

## Organic Questions and Answers

by Irucka Embry

I have heard many people ask various questions about what it means to be “organic” and the following is a list of 4 of the most asked questions:

### **1) What is organic?**

In chemistry, it refers to a substance that contains Carbon. [1]

In horticulture, a certified organic farm and/or garden keeps and restores the fertility of the soil ecosystem without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides and fertilizers. Furthermore, certified organically produced foods must be grown or raised without the use of antibiotics, cloned animals and/or their products, genetic engineering and other excluded practices, irradiation, sewage sludge, and/or synthetic hormones. [2]

Therefore, all organisms involved in the agricultural, including horticultural, processes are organic substances.

### **2) How do you know if a food, product, and/or seed is certified organic?**

A certified organic food, product, and/or seed will contain the “USDA Organic” or another approved label and it will also include the name of the organic certifier. [3]

### **3) Why purchase certified organic food, products, and/or seeds?**

Purchasing certified organic goods ensures the continuation of the organic agricultural industry, especially when you buy your goods from local suppliers. It also allows you to avoid genetically modified organisms (GMOs), including genetically modified (GM) food. The American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) released their Genetically Modified Foods Position Paper on May 19, 2009, which, in part, asked doctors to educate their patients, the rest of the medical community, and the public on avoiding GM foods due to their probable harm.[4]

### **4) What advice can you offer?**

The following steps, along with others, will enhance the health of the garden ecosystem:

- Use certified organic seeds best suited for your biological region (bioregion).
- Test the soil that you will use to grow your crops. Make sure that you examine the biological genetic diversity (biodiversity) of the soil micro- and macro-organisms present in your Earth.
- Practice plant biodiversity and companion planting so that plants grown close together can provide some mutual benefit.

What other questions do you have?

*Irucka Embry, EcoC<sup>2</sup>S Principal, wrote this article. Information on ecological gardening and other provided services can be found online @ <http://www.ecoccs.com>.*

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105.

---

## References

[1]

Schubert, L. and Veguilla-Berdecia, L. A. (1972). *Chemistry and Society*. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston.

[2]

<http://www.ota.com/definition/quickoverview.html>

Organic Trade Association (OTA): Quick Overview of Organic Agriculture and Production

[3]

ibid.

[4]

<http://www.aemonline.org/gmopressrelease.html>

The American Academy Of Environmental Medicine Calls For Immediate Moratorium On Genetically Modified Foods

<http://www.aemonline.org/gmopost.html>

Genetically Modified Foods Position Paper: The American Academy Of Environmental Medicine (AAEM)