



What's wrong with Chemicals?

Well, actually, nothing. Everything has chemicals. Water is a chemical. Try to use the word synthetic instead of chemical. But, as everyone says chemical farming and farming (even me), remind people that it's the type of chemical that matters. Organic farmers use natural chemicals that breakdown quickly and don't harm the environment. A lot of stuff that organic farmers use comes from the kitchen. Other chemicals we use come from plants, animals and bacteria in our natural environment. Synthetic pesticides and herbicides can be much more persistent - they don't breakdown as quickly. They can also attach themselves to the humus in the soil and remain inactive for hundreds of years until the humus breaks down.

Synthetic pesticides also harm more than their target insect. They can kill many different types of insects at one time. Organic farmers work to control just the pest insects. Insecticidal soap kills when it covers the insect. Horticultural oil kills by smothering the insect. Insects who come along later are not likely to be killed. But after spraying a synthetic pesticide, any insect that lands on the plant days later can still be killed. Synthetic herbicides have been found to be harmful weeks after application. Mulch controls weeds very effectively, and it helps, not harms, your desired plants.

~ From Suite 101, written by Deborah Turton