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**The Global Food Crises
And
Growing a Sustainable Future**

Origins of Grow Food Not Lawns

War in Iraq, Peak oil, localization movement

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model which makes the old model obsolete.”

Buckminster Fuller

- “Every morning I awake torn between a desire to save the world and an inclination to savor it. This makes it hard to plan the day!” (E. B. White)

Growing healthy food accomplishes both for me



Grow Food not Lawns
Mission:

Our mission is to inspire people to develop and sustain organic food-producing gardens, and to build competence, community, and joy while doing it!

“Give a person some vegetables and you feed them for a day. Teach them how to grow vegetables and they can feed themselves for a lifetime.”

variation of
Chinese Proverb



Overview of Problems GFNL Is Addressing

Rising cost of fuel, food and water

Food quality, safety and nutritional value declining

Loss of diversity and variety in food we eat

Financial squeeze on individuals

GFNL Goals

To increase local food production, build healthy soils, increase food self sufficiency, reduce amount of water wasted on lawns and encourage sharing of excess produce.

We will do this through education and hands on work helping individuals to start and maintain backyard vegetable gardens.

Grow Food not Lawns

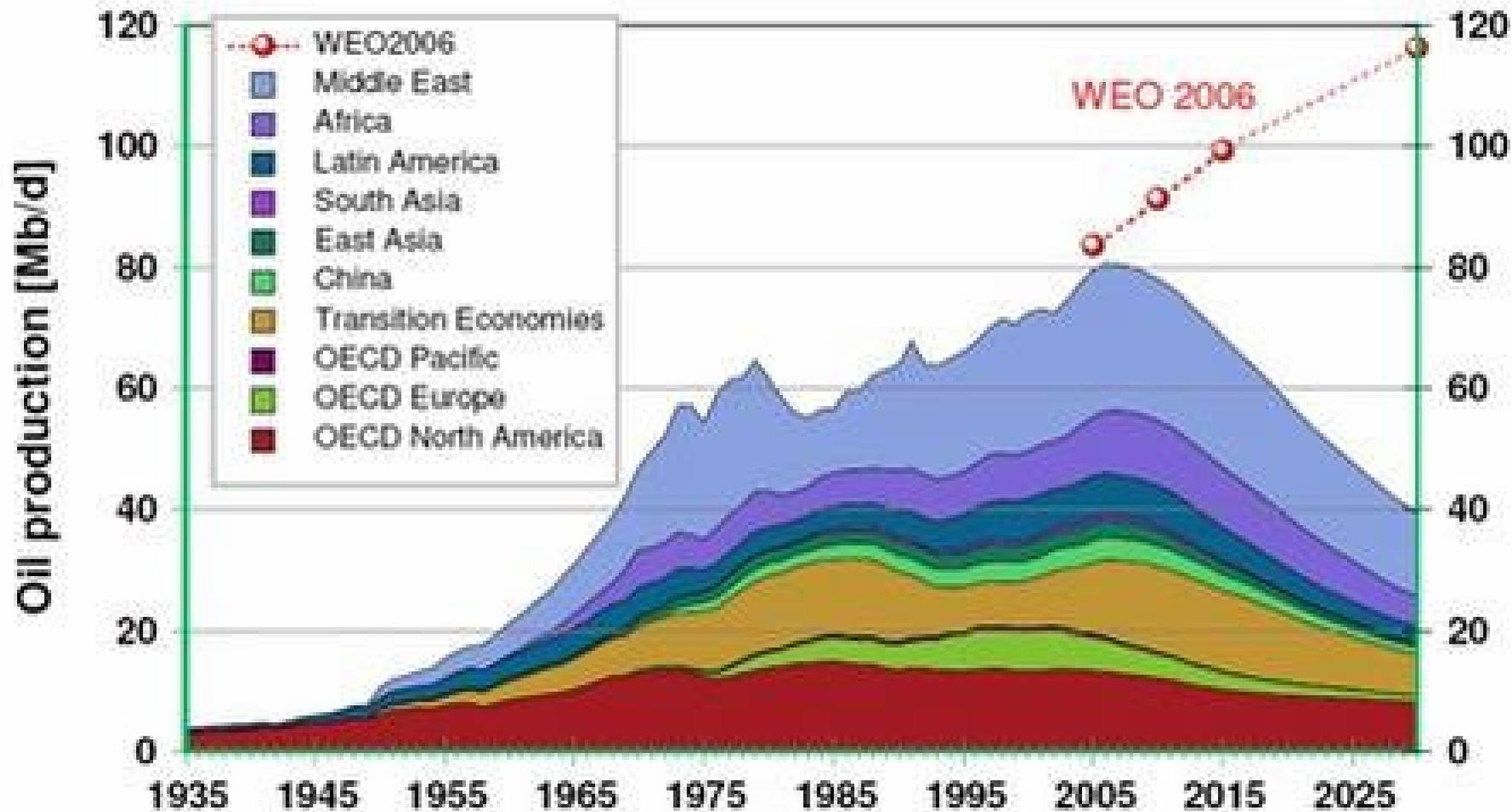
Similar to “Victory” Gardens which supplied up to 40% of food in U.S. in WW I and WW II and during the depression.

Has potential for being a key part of local food production again in addition to community supported agriculture (CSA's), community gardens and farmer's markets.

GFNL Approach Involves

- Workshops teaching “no dig” sheet composting, regular composting, seed starts, season extenders, etc
- Volunteers provide back up assistance and advice
- A local landscaping firm can be paid to set up gardens if needed

This project emerged out of the “localization” movement which started because of awareness of peaking global oil production. This movement strives to be less dependant on fossil fuels and to grow local food and produce local renewable energy.



Problems We Are Addressing
and Solutions We are Trying to Provide

Growing World Food Crises - End of an Era of Cheap Food

Factors pushing up the price of food and grains:

Peaking global oil production = higher fuel prices. Commercial agriculture...

Hotter summers, droughts hurting harvests and rising cost of water

In 7 of the last 8 years, world grain consumption exceeded production

Corn prices doubled in past 2 years due to two major reasons:

a. Demand for biofuels: US law requiring ethanol production of 35 Bill gal/yr by 2022

20% of corn went to ethanol in '07; 33% projected for 2008

800 million motorists competing with 2 billion of world's poorest for grain use

Will all US corn eventually be used for ethanol?

b. Demand from China middle class for dairy products and meat

7 lb of grain needed to produce 1 lb of beef. More beef requires more grain.

Wheat prices have tripled in past 2 years; soybean prices doubled and rice prices tripled in the past year

Result? Food prices are soaring in developing countries. Food index of the UN (60 items of internationally traded foods) rose 37% in 2007 after rising 16% in 2006

This is leading to desperation, protests and riots in parts of the world

Haitian woman making mud biscuits for her children



Haitians Riot Protesting Food Prices- 5 Killed



Impact of Peak Oil and World Food Crises?

World's poor will not be able to afford fuel or food and in some cases will not be able to get enough of either. Rationing and hoarding of fuel and food are starting.

“We will either come together as one globalized people or we will disappear as a civilization.”

David Korten

“Humanity is faced with a stark choice. Evolve or perish.”

Eckhart Tolle

“If food security cannot be restored quickly, social unrest and political instability will spread threatening the very stability of civilization itself.” Lester Brown

What Can We Do About It?

Conserve fuel- Travel less, bike, fuel efficient cars, etc.
The grain needed to fill an SUV tank with ethanol would feed a person for a year.

Eat less meat. UN committee on climate change (IPCC) is asking the world to eat 10% less meat because:

- Livestock production creates greenhouse gases
- It would slow the growth of factory farming of animals
- More grain would be available to feed the poor

Nelson Mail 10 March 2008



GFNL Can Help a Little With this Global Problem by:

Education and raising awareness about the issue

Reducing the need for commercial agriculture -using less fossil fuel and less transport, refrigeration and packaging of food.

Using less petrol for driving and to shop due to growing food

Using less water on lawns

What is really needed is fair trade and an equitable sharing agreement of resources between world governments and a coordinated effort to solve this problem. Urgent need to switch to new sources of biofuels. Grains are needed for food to avoid malnutrition and starvation.

Food Quality and Safety

Commercially grown food may be making us sick and killing us slowly

Chemical pesticides and herbicides contain toxins, carcinogens

and kill beneficial insects (bees and butterflies) and birds

Air, water and soil pollution are absorbed by plants and humans

Food from China is a **MAJOR** concern

“Not mandatory to state country of origin on food labels”- Shocking!

NO oversight of pesticide use, **VERY** contaminated air, water and soil in China

Result? Toxins in air, water and soil is producing toxic plants, vegetables, fruit meat and fish. People **WILL** get sick slowly when they eat them. Some will get cancer. Pesticides bio- accumulate in our bodies. Biggest affect on children and elderly.

GFNL- Eating locally grown organic vegetables grown in healthy soil produces the healthiest bodies. Question **ALL** commercially grown food especially from foreign sources. Avoid all food grown in China. Call 800 # on food package if you can't tell whether it is from China to find out.

Lack of Diversity and Variety

- Most individuals don't eat a large variety of food
45 vegetables in markets but only 6 are eaten the most
Vegetables offered to public determined by profitability,
durability, shipping well and appearance- not nutrition
 - Corporate focus on most marketable food = loss of diversity
In last 100 years: 81% of tomato varieties lost
93% of lettuce
80% of apples
- GFNL-Education regarding nutrition and need for variety
Raise heirloom varieties and not hybrids
Seed saving and preservation

Chemically Treated Lawns

Use up to 10 times as much chemicals per acre as commercial farms

These chemicals kill many living organisms including worms

Children can get sick playing on this soil and grass

GFNL- Strongly opposes chemical lawn sprays

Ask your neighbor not to spray. Spray drift can make you sick too

Water Wasted on Lawns

Water wasted on lawns

FC: 42% of water is for lawns= 44,000 gal/yr

Kentucky bluegrass thrives on 25 inches/yr

FC gets 15inches/yr

Why do we do this? Image and HOAS rules

GFNL- Encourages xeric plants (saves 30-50%) and drip irrigation on vegetable gardens and fruit trees. Saves water which goes toward healthy food.

Financial Squeeze

Number filing bankruptcy in US increased 40% in 2007 and % of families in poverty is increasing.

Perfect financial storm is brewing in US due to:

- Falling stock and real estate prices- loss of “wealth” effect

- Higher costs of fuel, water, food, healthcare

- High debt levels, negative savings rates, “Subprime” mortgages, foreclosures on homes (900,000 in US), end of “easy” money

- Food Banks running out of food and less Federal assistance

- Rising inflation

- Entering recession of unknown severity or length

Result? Hard times likely for more folks especially the poor

GFNL helps families learn to be more self sufficient by teaching them how to grow their own food. A backyard garden can produce 100-300 lbs of produce per year and can easily feed 5 people.

Back yard gardens provide maximum food security

Excess food can be shared/exchanged with others or donated to those in need. Food sharing in NZ.



Produce loses nutritional value as soon as it is picked

Average supermarket food travels 1500 miles in US.

Some vegetables in stores was picked weeks ago.

GFNL- Locally grown food is fresher & has more nutritional value.
It should give one more energy, better health and lower medical bills

Lawn Maintenance, Expense and Yard Waste

Larimer Co landfill receives and buries yearly:

10,135 tons of yard waste (grass and leaves)
+20,270 tons of food waste –household and stores
30,405 tons (60 million pounds) that is biodegradable

Permaculture concept- “nothing is wasted in nature”

GFNL- Imitates nature. All of our free yard and food waste can be converted into excellent plant food for our gardens with composting. Avoids wasting a valuable asset and the expense of pick up, transport and disposal of trash.

Conclusions

- Time is of essence. We feel a calling and sense of urgency to do this work now – to educate the public, raise awareness and create an effective plan of action to help others start growing their own food.
- We are part of a quiet revolution trying to return to a more sensible and sustainable food system.
- Many folks won't be motivated to act until prices are higher. We want to be prepared and have a community organization in place to help people when that occurs.

Review of Benefits of this Work

To Community

Water savings

Less organic matter into landfill

Improving soil health and fertility

Revitalizing neighborhoods

Less dependence on food banks and shelters

To Individuals

Better health and more vitality

Lower doctor bills-eating non toxic food

Lower cost of food and transportation

More self sufficiency- growing own food

Less lawn maintenance and expense

Meaningful connections with people and the earth

A positive plan of action frees up creative energy
and gives one hope for the future

Closing Ideas to Live By

“Food has always been our most direct, intimate tie to a nurturing earth as well as a primary means of bonding with each other. Food has helped us know where we are and who we are.” Francis Moore Lappe

“We will be judged by future generations primarily by how well we preserved our land base for growing food.” Derrick Jensen

“ We need to do everything within our power to ensure that future generations of all species survive and inherit a sustainable planet.” Anonymous

“There is one force stronger than all the armies of the world and that is an idea whose time has come.” Victor Hugo
That idea is backyard gardening...

HOW TO GET MORE INVOLVED

- Start or expand a food producing garden
- Support GFNL project with your time or financial assistance. See contact information on handout.
- GFNL needs many skills. All have value
- Join or form a neighborhood garden group to share excess produce, organize work groups to help each other, attend workshops.
- Sign up for GFNL e-mail newsletter.
- Contact us if you have questions or suggestions

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No Dig Sheet Composting

Description- Build a garden with layers of organic material on top of existing soil similar to nature's process

Benefits:

Easy to learn and do- set up in an afternoon

Minimum effort and time required

Low cost – most materials are free

A thick layer of mulch:

- Smothers weeds

- Retains moisture and shades soil

- Provides food and protection for earthworms

Effective way to build healthy soil

Drains well

Ideal technique for doing in neighborhood groups