields, or palm oil plantations. Even worse, a lot of biodiverse ecosystems are destroyed for land to grow food for cars, not humans--**biofuels**--of which very few are considered a sustainable alternative fuel source.



SOIL

is also called earth: it is the substance for which our home planet is named. It retains moisture and contains nutrients and is full of the organic matter in which roots can get established and plants (food!) can grow. It is estimated that between **50-75% of the original topsoil in the US has been eroded away**, in great part because of livestock grazing and industrial agriculture that strips the soil of nutrients and is heavily tilled so that very little organic matter remains in the soil to prevent erosion. This fertilizer-polluted topsoil then pollutes waterways and causes "dead zones," as found in the Gulf of Mexico, at the end of the Mississippi River. It takes about **100 years** of debris build-up and biodegradation **to produce 1 inch of topsoil.**

Rainforest Action Network: tons of info about rainforest destruction, indigenous rights and agribusiness. www.ran.org

Indigenous Environmental Network: Coalition of North American indigenous communities working for environmental justice. www.earth.org

Friends of the Earth International: world's largest environmental network, with lots of news and reports about agribusiness and land-use issues. www.foie.org

WATER

Water resources are a huge part of real food, not only because our existence depends on water as much as food sustenance, but also because of how much food production depends on clean, accessible water. Many have said that **the wars of the coming decades could be fought more for water than oil**, and people around the world are engaged in struggles against the pollution and privatization of their water resources, which are increasingly controlled by a few multinational corporations.



FISHERIES

We might possibly live to see the extinction of native fish populations due to their overfishing and the detrimental impact of fish farming in ocean ecosystems. Fishing is quite a **complicated, convoluted** issue: for example, wild fish populations are increasingly being depleted for aquaculture (fish farm) feed. Also, the **crazy commerce** of wild salmon and other fish includes exporting it from the US to China for processing, only to import it all back to the US....and so on....

Food and Water Watch

Food and Water Watch: leading information on food safety, fisheries, and water resources. www.foodandwaterwatch.org

Oxfam International: advocacy, activism for climate justice, resource sustainability. www.oxfam.org

Center for Food Safety: extensive research and advocacy against unjust food production and destruction of biodiversity by GE crops. www.centerforfoodsafety.org

Worldwatch Institute: tons of data about natural resources, land use, and agriculture worldwide. www.worldwatch.org

READ: *Fatal Harvest*, *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations*, and anything by Gary Nabhan, Francis Moore and Anna Lappe, and Vandana Shiva.

SEEDS

are **the future and the past:** they have been saved for centuries, selected for drought-resistance, color, flavor, or numerous other characteristics, but in many places, these heirloom varieties are being lost to genetically-engineered varieties that are forced upon people through “development” projects, which means biodiversity is lost as well.

Seed Savers Exchange research on and seed-saving of US native varieties. www.seedsavers.org

Native Seeds/SEARCH seed and culture-saving in the Southwest US. www.nativeseeds.org

Navdanya lots of news about seed and food sovereignty. www.navdanya.org

Global Crop Diversity Trust crop diversity research and the global seed bank in Svalbard, Norway. www.croptrust.org

REAL FOOD CHALLENGE
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Uniting students for just and sustainable food.