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The Biochar Solution: Carbon Farming and Climate Change

By Albert Bates

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0.7in. Civilization as we know it is at a crossroads. For the past 10,000 years, we have turned a growing understanding of physics, chemistry and biology to our advantage in producing more energy and more food and as a consequence have produced exponential population surges, resource depletion, ocean acidification, desertification and climate change. The path we are following began with long-ago discoveries in agriculture, but it divided into two branches, about 8,000 years ago. The branch we have been following for the most part is conventional farming -- irrigation, tilling the soil, and removing weeds and pests. That branch has degraded soil carbon levels by as much as 80 percent in most of the world's breadbaskets, sending all that carbon skyward with each pass of the plow. The other branch disappeared from our view some 500 years ago, although archaeologists are starting to pick up its trail now. At one time it achieved success as great as the agriculture that we know, producing exponential population surges and great cities, but all that was lost in a fluke historical event borne of a single genetic...



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