

# The Garden Steward



*Beginnings...*

*“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”*

*Genesis 2:8*

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# Beginnings: What Is The Garden Steward?

“How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?”  
(Proverbs 6:9, ESV).

“A greater effort should be made to create and to encourage an interest in agricultural pursuits... it was God’s plan for man to till the earth; that the first man, the ruler of the whole world, was given a garden to cultivate; and that many of the world’s greatest men, its real nobility, have been tillers of the soil,” (*Education*, p. 219).

To answer that, I must share some history. My journey is one of providential transformation from businessman/entrepreneur to gardener. After attempting farming for two years with abysmal results, I attended an education/agricultural convention given by Bob Jorgensen hoping to become a better gardener. Up to that point with a down economy, organic gardening—absolutely not my long-term plan—was to temporarily pay bills until I returned to the business world. Little did I know what God had planned for me. On the way home, I called my wife saying, “We’re changing our lives!” Thankfully she shared the same convictions.

An opportunity arose: Bob Jorgensen called me saying he was no longer going to hold any more conferences because of a busy travel schedule; he asked me to take it all over. A small-scale gardener, I struggled for years not knowing of other Adventists also straining to start CSAs or family farms. Bob’s opportunity and a burning desire to form some sort of network for struggling Adventists spurred me on. I piggybacked off the 2013 conference inviting hundreds of like-minded individuals and some 270 institutions hoping to share my vision and discuss the possibilities—*Adventist Agricultural Association* (AdAgrA) is the result.

I shared how Seventh-day Adventists have a golden opportunity to introduce unique and wholesome methods from an Adventist perspective. Yet, it was never my intent to start an organization to simply teach how to grow or up-sell their products. I personally know many of the struggles involved in starting a small farm and transitioning from the

city to the country. I desired a foundation with seminars and workshops calling people back to God’s original ideal for the family. My plan was simple: establish an online community for networking, develop a periodical, and build upon the years of Bob Jorgensen’s training conferences. There are many organizations out there already teaching how to grow and many are quite good at it. I did not want to emulate them. How would I be different? My simple desire was to teach *why* we should garden and then how. First the *why*, then the *how*.

In 2015 my wife and I named and launched *Roots* magazine with the intent of keeping it separate from the *Adventist Agricultural Association*. In 2016 while checking on registering the magazine name, I found it had already been taken. Reaching out to the company, they responded they would not allow fair use of their name, even though we were in different fields. Many across the world have reached out to me via email and phone calls asking me to continue the journey I started in 2012, which brings me to *The Garden Steward*.

In 2012 I attended Bob’s seminar seeking knowledge to grow better produce, but left learning how to grow a better family—utilizing God’s simple methods and of all things... a garden. I am forever deeply humbled knowing out of everyone in the Adventist world, God thought enough of me to use me as a vessel to start such a movement. I hope you will be blessed by this new endeavor. 🌱

Daniel LaFlair





## What Should I Be Doing Now? Fall Gardens

In the U.S., fall usually means—for the most part—the end of the growing season. Tools are put away and the land is left alone to rest until spring. Many have stated they feel it's too cold and wet to garden; and since they don't have greenhouses or grow tunnels, they feel they can't do anything.

However, fall is an important part of the growing season and should be a time for both fall/winter planting and/or preparing your soil for the spring. So, if you want an abundant spring harvest, you will not rest your garden. In Georgia (zones 8-7) during the autumn months, experienced growers are harvesting their fall crops and planting cold crops to take them through the winter, or they're preparing the ground for spring. Undoubtedly, this is a much easier task in the southern climates with no snow accumulation, yet it can also be achieved in northern zones. I know of people growing in the winter in Montana, Colorado, and Maine using row covers. In colder climates, things like hot houses, row covers, caterpillar tunnels, high tunnels, and greenhouses, etc., can be used to extend the growing season. In this article I answer a question for the beginning gardener which applies to warmer zones.

**Question:** I've never done any gardening and I want to start one next spring. Should I simply copy everyone else, wait until the weather is warm, till up the soil and start planting?

**Response:** As pointed out, fall is the time for spring prep if you don't plan on growing a fall or winter garden. First, break up or till the area before the ground freezes. This will open up and allow air into the soil; do this even if the area is already well established. Additionally, in the southeastern part of the United States, or any place where the dirt is composed of mainly clay soil, your fall garden prep affects next year's crop production. The autumn months is also time to add compost and mulch to your gardens thus providing food for all those unseen beneficial microbes.

Here are some options to consider:

The very first step before anything else is to loosen the area with whatever means you have on hand, whether it's tilling with a plow, shovel, pickaxe or using something like a broad-fork. The latter is my personal preference. Then, do one of the following.

**Option 1:** Purchase enough nitrogen-fixing plant seeds for your growing area and cast them over the garden plot. Many locations have compacted soils which need to be loos-

ened—hence the instruction to till. But don't stop there; many plants you'll grow in the spring need nitrogen (N), no matter the soil type, and a good inexpensive way to achieve this is through the use of nitrogen-fixers. Yet, these plants don't simply pull nitrogen from the air by themselves, they need help. One way this is accomplished is by a common bacteria called Rhizobium. The plants make “apartment houses” (also known as nodules) on their roots for the Rhizobium and provide them with food and air. The Rhizobia convert the air you and I breathe, which is 78% N<sub>2</sub>, a form of nitrogen which plants can't even use, into two plant usable forms: an ammonia form used for the fruiting growth stages and a nitrate another form needed for the vegetation growth stages.

These nitrogen-fixing plants grow in a symbiotic relationship with soil-dwelling bacteria. For example, bacteria pull gaseous nitrogen from the air providing a usable form to any plant growing on soil (absent any organic matter). In turn, the plant feeds the bacteria carbohydrates, which they are unable to produce themselves. Here is where true education reveals itself and we're able to show the student an example of God in the garden where service is observed and taught. In the garden we see plants and microbial life as partakers of an unselfish nature, similar to Him who “*came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...*” (Matt. 20:28).

Many people purchase nitrogen and/or fertilizers for their plants in the spring spending exorbitant amounts of money—over one hundred billion dollars world-wide for factory fabricated nitrogen fertilizers per Christine Jones<sup>1</sup>. But, if you do this one simple thing, your growing area should have sufficient nitrogen for your plants. I encourage you to purchase three or four different types of seeds to achieve better results.

In addition to nitrogen fixers, I plant Daikon radishes (aka field or tillage radish). Daikons are an Asian radish which dig deeper into the soil, not round like the common radish. For several years I've used them to loosen my compacted Georgia clay soil. Daikon radishes burrow deep into the soil and if left to rot, leave behind organic matter and slightly deeper looser soils. Each season I do this increases the soil depth. I even harvest some of the radishes since my family enjoys eating them. They can be eaten like a regular radish, pickled, fried, baked, boiled, or added to stews. I also encourage you to throw in a narrow leaf crop to the mix; I personally accomplish this by planting rye grass.

Grasses will support Glomus species<sup>2</sup> which make humus.



Humus is the sponge of the soil which holds water rather than letting it run off when it rains. It also serves as long lasting microbial apartment complexes which can last for hundreds of years.

Following this formula gives you a grass (humus), a legume (nitrogen), and a taproot (tillage & organic matter) for your cover crop. There is infinite wisdom in “*the planting of the Lord*,” (Isa. 61:3).

**Option 2:** Another option to the question is to gather leaves and grass and cover the growing area in four to ten inches of leaf mulch. I've done this method many years simply using my mower to bag the chopped grass and leaves then spread on the garden area. Come springtime, my area is teeming with microbial activity and earthworms. I simply till it in, prep my beds, and plant.

**Option 3:** A third option is to purchase black plastic from your local hardware store. Note: do not purchase clear plastic as it will burn up your micro-organisms and destroy them. I started doing this six years ago in areas with Bermuda grass or pesky weeds. The plastic gives a greenhouse effect by heating up the soil. All the exposed weed seeds will germinate in the warm environment, but will die for lack of a light source. Come planting time your area will be, for the most part, free of weeds and your prep work will be a bit easier. I want to stress however, I would only advise this method over options 1 and 2 if (a) you want to kill heavy persistent weeds in an area you plan to start growing in, or (b) your soil is already well established and you simply want to kill off weeds before planting.

It's better to leave out option three and grow cover crops to improve the area than to allow it to lie dormant for several months or cover it in grass and leaves. Option one is ideal, option three is the least ideal.

Regardless of the method you use, don't leave your garden dormant until springtime. Any time soil is left bare, it loses carbon into the air.<sup>1</sup> Carbon is the basic element of organic matter. Spend the

time preparing the area(s). Then each year, divide the area into sections. Rotate areas planting season appropriate plants for family consumption, while sowing the rest in cover crops, which increase humus, ni-



trogen and minerals for your coming crop.

The book *Country Living* page 17 gives us something to aspire to:

"If the land is cultivated, it will, with the blessing of God, supply our necessities. We are not to be discouraged about temporal things because of apparent failures, nor should we be disheartened by delay. We should work the soil cheerfully, hopefully, gratefully, believing that the earth holds in her bosom rich stores for the faithful worker to garner, stores richer than gold or silver. The nig-gardliness laid to her charge is false witness. With proper, intelligent cultivation the earth will yield its treasures for the benefit of man. The mountains and hills are changing; the earth is waxing old like a garment; but the blessing of God, which spreads a table for His people in the wilderness, will never cease."

A final thing for autumn months is planting any type of bulbs, whether for food (onions) or beauty (gladiolus). And fall is a great time to start planting those fruit trees you've been wanting to get started along with fruit vines (grapes), bushes (berries), or plants (strawberries).

Happy Growing! 🌱

Daniel LaFlair

1 Christine Jones is an Australian "groundcover and soils ecologist" who works with landowners to "implement regenerative land management techniques." (<http://renewablesoil.com/dr-christine-jones.html>)

2 Glomus is a genus of arbuscular mycorrhizal (AM) fungi, and all species form symbiotic relationships (mycorrhizas) with plant roots. Glomus is the largest genus of AM fungi. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glomus\\_\(fungus\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glomus_(fungus)), accessed 2017-12-20)

## Nitrogen Fixing Plants

- 🌱 Wild Peas
- 🌱 Clover  
(red, white, yellow)
- 🌱 Cowpeas
- 🌱 Soybeans
- 🌱 Fava Bean
- 🌱 Vetch
- 🌱 Alfalfa
- 🌱 Lupines
- 🌱 Legumes  
(any bean or pea)



## Cold Crops

- 🌱 Broccoli
  - 🌱 Cauliflower
  - 🌱 Cabbage
  - 🌱 Radishes (any type)
  - 🌱 Turnips
  - 🌱 Kale
  - 🌱 Swiss Chard
  - 🌱 Spinach
  - 🌱 Lettuces (any kind)
  - 🌱 Fall Carrots
  - 🌱 Beets
  - 🌱 Arugula
  - 🌱 Celery
  - 🌱 Cilantro
- And many many more

Simply check your local area for what you can grow. In a future post, we'll address how you can extend your season, or how you can protect your produce from snow or frost.





# Agricultural Origins

*Editor's Note: This article first appeared in Roots magazine in 2014. Bob, prior to his passing, graciously turned over all rights to this article to Daniel LaFlair.*

When we consider what constitutes origins, we are really talking about going back to the events connected with the creation account of Genesis. God was and is the originator of the gardening idea. He is the first One mentioned in Scripture who planted a garden: *“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden...”* (Gen. 2:8).

From the creation account we learn that human origins go back to the soil. We were made from the dust of the ground, and when we die we return to the dust of the ground. Between these two points we are basically sustained by the products that come from the ground. Foremost among these, of course, is food. God designed that we maintain a close connection with the soil through the food we eat.

Since it is evident that the food comes from the soil, it should be also apparent that the quality of the food will be dependent to a large degree upon the care we take of that soil. This may be a reason why man was given the work of tilling, or caring for the soil (see Gen. 2:5). The Bible refers to man being given the responsibility to “dress and keep” the garden. Soil quality and consequently food quality would be dependent upon man properly exercising his responsibility to care for the soil and the plants.

I believe that there was a divine purpose in God’s act of planting a garden and putting Adam and Eve in it to “dress and keep it.” In reality God planted two gardens—one in the soil of Eden, and one in the soil of the hearts of our first parents. Adam and Eve and their posterity were given the advantage of learning lessons regarding the development of the heart garden as they had opportunity

to work in the “dressing and keeping” of the garden and its production.

The work of “keeping” the garden seems to include the idea of maintaining and nurturing the garden. This would be true of the heart garden also. They needed to cultivate those attributes and characteristics which most reflected God’s character—ever growing in the ability to understand and participate in God’s great government of service.

In serving the soil and plants, they, in turn, would be served by the soil and the plants. God established the outward garden as an accurate reflection of the inward garden. As illustrated and reflected by the outward garden, the cultivated heart-garden was to bear such fruit as kindness, love and service. It is clear that Adam and Eve were to learn how to “dress and keep” the garden of the heart as they engaged in “dressing and keeping” the garden in Eden.

Sin significantly affected the order of things, but still, God kept the role of the garden in its function of representing the heart of men and women. We read of the curse pronounced upon the ground because Adam sinned (see Gen. 3:17-19), and perhaps we are prone to view this as an arbitrary act of God instigated as a punishment for Adam’s sin. But the wording of the Scriptures forbids this conception of the matter.

Notice the wording of the text: *“...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life...”* (vs. 17). Note the words “for thy sake.” God, here, is telling Adam that He is not just putting a curse on the ground, but rather He is informing Adam of something deeper. Because of Adam’s sin, He is

stating that this new condition of being cursed will be humanity’s blessing. God said, the ground is cursed “for thy sake.”

What was to be the result of the curse? *“Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”* (Gen. 3:18-19). Humans would have to contend with thorns and thistles, and their work would now be more difficult. In fact, God informed Adam that he’d need to exert himself to the point of experiencing a new sensation—sweat on his face—in order to have food.

Both men and women would experience pain as the result of the original sin—Eve in childbearing, and

Adam in cultivating the ground and producing a livelihood to sustain them. It seems that ever since man was told that he must sweat in order to sustain himself, he has been looking for ways to avoid sweating and still obtain

his livelihood. Yet the exertion that would bring sweat was pronounced to be “for thy sake” or for a particular benefit.

Physiologically, sweating is cleansing and beneficial to the body. But more than that, the exertion of the body has a cleansing and up-building affect on the mind and character. Science now confirms that useful physical activity has physiological effects on the formation of the brain and its ability to function most effectively.

This connection of agricultural pursuits and heart development is



discussed at some length in Ellen White's writings. Note the connections made in the following passages.

To Adam God had said: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17-19).

Although the earth was blighted with the curse, nature was still to be man's lesson book. It could not now represent goodness only; for evil was everywhere present, marring earth and sea and air with its defiling touch. Where once was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil. From nature, which now revealed the knowledge of good and evil, man was continually to receive warning as to the results of sin. (*Education*, p. 26)

Through disobedience to God, Adam and Eve had lost Eden, and because of sin the whole earth was cursed. But if God's people followed His instruction, their land would be restored to fertility and beauty. God Himself gave them directions in regard to the culture of the soil, and they were to co-operate with Him in its restoration. Thus the whole land, under God's control, would become an object lesson of spiritual truth. As in obedience to His natural laws the earth should pro-

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duce its treasures, so in obedience to His moral law the hearts of the people were to reflect the attributes of His character. Even the heathen would recognize the superiority of those who served and worshiped the living God. (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 289)

As a relaxation from study, occupations pursued in the open air, and affording exercise for the whole body, are the most beneficial. No line of manual training is of more value than agriculture. A greater effort should be made to create and to encourage an interest in agricultural pursuits. Let the teacher call attention to what the Bible says about agriculture: that it was God's plan for man to till the earth; that the first man, the ruler of the whole world, was given a garden to cultivate; and that many of the world's greatest men, its real nobility, have been tillers of the soil. Show the opportunities in such a life. The wise man says, "The king himself is served by the field." Ecclesiastes 5:9. Of him who cultivates the soil the Bible declares, "...His God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." Isaiah 28:26. And again, "Whoso keepeth the

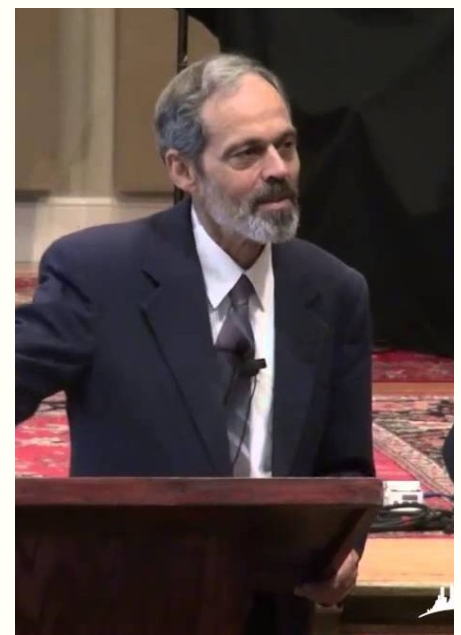
fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof." Proverbs 27:18. He who earns his livelihood by agriculture escapes many temptations and enjoys unnumbered privileges and blessings denied to those whose work lies in the great cities. And in these days of mammoth trusts and business competition, there are few who enjoy so real an independence and so great certainty of fair return for their labor as does the tiller of the soil. (*Education*, p. 219)

Garden activity was intended by God to be a part of our life, and was given for the benefit of all mankind. Not only does it provide direct access to one's sustenance through direct involvement, but it also engages one in the most beneficial line of manual activity for our spiritual development. Rather than a dependence on other suppliers and distributors, we provide for ourselves.

Employment of our time in growing fruits and vegetables was a work given to Adam and Eve before they fell; it was adapted and rearranged for them after they fell. But more than that, it is to be an occupation of the redeemed in the new earth; and we have seen that it is the most valued of all manual engagements we can involve ourselves in at the present time. I encourage you... spend some time in your garden this week! 🌱

**Bob Jorgensen**

Many of Bob's lectures, videos and other materials can be obtained from <http://mmpress.info> or call (828) 649-0070



## Where are the Disease and Pest-free Plants?

Finding an answer requires a little digging. When Seventh-day Adventist education was in its infancy, and schools for higher grades were being formed, God saw the curriculum being adopted was not going to reach the mark of true education. The development of the character of Christ in the student was being given low priority to that of academics. “*Preparation for the life that now is...*” (*Education*, p. 13) was the direction the courses of study were taking. Preparing “*...students for the joy of service in this world, and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come,*” (*Education*, p. 13) was not realized as the foundation for true education until Avondale and Madison’s demonstration.

The statement, “*study in agricultural lines should be the A, B and C of the education given in our schools*” was grasped in the development of Avondale in Australia and Madison in the United States (*Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6*, p. 179). God’s character is one of a servant, all His creations throughout the universe are moment-by-moment served by Him. He is serving the living things their meals, providing them habitat and aiding them in reproduction. He is regulating the weather, both planetary and celestial, so it serves to impact all life forms in ways that keep them thriving. Participating in soil culture, agriculture, we are sharing with God the responsibility of keeping living creatures thriving. This work educates us to act like God by serving as He serves.

From the preparation of the soil to receive seeds, to the planting of seeds at the right depths, at the right temperature, in the right climate with sufficient growing season, we are gaining an understanding of God (Gen. 2:15).

Our role of caring for this



precious new plant, about to spring forth, is similar to God’s role of caring for every seed that germinates, in the forests, scrublands, grasslands, and water bodies of the earth each year. Our care of the soil life that God has designed to feed this new plant, the tilling, mulching, and composting, all reveal that God’s design for the work we do to feed ourselves teaches us acts of service (Gen. 2:5). Thinning excessive fruit, supporting fruit weight, putting white surfaces under melons to increase sunshine reflection—any care in vegetative or fruit development aids seed production, quality of fruit and seed, and regulates genetic expression. Lastly, harvesting and caring for the seed to be used next year by drying, storing and maybe even fermenting it, establishes in our minds that to be like God is to be an unceasing servant.

Earth was given to us as a paradise. There were no disease or pest problems. Our dominion over *every living thing* and our capacity to *subdue* the earth was a “moral responsibility and obligation” committed to us when we were given “care of the garden to dress and keep it” (see Gen. 1:28; 2:15; *Education*, p. 20, 21). Our neglect to keep earth according to God’s design has altered genetic expression by way of epigenetic switches, so that disease and insect attack are common among most of our food plants. Yet, these genetic predispositions for disease and attraction of insect pests, turned on by a damaged environment, can be turned off by a repaired environment.

Searching for disease and pest free stock or seed was a service that was done by Avondale and Madison schools as part of their curriculum. Madison was established on a worn out and eroded piece of ground, providing students *and teachers* an opportunity to learn how to repair the damage to the soil and damage to the health of plants<sup>1</sup>. God wanted to

demonstrate to the world, and universe, that His “adopted” children are willing to repair the damage they have done on earth (Rom. 8:15). They are willing to take up again their God-given job of groundskeepers and gardeners by repairing and then keeping earth the way that He gave it to them (Gen. 2:15).

So where are these disease-free trees, shrubs, vines, berries and vegetables that were developed at Avondale and Madison? Madison had over 600 varieties of grapes. Obviously, they were “trialing” them for disease resistance as well as flavor. Today, almost all trialing of new varieties is done with a spray program in place to keep disease and pests off of the plants. You will hardly ever find disease resistance and pest resistance while you are spraying to kill them. Why pay for sprays to poison your environment, and yourself, when the capacity to grow disease and pest free has already been genetically programmed into all plants from the beginning?

God designed plants to feed all living things (Gen. 1:29, 30). That diet, when eaten, will keep “beasts” and “fowl” and “creeping things” and us free from disease and parasites. Our responsibility as groundskeepers and gardeners (Gen. 2:5, 15) was to do labor that maintained a healthful environment for the soil microbes and the plants. Our neglect to keep the environment the way God designed it is what has turned on epigenetic switches for survival of the fittest, and turned off switches for Edenic pleasure and delight.

When plants are overgrazed, or forests clear cut, genetic expressions for thorn and thistle production turn on. These plants are there not only to defend the soil life, but they serve as repairers of the soil. They increase organic matter, humus, oxygen and food for microbes, they reduce erosion and siltation. Managing grazing in a mob stocking<sup>2</sup> manner and selective cutting in forests will keep these soils





fertile. Then, no genetic expressions that defend or repair the land from our mismanagement will be needed and Edenic expressions of pleasure and delight can be turned back on.

Madison school took their eroded, worn out soil and reestablished the microbial habitat necessary to feed plants as God designed. They increased organic matter and humus, and planted fruit trees, berries, bushes, cane fruit, vines and any other fruit that would grow in their climate, to feed the microbes. From these they selected disease free stock that thrived without sprays. So where are these disease free plants? Who has them?

Black rot, the scourge of grapes from the prairies of North America to the Atlantic Ocean, requires commercial growers to spray every season. Yet, someone had black rot free, delicious, pink table grapes which they gave to Hartland College in Virginia. Cuttings were passed to Bob Jorgensen, who shared some with me. I need brown rot resistant peaches, scab free apples, Fabraea free pears. Where are they?

### Disease and Pest Resistant Plants

What are your needs for disease and pest resistant plants for your area?

When soil is repaired with organic matter, humus and minerals, plant varieties that have repair and defense genes turned on, need to be substituted with varieties that have disease and pest resistant genes turned on. Work has been done on this, but where are the plants? If we can't gather them up from sources, we'll need to redo all the work. This requires planting seed from our fruits and starting new trees, new bushes, new vines and new berries and trialing them for their Edenic traits of growing free from disease and pest attack.

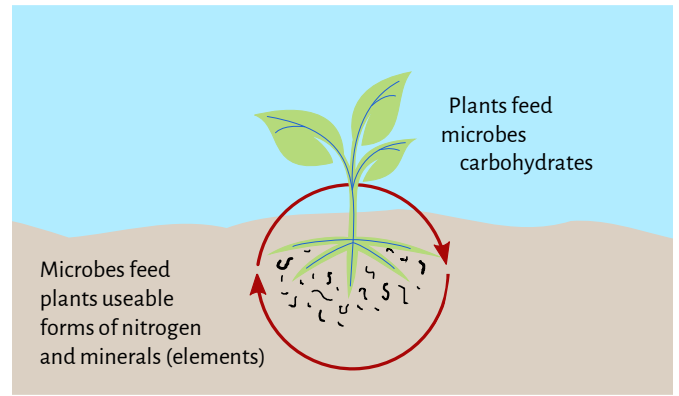
Plants feed soil life so the soil "livestock" can have the energy to in turn feed the plants. If plants have been selected for how well they

thrive on water soluble fertilizers we supply, an interesting thing takes shape. They will turn off genetic expressions for feeding microbes. Why should plants waste energy, exuding food into the soil or on the leaf surface to feed microbes that would feed them, when they are already being fed by us? When the soil livestock's environment is flooded with the nutrients they were designed to make available to the plant, they are triggered by that environment to stop producing those nutrients.

Here's a question; is our fertilizer formula as good as God's? If we neglect to provide something in our fertilizer formula, the plant will be affected adversely. If severe enough, God's garbage disposal crews (aka insects, fungus, bacteria, virus) will come in and destroy it. God does not want us eating poor quality food. So if we dare supply what God has designed microbes to supply, we are looking for trouble.

We need plant varieties which have their genes turned on to get their fertilizer from microbes and not from us! We don't know how to feed those plants the way that God designed them to be fed. Our occupation, given to us in Eden, as groundskeepers and gardeners, is what will provide perfect fertilizer for the plants, fertilizer that will give them disease and pest resistance. Providing the environment that microbes need is accomplished by keeping the earth covered with plants.

Microbes will do a good work if we give them the environment they need to thrive. Many people are repairing their damaged soil, but they do not have the plants that "know" how to thrive in it. Where are the disease and pest free varieties of our pre-chemical society... the ones our great/grandparents used? If you have



any, please contact us; we'll help you propagate them! Then they can be shared with those who seek to glorify God by bringing their places back to Edenic pleasure and delight. 🌱

**Jerry Travers**

Contact Jerry at (203) 686-1425

- 1 See Ira Gish and Harry Christman, *Madison, God's Beautiful Farm* (TEACH Services, Inc., 2003)
- 2 Mob stocking is intensive grazing for a short period (e.g. a day). The animals eat the best and trample the rest, then are moved to another paddock allowing the trampled organic matter to be transformed by microbes to humus enriching the soil for the next time that paddock is grazed.

## Teaching Moments

Citrus fruit are mainly grown in subtropical climates, but can be grown elsewhere if the right environment is established. Citrus varieties include grapefruits, lemons, limes, and oranges. A notable thing about citrus is the sweet/tart flavor. Herein lies a lesson begging to be opened to the student. In a fruitful life, God blends trials with the sweet experiences of life. Going through these "flavors" of life allows each person a unique perspective they can share with others as well as an ability to relate and understand. Christ's tart-sweet experiences in life gave Him a tender heart affording Him a way to relate with each of us.

