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## MONEY TREE THE BUSINESS OF ORGANICS



Caroline Shackleton and Nathan Paul Turner





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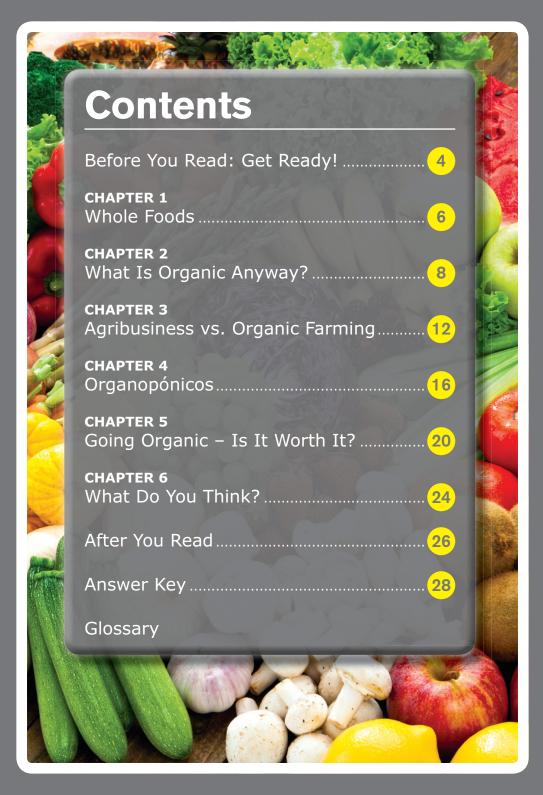
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# Before You Read: Get Ready!

Natural products are more popular than ever before, but how natural are they? We take a look at some of the many ways of going organic.

#### **Words to Know**

Complete the sentences with the correct words.





soil

pest





fertilizer

urban garden

whole foods

- 1 A place to grow food in a city or a town is an \_\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Foods that are not changed in any way by adding something to them or taking something out of them are called \_\_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 An insect or small animal that is harmful to crops is a \_\_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 A natural or chemical product that is spread on land in order to make plants grow well is called \_\_\_\_\_\_.
- **5** The material in which plants grow is \_\_\_\_\_.

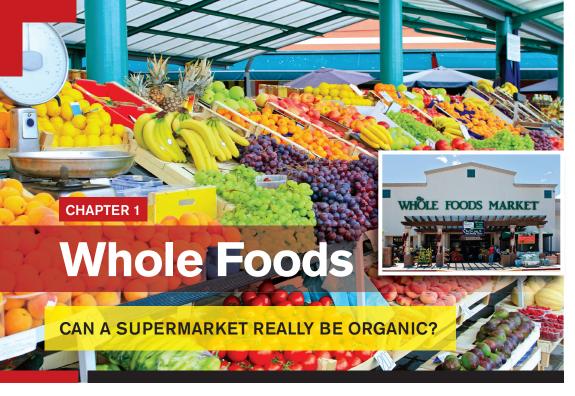
#### **Words to Know**

## Read the paragraph. Then complete the definitions with the correct highlighted words.

In the second half of the 20th century, the debate about how we should look after the land around us became more and more serious as populations grew, and new industrial farming techniques, including the frequent use of pesticides, began to be used. The first organic pioneers questioned this new way of farming. They were early critics of techniques that most people thought were positive. Their criticisms came from a belief that to rob from the land without giving nutrients back was not ethical. Today, many organic farmers see themselves as activists in the fight for a healthier planet.

0	: what plants or animals need in order to live and grow
2	: a person who expresses disagreement with something or disapproval of someone
3	<ul><li>a serious discussion between two persons or groups with different opinions about something</li></ul>
4	<ul><li>a person who works to achieve political or social change, especially as a member of an organization</li></ul>
<b>5</b>	: a person who is among the first to do, study, or develop something
6	: relating to principles of right and wrong
<b>7</b>	: chemicals used to kill pests





In 1980, John Mackey, a 27-year-old vegetarian, and his 23-year-old girlfriend, Renee Lawson, were running a small health food business in Austin, Texas, USA. They decided the time was right for an organic supermarket, so they merged<sup>1</sup> their business with another store and opened Whole Foods Market. Their motto<sup>2</sup> was: Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet.

Previously, health food stores had concentrated on **herbal** products, beans, fruits, and vegetables; but the new store also sold products such as fresh bread and local fish, meat, and cheese. The new supermarket was an immediate success and by 1985, Whole Foods had added stores in Dallas and Houston.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>merge: combine two or more companies

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>motto: a phrase that expresses the beliefs of an organization

The company began buying out its local competitors, and in 1992, it started opening stores throughout the USA. Since then, its varied organic produce, clean colorful stores, and friendly staff have proved a recipe for success.

The Whole Foods success story has not been free of

criticism, however. Although the company sells an image of high quality organic, local produce, the reality is often different. Most organic food in the USA actually comes from a few giant farms. This is because US food legislation<sup>3</sup> makes it difficult for small farms to qualify<sup>4</sup> as "organic."

Also, a lot of the company's produce comes from abroad; and while goods from China and Mexico may be green, the amount of oil needed to transport them is certainly not. Many green activists insist that Whole Foods does not represent the model of **sustainable** local food that the organic pioneers intended.

One of the biggest criticisms of the store, however, is its pricing. In fact, the company's promotion of healthy organic food as a lifestyle choice to the wealthy has even led some critics to change its motto to: "Whole Foods, Whole Paycheck . . ."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>legislation: a law or set of laws

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>qualify: If you qualify for something, you are allowed to do it.