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Peak Oil: Coming Soon to a Planet Near You

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This won't come as news to many gardeners and permaculturists, but global "peak oil" is on the way and, [according to a new study by Kuwaiti scientists](#) [1], due to arrive on a planet near you in 2014...near as in the one you're sitting on right now.

The study used a new methodology:

The scientists from Kuwait University and the Kuwait Oil Company adopted a newer approach by including many Hubbert production cycles, or bell-shaped curves showing the rise and fall of a non-recyclable resource. Earlier models typically assumed just one production cycle, despite the fact that most oil-producing nations have historically experienced more of a roller coaster ride in production. Such production cycles reflect the influence of new technological innovations in the oil industry, government regulations, economic conditions and political events. The factors include the discovery of new oil deposits, the recent economic recession and the rise of renewable energy.

For those of you who aren't familiar with [peak oil](#) [2], now is a good time to get acquainted. In heavily industrialized food systems like those of the US and Europe, fossil fuels are some of the main inputs used to produce food. Oil is required to produce synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, to power agricultural and food processing machinery, and transport food from points A to B (and mostly likely on to C and D). All told, some studies have shown that it takes 10 calories of fossil fuel energy to produce 1 calorie of food energy, an imbalanced and unsustainable equation.

More kitchen gardens and other forms of small-scale food production are needed to bring this equation and our planet back into balance. So be sure to dig in this spring and help at least one other person, family or group in your community get a garden started. That's how we'll seed the next garden revolution.

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- [1] <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35838273/>
- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peak_oil