

## Living Responsibly... It's Only Natural!

Sheryl Eaglewoman

Welcome! This week's topic of choice is "coffee". That's right...your morning java. How do we love thee? Let me count the ways. Cappuccino, Latte, Americano, black, sweet...the list is endless. We even use coffee in our food recipes. Wow! So, what is so important about coffee that we would dedicate an entire column to it? It is because billions of people are drinking coffee on a regular basis. And if we, through this column, can explore the consumer ethics involved, then we can help save more of the Earth's biodiversity. Yes. It is that important! Something that appears to be mundane actually has a huge impact on the environment. You really can start your day by helping to save the natural spaces and natural resources. It is EASY! Let's see!

Okay, to begin. What is happening with conventional coffee production begins with clearing / clear cutting natural habitat. Habitat; where numerous species live, sometimes distinct peoples. These are distinct peoples, with distinct knowledge to share with the rest of us. And possibly, we "clear away" forever, a species known for its healing powers. How easy it happens. Once taken, it is gone forever. Think about it. FOREVER! Of course, there is the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, resulting in environmental pollution concerns such as ground water contamination. What of the growers themselves? Are they paid fairly for their work or are they kept as slaves?

What we want to see on the label when choosing our morning brew is: Organic, Shade Grown, Fair Trade, and Swiss Water Decaf. For the newcomer, and as a refresher course for the rest of us; some terminology follows. Organic means; grown without the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers. It also states the organism must be non-GMO, not genetically modified. This is an obvious choice. Not only have synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers shown to be damaging to the environment, creating damaging change to entire eco-systems, it is firmly being linked to having a negative impact on people's health. If we consider only the damage the contamination of our water systems imply in regards to our health we would buy organic, always. We must have clean water to survive as a people. We know this yet forget to match our actions with our thoughts. Sometimes I hear people state they cannot afford to buy organic. Once again, you can't afford not to. The Earth can not cleanse Herself if you keep dumping more toxins on her. Do you not see the Earth stressing under her already heavy burden? One can cook a home cooked, organic, great tasting, nutritious meal for less expense than you can eat fast food. And with the fast food, you certainly aren't getting anywhere near the nutrition.

Shade Grown indicates the product is grown in a more natural habitat, without inflicting damage on the local eco-system. This is important because this farming practice encourages biodiversity. It saves the various species of plants and animals and people from the destruction of their habitat. It saves species of plants that could have huge impacts with their healings uses. It often saves an entire community of people, if not from extinction, from the displacement from their homeland, their way of living. Choosing Shade Grown means choosing to show respect for the land and her peoples; the winged, the four legged and the two legged. And when you show respect for others, it will also be given to you.

Fair Trade. It is just as it is stated, product being fairly traded for the fair market value, with wages for the farm workers reflecting that ethic. This encourages a better, healthier lifestyle for everyone. When you buy Fair Trade, you can enjoy knowing you are aiding someone in living a happier, healthier life. How cool is that? You can begin your day making your day and someone else's better with a good ole cup o' Joe.

Swiss Water Decaf is a natural decaffeination process, reducing the amount of caffeine. For those who are caffeine sensitive and would like to know healthy decaf options, this is the way to go. It is a natural process of removing the caffeine and is a totally sensible choice. For the rest of us; when considering our caffeine consumption, moderation, moderation, moderation is the key.

Okay, so who knew we could have such a huge impact with such a simple gesture as buying coffee? But wait, what about all of the extras we "take" with our coffee? Sweeteners? Is it natural? Organic? Fair Trade? And your cream? Is it, you know, real cream? Organic? From cows not treated with rBGH (recombinant growth hormone)? Just checking.

So, we get it. Right? But can we actually buy Organic, Free Trade, Shade Grown and Swiss Water Decaf coffee right here in The Valley? Why, yes we can. We are lucky to even have coffee roasting houses right here in our midst. Some even offer coffees that benefit causes such as grizzly bear habitat and educational funding for Native American youth. You've got to love it. Great coffee that makes great things happen! Don't have time to go to the roasting house? Go to your nearest natural foods store. They'll have the good stuff.

So, you've always wanted to do something good for the world but wasn't sure what "Little 'ole You" could do. Now you know. Drink your coffee from the right cup - the one that is half full. Fill your cup with the fullness expressed with choices for a healthy Earth. Yummy!

Question of the Week: Do you know of a way to naturally remove smells from carpets?

Answer: Actually, I have used Nutribiotic's Grapefruit Seed Extract, 50 drops and hot water, in my steam cleaner with excellent results. Of course, test an area of your rug for it's colorfastness before proceeding.

Book of the Week: *Coming Home to Eat, The Pleasures and Politics of Local Foods*; Nabhan, Gary Paul; W.W. Norton & Co., 2002

Have a question you'd like to see addressed by Sheryl Eaglewoman? E-mail your question to [sheryleaglewoman@livingresponsibly.com](mailto:sheryleaglewoman@livingresponsibly.com) for "The Question of the Week".

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