

How Does Nature Grow Food?

Please make a chart or document comparing **natural landscape systems** vs. **conventional farming systems**

1. How are seeds spread?
2. How do seeds get into the ground?
3. How are the plants arranged?
4. Is the soil structure and ecology disturbed or left alone?
5. Is the soil left bare or covered?
6. How does water get to plants?
7. How does water get to animals?
8. What species participate in the water cycle?
9. Who spreads water over the landscape?
10. What processes drive the water cycle?



11. What are all the ways water gets deep into the ground for deep rooted plants?
12. How does nature make sure falling rain seeps slowly into the ground rather than compacting it or eroding it?
13. How do nutrients and microbial life get into the soil? Are the microbes fed? How?
14. How are nutrients and microbial life moved around, (and especially moved uphill)?
15. Do natural systems tend more to monocultures or diversity of plant life? How about conventional farms?
16. How does each system prevent insects and animals from eating plants?
17. How does each system keep animals healthy?
18. How does nature make sure that the right food grows for the inhabitants who live in the area? How does conventional agriculture get the right food to the people in each area?
19. How are soil temperatures modulated?



20. How are ambient air temperatures modulated?

21. Does anything in either system cost money – inputs, technology, etc?
What are those things? How much do they cost?

22. Who pays for the cost of supplies?

23. Are there any negative residual effects from the processes in either system?
If so, who pays for cleanup, health costs etc. from those effects?

25. What ecosystem services does each system provide? How valuable are those services? How would you assess their value?

26. What would the impacts be on human life if natural landscape systems failed? What would the impacts be on human life if conventional agriculture systems failed?