

THE SOIL FOODWEB

by Prof. E. Ingram Uni. Oregon USA

The Soil Foodweb is a complex, mutually beneficial population of microbes which develop soil structure and release natural nutrients for uptake by plants.

In the Soil Foodweb, everything eats and everything excretes and everything is food for something.

Residues are broken down and nutrients captured by the microbes, storing them in their bodies and making them available to plants in a steady supply as the plants require them. These nutrients include Nitrogen, Calcium, Iron, Potassium and Phosphorus.

Completing the Foodweb cycle, plants are stimulated by the foodweb to excrete materials from their roots which in turn provides food for microbes.

In her papers on weeds, Professor Ingram compares their treatment with herbicides to disconnecting your engine's warning light without first finding the cause for the warning.

Her findings show weeds require high levels of nitrates and by reducing their levels to less than 10 ppm, the weeds will seek other pastures.

This reduction in nitrates can be achieved by having microbes and fungi feeding plants with natural nitrogen. Dr Ingram's findings prove a well balanced soil will suppress weeds, provide free nutrients and retain nitrogen that does not leach.

A healthy balanced soil will also produce good soil structure, improve aeration and water retention, decompose plant residues and consume pollutants.

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