

# Organic Land Care *with*



When you start working with the environment seriously, the whole arena comes: human rights, women's rights, environmental rights, children's rights, you know, everybody's rights. Once you start making these linkages, you can no longer do just tree-planting.

*Dr. Wangari Maathai*, leading African environmentalist and co-founder of Kenya's influential Greenbelt Movement

**Organic Land Care with SOUL** is published ten times per year by the Society for Organic Urban Land Care

**Our Mission:**

"To support our communities in their transition to organic practices".

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

**SOUL**

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To find an organic land care professional in your area please visit the SOUL website at: [www.organiclandcare.org](http://www.organiclandcare.org)

## February, 2007

*For this issue in the month of Valentine's day, we have a spotlight on Africa – see the back page and above quote.*

**Please note:**

SOUL has a new mailing address, effective immediately:  
P.O. Box 8548 Victoria BC V8W 1L4

**Reminder:**

Spring is just around the corner, and opportunities for socializing and green learning are popping up everywhere! Check the calendar on the SOUL web site for lots of interesting local and regional classes, events, meetings etc.

**Announcing:**

Victoria Branch SOUL meeting on Sunday Feb. 25, 2007

*Time: 2pm – 5pm*

*Location: Camosun College, Interurban Campus, Portable A*

*Free parking on Sundays!*

*Admission: Members free, Non-members \$5*

**Guest Speaker: Erik Bjornsen**

**"Exploring Ponds And Water Features"**

# Beauty and the Beast – Flowers can Pollute

*Dr. Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher is Head of Environment Protection Authority of Ethiopia; chief negotiator and spokesperson of the Like Minded Group for Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and African Group for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources; winner of Right Livelihood Award 2000; Champion of the Earth 2006*

## Launching the International Flower Campaign

*Keynote address at the Multi-stakeholder Forum of the International Flower Campaign, Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa, 18 May 2006*

Flowers are undoubtedly among the most beautiful things in life. That is why poets have always praised them. That is why we celebrate major events using them. That is why people idolize their loved ones through them. [...]

Flowers are designed to advertise the plant to many animal species – mostly insects. They advertise for help in cross-pollination. They reward those that help them mostly with nectar, but also with pollen. But as you know, not all invited guests are grateful. Some are downright greedy. They take more than what the plant is willing to give. They attack it. They eat its parts. They kill it.

If it is a plant that produces flowers that we love, we, humans, naturally want to help the plant. [...] So, we kill those living things that kill the flowers we love. But the flower-killers are mostly insects. And insects have proved themselves to us to be more difficult to kill off than the fearsome lions, tigers and snakes. So, we go into a lot of trouble to poison the insects, often with limited luck. [...]

But killers are not always choosy. Many insect poisons kill off other beautiful insects as well. [...] We want flowers, beautiful flowers. We want butterflies, beautiful butterflies. So, we better be careful about poisoning the insects that eat our flowers. If we are not careful, we may even poison the lovely ladies that tend the flowers in the flower beds.

You may say that not all insect poisons kill people. True. For example, DDT does not kill people. However, it does something less obvious and equally horrendous.

Have you heard of little girls in DDT sprayed sugarcane plantations starting to menstruate at the age of seven years? It has happened many times. Why? Because DDT and similar organochlorine substances mimic female hormones. So, the small bodies of seven year-old girls feel that they are being supplied with the amount of female hormones that young women of 18 produce. Therefore, they menstruate.

How about the boys? Do you know what happens to males whose bodies are subjected to female hormones? They develop feminine traits. Do you think that a society where males and females are approximately the same is viable? No. That is why the world now has the Persistent Organic Pollutants Convention, or POPs Convention, which aims at eliminating from the world organochlorine pesticides and a few other dangerous synthetic chemicals.

So let us have flowers, by all harmless means. But let us remember that if the chemicals we use to protect flowers from pests harm humans or the environment, we will be held liable.

Ethiopia now has laws to control pollution. If anybody pollutes anything and causes or risks causing damage, he will be liable. And it is not only the person who suffers the damage that has the right to take the culprit to court. Any person can. [...]

Be sensible and enjoy as well as benefit from flowers. Otherwise, see you in court.

*ISIS Press Release 30/08/06, Source: Sustainable Agriculture Network Discussion Group*



*Coming Up:*  
**The Victoria Seedy Saturday**  
Victoria Convention Centre - February 17th, 2007 - 10 am till 4 pm

*See you at the SOUL table!!!*