Healthy Plants, HEALTHY HUMANS

Plants are the basis of everything we eat. Without plants there are no fruits, vegetables, grains, or meat (livestock eat plants). Plant pathogens and pests cause between 10 and 40% crop loss in major food crops. Without healthy plants, humans don’t have healthy foods to eat.

Some plant products, like chocolate, contain high amounts of flavonoids. Flavonoids are plant chemicals that have been shown to improve learning and memory and may help prevent and treat brain disorders.

The key ingredient in aspirin, salicylic acid, was discovered when scientists investigated the pain-relieving properties of the willow tree. Aspirin acts on the hormone system to relieve pain. It may also reduce the risk of heart attacks and some cancers. This is just one example of important medicines that have been discovered in plants.

Iron is a mineral needed for proper functioning of red blood cells in carrying oxygen. Some plant-based foods, like spinach and beans, are high in iron and are an important source for vegetarians.

Some fruits and vegetables, like carrots, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes, are a good source of vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for healthy eyesight as well as proper immune and digestive system function. Vitamin A is just one example of how eating a diet of diverse fruits and vegetables keeps you healthy.

Beta glucans found in oats can help reduce cholesterol and may also lower blood pressure for better heart health.