

Living Her Practice Philosophy: A Physician's Organic Garden

Internal and Integrative Medicine physician, Laura Kovalcik, DO and her husband Rich, have been organic gardeners for years.

"I've never gardened any other way than organic," says Kovalcik. "Early on we tried the organic approach and experienced successful growth, along with several other benefits from the food we grew. Plants grow large, have more flavor and do not become infested. We feel better going in the garden knowing that we aren't polluting the environment and are keeping it safer for ourselves, our pets and local birds and wildlife."

"If anyone has ever compared the taste and smell of fresh organic strawberries or lettuce or tomatoes to traditional store bought produce, you will smell and taste the difference immediately. And, there have been studies that show that organic produce contains a higher level of nutrients than traditionally grown

produce – especially the micronutrients and antioxidants."

This quote resonates with the Kovalciks' as they have learned to work with nature to control garden pests...

"On every stem, on every leaf, ... and at the root of everything that grew, was a professional specialist in the shape of grub, caterpillar, aphid, or other expert, whose business it was to devour that particular part." ~Oliver Wendall Holmes

Dr. Kovalcik and her husband create and maintain their successful organic garden by:

■ **Enhancing Soil Quality** – Checking for the proper pH for each vegetable or fruit and adding their own compost to the soil.

■ **Using Natural Fertilizers** – Fresh manure (or purchased manure which can be dehydrated) are used along with some specialty products like Tomatoes Alive available from GardensAlive.com

■ **Using Natural Pest Management** – Slug traps or bait, Japanese Beetle traps, ladybugs, and Bt (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*), and the ever successful hand-plucking

of pests off plants.



■ **Rain or Well Watering** – Well water or rain water are preferred as they don't have chlorine or other additives.

■ **Applying Natural Mulch** – Mulch helps retain water and keeps weed levels down. Grass clippings from their lawn, straw and newspaper are the materials of choice since recycling is important too.

"We thoroughly enjoy our garden," adds Kovalcik, "it's good exercise, it slows you down to think and focus, like meditation, and you are out in the fresh air and sunshine – plus you get the bonus of great food to enjoy and share."

Laura Kovalcik, D.O., F.A.C.O.I., practices at The Downing Clinic, 5715 Bella Rose Blvd., Suite 100, Clarkston, MI. For more information, call 248-625-6677 or visit her website: TheDowningClinic.com. See ad page 21.

