

Organic Gardening

4:24 pm - June 17, 2008

Last night, I took recycling to a new level. After Jeff cut off Dexter's curly locks, I gathered the clipped clumps and sprinkled them in my garden.

Recycling? Certainly. Organic? Absolutely. Composting? One could argue. Witchy and weird? Well, yes.

Eating local is one great way to be earth-friendly, for so many reasons (check out *Local or Organic? I'll Take Both* to learn the basics.) I have always loved gardening, so it was easy to decide that to grow green was to go green. I've gone to the library and checked out every book on organic gardening and my favorite is called *You Grow Girl*. As I tuck myself into bed each night and flip through these tomes, I must confess that I'm happily becoming a bit obsessed.

My garden is fully organic. I bought organic soil, and my kids are thrilled that I'm using fertilizer made from worm poop. Bottled in old soda bottles, TerraCycle Worm Poop fertilizer is completely "zero footprint." Most importantly, when the crops are harvested, I'll be eating so local I can grab the food while wearing my pajamas.

For me, gardening conjures up hippie, loving, earth mama images, but the truth is that nothing draws out my greed and possessiveness like a garden. When the garden gloves come on, the kid gloves come off. Squirrels, raccoons, deer, and even fuzzy little bunnies are no longer the sweet woodland creatures so fondly anthropomorphized in our bedtime stories. No, they are scavenging vandals just waiting for my preciously nurtured tomatoes and cucumbers to appear so they can snatch them, nibble away at them, step on my soul and destroy my dreams.

A bizarre piece in the *New York Times* recently said otherwise sophisticated and peaceful artists and professionals are shooting woodchucks, drowning squirrels, and just generally getting a little homicidal on the local wildlife. While the piece was alarming, I must confess that I at least understood their motivation.

I could never shoot an animal (or a human, come to think of it), but it's funny how something so supremely green and natural can make people want to kill. A friend of mine has a family of groundhogs who roam her backyard. Rather than see them as pests, she considers the outdoors *their* property, not hers. While we are all gardening away and being locavores, maybe she is the truly green one--though her house is full of single serving water bottles and she complains about the smell of natural lawn fertilizers.

Her attitude is admirable, but after nurturing my tomatoes and peppers to ripeness, I will not feel so warm and fuzzy toward anyone or anything who robs me of the fruits of my labor. There is nothing for the bunnies and raccoons to steal yet, but I want to send a non-violent message that they are not welcome.

The organic gardening books all mention that the human smell of our hair clippings can ward off animals. They suggest asking your hairdresser for a bag of the clippings in the salon. Since Dexter's "salon" is Daddy and the clippers, I decided to just scoop the clumps of hair from the back porch and walk them to the garden. I find the fuzzy frizz of his hair surrounding the base of each of my plants to be nearly vulgar--as if my plants are going through some sort of sci-fi puberty. It is gross, but if it keeps the vermin away without me having to rig up fencing or buy a "green" gun, well then I'm in. I'll keep you posted.

