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ARCH CREEK NEWS

On Saturday, October 11th, at 9 am. we will meet at the Enchanted Forest next door to our park. Their staff has been making some major improvements, including an aerator. We recently received a donation to help us with our new butterfly garden, so we are open to new ideas. Following the tour, we will have a delicious brunch at the Picadilly Restaurant, just around the corner on Biscayne Blvd., giving us the opportunity to share suggestions. Our monthly meeting will be held on Monday, October 13th. at 7 pm in the museum.

CANOE TRIP CLEANUP

Come join the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, Natural Areas Management and the Wildlife Research Team as they partner to clean up the mangroves along County-protected parts of the Oleta River. Parking fees will be waived for volunteers. Community Service hours provided. This is a canoe clean-up. Previous canoeing experience preferred. Must be accompanied by parent or guardian if under the age of 18. Space is limited, 9 am.-12 noon. East Greynolds Park, 16700 Biscayne Blvd., Miami . 305-257-0933. www.miamidade.gov/parks/parks/eastgreynolds.asp.

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VODOU SHRUB

A favorite butterfly nectar plant, widely planted in South Florida, although not a native, is the *Jatropha Peregrina*. It can be trimmed to a shrub or grow into a small tree, about 15 foot high. It has bright red 6-lobed seeds, which are toxic, and explode as the seed dries. It is used in many malls as a landscaping plant.

Now we are learning that another form of *Jatropha* may become a source of biofuel in countries like Haiti, which suffers from chronic shortages of diesel fuel and electricity.

For decades, Haitians have cut down trees for charcoal to cook, and this practice has turned "Haiti's once lush landscape into an environmental disaster. In addition, Haiti imported about \$200 million in diesel fuel, with half going for transportation and the rest to run generators."

Jatropha will grow in areas where many other plants won't grow. Gael Pressoir, who holds a doctorate in plant breeding and genetics is working to breed a nontoxic *Jatropha* that would yield between 150-200 gallons of biodiesel per acre. It would also produce animal feed..

"There are about \$1.5 million acres of dry and arid land, which is suitable for *Jatropha* plantations and would create thousands of rural jobs", said Reginald Noel whose car runs on biodiesel.

Jatropha has been used for centuries by Vodou priests and priestesses for burial ceremonies, ritual baths and cures. It has also been used as a "living fence" to ward off crop-devouring goats that don't like the plants bitter flavor.

There has been reports that India and Nepal are using *Jatropha* to fuel their power plants. With the help of this sturdy shrub, could Haiti again become the beautiful country described by James Michener in his book about Haiti? From a Miami Herald article by Jacqueline Charles.

GREEN LIGHT BULBS

You wanted to do your part in saving the Earth, and switched to the compact fluorescent light bulbs. They probably didn't last as long as the package stated, but now you need to dispose of the used bulbs. Take them to your nearest Home Depot store, but take them to the Return department.

FOOD SAFETY IN THE UNITED STATES

HERSHEY CHOCOLATE

Unfortunately for my waistline, I was recently introduced to Hershey's dark chocolate nuggets with almonds. What a way to end a meal! But there is disturbing news from the Food Network. Hershey's in Brazil announced it would not use sugar beets harvested with Monsanto's toxic weed killer, Roundup, in its products made for Brazil, but it remains silent about its plan for the United States.

"When the USDA first announced the planting of GM sugar beets, the EPA also increased the maximum allowable residues of Roundup Ready (glyphosate) on the beet roots, by a staggering 5,000%. This EPA policy change was made at the request of Monsanto. The more GM ingredients permitted in our foods, the greater likelihood that we are ingesting more toxic chemicals"

For years Monsanto was allowed to sell its artificial growth hormone to dairy farmers and our milk did not have to be labeled. People fought back and recently the practice was ended.

FOOD IRRADIATION

The Food and Drug Administration has ignored consumer advocates and common sense by authorizing the irradiation of spinach and lettuce. "Never mind that hitting food with extra-powerful x-rays causes loss of flavor, texture and nutrition. In addition, to be treated, it must be shipped hundreds of miles, wasting energy and driving up cost."

NANOTECHNOLOGY

The Center for Food Safety and the NRDC are warning about products using this new technology. "Nanotechnology involves the manipulation of chemical elements on the nano scale (a single strand of hair is 100,000 nanometers wide.) Many nano-enabled products, without undergoing careful study of their possible toxicity, are incorporated into common consumer items that are applied to the skin or that can potentially be ingested or inhaled. Although the NRDC has called for more stringent safeguards, many products that contain unlabeled nanomaterials, including food and food packaging products, are already on the shelves. "Unfortunately nonproducts are still treated by FDA like any other products or product ingredients."

HALLOWEEN CANDY AND DYES

Family magazine is issuing a warning about food dyes used in candy. The European Parliament passed legislation requiring labels on food containing dyes that have been linked to hyperactivity and possibly autism. The M+M's and Skittles shipped to the United Kingdom have only natural dyes. Those sold in the U.S. can contain synthetic dyes.

MELAMINE

Fifty two countries purchased food from China that contained melamine. Although many Chinese babies died and countless babies became ill, in this country we were advised that the problem shouldn't affect those other than babies. What about the dog food that contained melamine? At least one thing was accomplished. Now, as a result, U.S. supermarkets and other big food retailers must label or display the country of origin for meat, produce and certain kinds of nuts. The labels won't apply to meat or produce that has been cooked or processed, such as corned beef and sausage. A small step in the right direction.

UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

"The United States Secretary of Agriculture is the head of the United States Department of Agriculture. The department includes several organizations. The management of the national forests and grasslands, food safety, the food stamp program and advice for farmers and gardeners comes under this jurisdiction. In 2002, Sierra Club magazine had five pages listing officials hired by the Bush Administration and their ties with the industries they were supposed to

regulate. At that time, the Secretary of Agriculture was Ann Veneman. She was a member of the Board of Directors for Calgene, a biotech corporation that created a genetically engineered tomato containing fish genes. The present Secretary of Agriculture is Ed Schafer. "In late February, in testimony before a subcommittee, he took the position that there was no need for a ban on downed cattle in the food supply." This information came from Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Why not use the same source to check out other officials in Washington?

OUR HEALTH

For years there have been many articles about food accepted for consumption in the U.S., but rejected by other countries. There are now plans to sell us cloned meat, without warning labels. Studies have shown that cloned animals are not as healthy as normal animals.

This month is Cancer Awareness Month. The United States has the highest incidence of breast cancer in the world. I wonder why.

