

THE MODERN ORGANIC LIFE

BY MAGGIE WILDE

Good news! You no longer have to move to Nimbin, paint a bus, plant a hemp crop or call your children Moonlight in order to consciously live an organic lifestyle. The organic market has spread its wings leaving the stereotypical '70s hippy chick eating mung beans and tofu' (not that I have anything against either) to swap her kaftans for hipsters in search of a modern organic life.

In this issue we raise a few 'organically grown' questions to help define the modern organic lifestyle. Why go organic? How can I grow organic? Where can I find organic and what can I get organic?

Organic wine? Organic sunscreen? Organic make-up? Organic coffee? Organic cheese? Organic chocolate? Surely the vices that make up modern life must be left behind if we are to take up living an organic lifestyle? Surely things like wine and chocolate can't be chemical and pesticide free? Things that taste good – are supposed to be bad for us, right? We're supposed to 'deny' ourselves the pleasures of life if we're serious about health. True?

Although Australia's organic industry is still in its infancy, it has now become one of our fastest growing markets. Our farming and retail industries, even our lucrative export markets, have woken up to the organic wave and are beginning to grow, source and manufacture an expanding variety of organic products which thankfully, provides easier accessibility and more choice! Even chocolate!

Internet companies are delivering organic, manufacturers are developing value-add products that are organic and produce markets are popping up in our cities and suburbs selling organic.

Did I mention organic wine? Things are looking up, aren't they?

Thankfully today, a modern organic lifestyle is definitely easier to choose. Whether our reasons for going organic are health based or about the environment, whether it's about our children or creating a sustainable future, the growing market finally provides the opportunity to follow through on our choices.

Did I mention Cheese? Organic cheese?

So here are the top five reasons to choose the modern organic life.

Chemical free for you and me – yep it's those little nasties we can't see in the food that we eat that are top of the list. The pesticides and additives that are linked to cancers, hormone difficulties and even birth defects are top of the list. So coming in at number *one* is living a pesticide free, chemical free, hormone additive free life.

Protect our children & future generations – Organics Australia Online states that *'the average child receives exposure to at least eight widely used cancer-causing pesticides in conventional food.'* Whew, that is eight very good reasons and although

linked to our number one reason to go organic, deserves its own mention for the sake of our children and the generations to come. Coming in on our hot list at number *two*.

Did I mention baby stuff? Organic baby stuff, things just get better and better!

Protect our planet (soil erosion) – as Franklin D. Roosevelt once said ‘The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself.’ It is estimated up to 30% of the world’s land suitable for crop growth was lost due to soil erosion in the past half a century. The commitment of organic farmers to build soil fertility and a balanced system to provide for a sustainable future is paramount. They rely on successful management of crop rotation, soil fertility and maintenance of biodiversity. Healthy soil leading to healthy planet comes in at number *three*.

I did mention wine, didn’t I? Chocolate?

Our water supply – Toxic chemicals used in conventional farming practices can affect more than our soil. According to Peter Beaumont from the Pesticide Action Group UK, one tablespoon of herbicide used near water can pollute drinking water for 200,000 people! Need I say more! Clean, healthy water is definitely *four* in the top reasons to go organic.

Organic toothpaste, did I mention that?

Be kind to animals – organic farmers understand the direct link between the health of consumers and the health of soil, crops and the stock that is raised on it. In fact the management practices of organic farmers are designed to create happy, healthy and stress free animals. Three cheers for organic farmers! Coming in at number *five* on our orgasmically organic scale is the humane treatment of our animal world.

This list only scrapes the surface, there are many other reasons to go organic including saving energy, securing the future for farmers by supporting small industry and of course the all important taste test – simply taste the difference that healthy food makes!

Talking about food, did I mention lipsticks, organic lipsticks?

Choosing to go organic is one thing but how can we ensure that the change is made easy? Isn’t it all too hard to put into practice? It’s now easier than ever, we can make a start simply by committing to buy one certified organic product each week, it’s that simple.

Did I mention organic coffee? Mmmm...smell those beans!

But sometimes the answer lies elsewhere. There are a number of internet sites that provide all the information you will ever need to grow your own! Gasp! Shock, horror! What’s that I hear you say? Grow my own vegetables? Whatever could she mean?’ Don’t all fruits and vegetables come in nice plastic bags, from unsmiling cashiers in retail stores? You mean to tell me life for a tender bean doesn’t start at Coles? Carrots don’t come washed and bagged at Woolies?

Yep, you guessed it, we can D.I.Y. organic fruit & vege and it might not be as hard as we think.

I must admit when I first contemplated this option I scoffed and questioned my sanity. Having recently done the 'tree change' thing (post 'sea change thing) I am beginning to think this might just be rewarding as well.

In recent months I have witnessed pumpkins growing on patches, lemons growing on trees and chilli's, for heaven's sake, growing on bushes!

Did you hear that? Chillies growing on bushes, huge red ones! I thought I was going mad when I first saw them! But there they were, bright as a button, mocking me as if to say '*What, you didn't know?*'

They'd be right, I didn't know! I freely admit I was stunned and amazed to see them growing all on their own on a wee little bush.

What about organic fabrics, nappies and manchester? Whew! Cleaning products? Wine? Oh yeah, I mentioned wine!

So hark not those that hover on the brink of an organic life. (*Did I mention chocolate? Oh, I did, did I?*) You don't need 200 acres, not even one. A tiny corner of the garden could be the difference between modern organic or not.

Check out www.theorganichouse.com.au for tips and tricks to growing all manner of goodies without chemicals, without shopping bags and without Friday night at Coles in the queue!

Chillies on bushes...I ask you!

Here's a few websites to help you research the where, why and how of a modern organic life.

www.aoii.com.au

www.organicaustraliaonline.com.au

www.bfa.com.au

www.ofa.org.au

www.goorganic.com.au

www.thegreenline.com.au

www.organicwinehouse.com.au

www.theorganichouse.com.au

www.chocolatebox.com.au

www.organictimes.com.au

For Miessence Certified Organic cosmetics and toiletries go to:
<http://www.onegroup.com/?wildlyhappy>

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