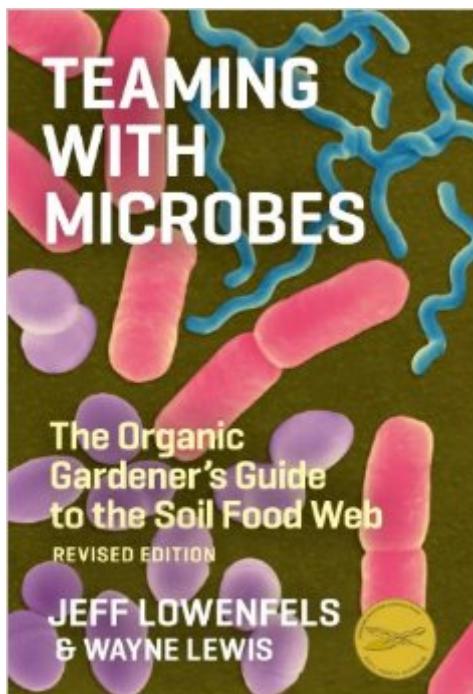


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# Teaming With Microbes: The Organic Gardener's Guide To The Soil Food Web, Revised Edition (Science For Gardeners)



## Synopsis

The 2011 Garden Writers of America Gold Award for Best Writing/Book proves soil is anything but an inert substance. Healthy soil is teeming with life -- not just earthworms and insects, but a staggering multitude of bacteria, fungi, and other microorganisms. When we use chemical fertilizers, we injure the microbial life that sustains healthy plants, and thus become increasingly dependent on an arsenal of artificial substances, many of them toxic to humans as well as other forms of life. But there is an alternative to this vicious circle: to garden in a way that strengthens, rather than destroys, the soil food web -- the complex world of soil-dwelling organisms whose interactions create a nurturing environment for plants. By eschewing jargon and overly technical language, the authors make the benefits of cultivating the soil food web available to a wide audience, from devotees of organic gardening techniques to weekend gardeners who simply want to grow healthy, vigorous plants without resorting to chemicals.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I enjoyed the beginning of *Teaming with Microbes*, but as I went on through it, I began to be uncomfortable with some of its tone. The authors seemed to be wanting to put their attachment to non-organic industrial lawn and garden products behind them, but they also seem to be doing advance work for a new bio-tech industry, rather than just proposing to work "with" the soil life in an organic way. They relate [p.69] that one of them wrote a weekly gardening column for 30 years and

never once mentioned mycorrhiza "out of sheer ignorance." On the same page they write, that it was only in the 1990's that the term mycorrhiza started to "creep into the agricultural industry's lexicon, much less the home gardener's." Most organic gardeners are aware that it is with home gardeners and "soil pioneers" progress is made in soil science, and not in an entrenched industry. On p. 125, with the section "a quick look forward," they write, "Given the advancing scientific techniques, the high degree of interest in the subject, and the human as well as the monetary implications of usable bio-products, it is certain more will be taken up - more and more often - as additional tools for restoration and maintenance." In other words, more industry involvement. Further, on page 126, the authors disclose their wish for the bio-tech development of "an endophytic fungi that rids the lawn of dandelions." The development of such a fungi that kills dandelions could be an ecological disaster. Besides the value of dandelions as a food source for many nations outside of the U.S., dandelions are a nitrogen fixing soil improving plant. Then too, did the authors consider that the bio-tech created endophytic fungi might adapt to also kill other root vegetables, such as sugar beets, and carrots?

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