

# Soil Foodweb Insights

February 2010

## This Month

Now that we are well and truly into the new year, we hope all our friends in the Northern Hemisphere are safely weathering the cold months and getting prepared for the new growing season. As for our Southern friends... well, let's just say this is the time of year when we wish we'd saved up enough for a nice surfing and scuba vacation somewhere in your sunny hemisphere.

15-19 February 2010 are the dates to remember for the next set of workshops here in Corvallis, Oregon. Registration forms are now available at <http://www.soilfoodweb.com/calendar.html> - or call David at Sustainable Studies Institute: 541-257-2614.

If those dates don't work for you, we now have others: 19-23 April 2010. Forms for that session will be posted online soon.

## Contents

### I. Soil Foodweb Oregon News

- A. Lower prices for testing packages now in effect
- B. New forms, new sampling instructions
- C. U.S. holiday schedule

### II. Sustainable Studies Institute News

- A. Upcoming workshops
  - 1. Oregon (Feb 15-19)
  - 2. Oregon (April 19-23)
- B. Soil Science News
  - 1. Recent research on "Roundup Ready" ecosystem effects
  - 2. Practical experience in desert gardening with soil biology

### III. Earthfort News

- A. New site launch
- B. Call for reviews
- C. New prices
- D. Public service announcement



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# I. Soil Foodweb Oregon News

## A. Lower prices for testing packages now in effect

After careful review of our costs, Soil Foodweb Oregon was recently able to cut prices for our main testing packages, as follows:

Full Foodweb:	\$120.00 (down from \$152.00)
Full Foodweb plus Mycorrhizal Colonization:	\$150.00 (down from \$190.00)
Basic Foodweb:	\$60.00 (down from \$76.00)

Our review also revealed a need to increase prices on testing for pH and Electrical Conductivity - each is now \$15.00 per sample (up from \$5.00 per sample before the review). Prices for all our other testing services, including E. coli tests and Leaf Surface Foodweb tests, are the same as before. New forms with all our current prices are on our web site at [www.oregonfoodweb.com](http://www.oregonfoodweb.com)

## B. New forms, new sampling instructions

In addition to the new forms to send in with samples for foodweb biology testing, we have written new instructions for collecting soil samples, soil amendment samples, and leaf samples. We hope these new step by step instructions will be more complete

and more clear for anyone who is new to the whole process of laboratory testing. We invite any and all suggestions for improving the instruction sheets, the forms, and any other documentation provided on our web sites.

## C. U.S. holiday schedule

The offices and laboratory at Soil Foodweb Oregon will be open during regular business hours for all of February. The United States Postal Service will not make deliveries on:

President's Day - Monday 15 February 2010 ■

## II. Sustainable Studies Institute News

### A. Upcoming workshops

#### 1. Oregon: February 15 - 19

Dr. Elaine Ingham will teach Intro to the Soil Foodweb on 15-16 February. Matt Slaughter, director of Soil Foodweb Oregon, will teach Compost Technology on 17 February and Compost Tea Technology on 17-18 February.

Light Microscope Methods class will start in the afternoon on 18 February. The full day of 19 February is a guided hands-on practice session. All students will need their own microscopes.

Classes will be at Corvallis, Oregon. Location and other details will be included in confirmation letters. Register online at <http://www.soilfoodweb.com/calendar.html> - by calling David Kuester at 541-257-2614 - or by email: [info@sustainablestudies.org](mailto:info@sustainablestudies.org)

#### 2. Oregon: April 10 - 23

This will be the first set of workshops to be taught entirely by Matt Slaughter, also scheduled to be held at Corvallis, Oregon. More details and registration forms will be available on the web soon.

### B. Soil Science News

#### 1. Recent research on "Roundup Ready" ecosystem effects

A note of appreciation for the diligent work of US Department of Agriculture microbiologist Robert Kremer and his co-authors. Thanks to their research, more evidence has become available in the struggle to reveal the full effects of genetically modified organisms such as "Roundup Ready" crops. Now we have more support to explain, to our neighbors, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, why the growing reliance on genetically modified plants in the human food supply is a poorly considered and risky course of action.

Here is the link to a recent brief interview with Robert Kremer about this research:

[http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/jan10/scientists\\_find\\_negative\\_impacts\\_of\\_GM\\_crops.php](http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/jan10/scientists_find_negative_impacts_of_GM_crops.php)

#### 2. Practical experience in desert gardening with soil biology

For another example of success using biological methods to manage the soil, the January issue of Phoenix Home & Garden magazine has an article on the experiences of Tom Pew. His work in Tucson, Arizona has shown yet again that a healthy soil foodweb reduces the need for watering, even in desert climates.

An online version of the article about his work is available here:

<http://www.phgmag.com/garden/desert/201001/soil-secrets/1/> ■

## III. From Earthfort

### A. New site launch

In recent months we've reached the conclusion that obtaining supplies from the Earthfort web site was just too hard, and not enjoyable enough. To remedy this situation we have now launched our newly redesigned web site, which is still at the same convenient and easy to remember address: <http://www.earthfort.com>

### B. Call for reviews

Among many improvements on the new Earthfort site, there is now a much easier system for posting your own reviews of our books, audio CDs, and other

products. We invite everyone to try out these new features and let us know of anything that needs to be corrected or improved.

### C. New prices on many Earthfort products

To start off the new year, Earthfort has reviewed all product prices. Some products now have lower prices. In a few cases the prices needed to move

upward. The new site has all the details. Of course, for questions on any specific product, you can call us at 541-257-2612.

### D. Public Service Announcement

Finally, as a public service, we remind all our readers about Valentine's Day, 14 February. For some people this day means very little. Feel free to skip this section if you're in that category.

As most of you surely know, for the people who do care about it, Valentine's Day is a Very Big Deal. We don't expect to see any extra sales because of this.

None of our current products are very "Valentine-ey." (We'd be happy to provide a nice set of audio CDs on soil biology, or a compost thermometer, or a dissolved oxygen meter -- if you are completely sure that's what YOUR Valentine really wants -- but we cannot recommend any of those as gift ideas!) So this is purely a public service reminder. ■

From all of our staff, happy sustainable relationships and happy sustainable growing!

