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Photo: Ecoroof

Courtesy of Multnomah County Library

Printed with soy-based inks by Oregon Lithograph,
McMinville, OR, on Blue Heron recycled paper.

The Columbia River edition of the Green Living Journal is published quarterly and 16,000 copies are distributed free of charge throughout the Portland-Vancouver metro area.

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An Exercise in Futility

by Gary Munkhoff

Recently my daughter was complaining about a set of four screwdrivers that she had bought at one of those big box stores where everything costs a dollar. Seems the very first time she tried to use them the shafts turned inside the handles rather than the blade turning the screw. And yep, you guessed it, they were made in China.

As she was unloading her disgust for the worthless screwdrivers and ignoring my fatherly advice about getting what you pay for, I was suddenly struck with the realization that those four 25 cent screwdrivers from China were far more than just another example proving some old hackneyed saying for the next generation of do-it-yourselfers.

It seems to me that those cheap, imported and unusable tools should be poster children for what ails both today's consumer mentality in the good old U.S. of A. and the world's industrial approach to feeding that consumerism, which together preclude any chance of bringing sustainability into the process.

Think about what it took to put that 25 cent tool from China into my daughter's hand in America in terms of the time, labor and energy consumed in converting the raw materials into steel blades and plastic handles that are then assembled, packaged and containerized for loading on ships that will carry them thousands of miles to our west coast. Here they are unloaded and trucked for miles to the big box store where they will be inventoried and then displayed in a heated, well lit, cavernous building.

Enter my daughter who plunks down one dollar for four of them, takes them home, and one by one twists the handle around the blade rendering all four of them useless in a matter of minutes. So, into the garbage can and off to the land fill with them. And why not? They were only 25 cents each.

But wait, my daughter recycles so she dutifully separates the blade from the handle so that just the plastic goes to the local landfill while the steel goes back into the stream of scrap headed back to the steel mill which has a good chance of being in China. Round and round it goes; creating jobs, burning fuel, and spewing gases into the air.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

You can buy a good serviceable screwdriver made in the USA for 25 to 50 cents, but you'll have to settle for a garage sale find (and perhaps a bit of deferred gratification) instead of the big box outlet. And if you shop with a sharp eye your purchase will last for years. You get inexpensive not cheap, plus you're on the reduce, reuse, recycle path towards sustainability. Works for other stuff too.

But if you really need it now and new, then shop for quality and use it for years. Maybe even garage sale it when you or your kids no longer have a use for it.



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Thank You Portland/Vancouver

This issue marks the start of our second year of publishing *GREEN LIVING* and quite frankly we are awed, humbled and grateful that so many of you believed in us enough to make going forward possible. We want to thank our advertisers that invested their hard earned dollars in our fledgling start up even as the recession deepened, our distributors that generously gave us the space to display our journal and all of our readers for your generous support. We will continue our efforts to keep *Green Living* a quality product in an economy package.

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Lose Your Lawn

by Stephen Morris

How did we become a nation of manicured, toxic lawns? How did a lowly perennial that imitates a carpet become our dominant ground cover? My personal theory (I make it personal to avoid the rigors of research or fact finding) traces the perfect lawn back to World War II. Our boys returned from the Big One with expectations of peace, prosperity and perfection. This vision included a trophy wife, nestled in a neat suburban home, surrounded by a flawless lawn and a picket fence. Peace reigned, and since the big enemies—Adolph Hitler and Isoroku Yamamoto—had been vanquished, only crabgrass remained.

Grass is an inoffensive perennial that is minimally decorative, inedible, provides no shade and attracts only the “wildlife” that subsists on kegs of beer. It is also overwhelmingly the ground cover of choice in North America. Its virtue is its uniformity. This is the Marine haircut of the plant world.

“This is the Marine haircut of the plant world”

Since I'm on the soapbox: Why do we grow lawns in regions intended for cactus and Gila monsters? Why are there golf courses in Phoenix? Whose idea of sanity is it to pump fresh water from ancient aquifers so we can make the desert look like the rain forest? And why do we nurture our lawns with water and fertilizers so that we can then attack it with an arsenal of lawn tractors, weed whackers, bazookas and mortars. Our neighborhoods sound like war zones on Sunday afternoons.

We're living the American Dream, internal combustion style, but we know the dream has to change. We're using up the oil; we're using up the fresh water; and we're putting the waste into the air we breathe. If you want to do something about it, take a look at your own back yard. If it's covered with grass, then you have an opportunity to take dramatic and effective environmental action by joining the revolution to lose your lawn.

I signed on after reading a delightful manifesto by Toby Hemenway called *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture*.

Permaculture is a system that works with the ecosystem to maintain permanent horticulture by relying on renewable resources. Hemenway shows that by treating Nature as an ally instead of an enemy, you can create a beautiful, productive, ecological garden in your own back yard. Hemenway takes the teachings of permaculture pioneers David Holmgren and Bill Mollison and makes them accessible to the average person living in the average home. The result is deceptively simple, deceptively beguiling and completely revolutionary. It makes so much sense you'll never look at lawn care or gardening the same way again.



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The natural world is neither flat nor rectangular. The natural world is not uniform, but diverse, with plants grouped in complementary ways that fill ecological micro-fiches. In Gaia theory the world is treated as one huge, interconnected and interdependent system. A garden of Gaia is one in which the cultivation mimics the layers of growth you see in a forest. From the roots to the treetops you select plants to play mutually supporting roles in a rich gardening system.

Getting from here to there is not as difficult as you might imagine. You do not have to dig up your yard with a backhoe or pulverize the sod with a rototiller. If you are a patient person, you can just do nothing. In a few years natural processes will be well on their way to restoring biodiversity to your back yard. You can speed the process, however, by following Hemenway's advice.

A key concept is to build soil by adding organic matter. No digging. No power tools. No chemicals. Put down a layer of cardboard or newspaper, and then add up to a foot of straw, seaweed, wood shavings, or any combination thereof. Then plant into the mulch, not the soil. Eventually the roots will penetrate the enriched topsoil. By planting perennials, maintenance is minimal.

As with all new and revolutionary ideas, the lose-your-lawn movement will be threatening to some. We've been conditioned to distrust things that don't require motors, medicine or pasteurization. The companies that profit from the sales of fertilizers, herbicides and lawn tractors won't embrace the idea of Gaia's Garden until they figure out how to make money on them. Millions of marketing dollars have been spent to perpetuate the myth that a weed-free lawn, along with even teeth and 2.1 children, is essential to personal happiness. We dutifully mount our lawn steeds to keep Nature at bay. Then we water like crazy so we can do it again next week.

We are still firmly ensconced in an age when our species removes any impediment to comfort through the addition of more power. Too hot? Too cold? Just add power. Need to go higher? Faster? Step on the accelerator, unleash the power. The size of our lawns, once limited by a human's time, energy and patience for pushing a mower, has grown in direct relation to the horsepower of our lawn tractors.

Permaculture advocates are challenging the myths by offering delightful and superior alternatives. Your

lawn does not have to be an extension of your living room, but rather can bring Mother Nature to the back door. You can design your outdoor space for visual appeal, edible yield or attracting wildlife. The choices are infinite so long as you embrace the one inviolable principle: You must work with, not against, natural processes.

If this revolution is successful, our back yards will be converted into mini-nature preserves offering beauty, harmony and delicious food. Sunday afternoons will be for relaxing to the soothing sounds of songbirds, not the hue and roar of warfare waged on grasses struggling toward the sun. With organic produce growing in your back yard, your food bills will go down and your health will improve. Moreover, you won't have to drive to the store, and the grocery store won't have transport your fresh produce from hundreds—sometimes thousands—of miles away, meaning less fossil fuel will be used transporting what's essentially water (the primary component of fruits and vegetables) across the planet. All because you lost your lawn, and replaced it with Gaia's Garden.

The revolution is barely a conspiratorial whisper at the moment. However, a new story is emerging that we can embrace, not conquer, nature in our own back yards.

Stephen Morris is a writer, business consultant, sustainable hedonist and national publisher of Green Living Journal.

Local Notes

Barn Raising and the Woodstock Green Team

By Patsy Steimer

The Green Team in Action

Under the leadership of Master Recycler, Lonnie Port, the Woodstock Green Team came into being two and a



half years ago. Lonnie contacted three other Master Recyclers in her neighborhood; Bill Steimer, Dan Steigerwald and Carey Collins, and the group began to take shape. After a good deal of time talking over many pints of beer at a neighborhood pub, they decided to clean the bus stops on Woodstock Boulevard. Their hope was that more people would ride the buses if the bus stops were clean and free of trash and cigarette butts.

After a good deal of time talking over many pints of beer at

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As the group grew closer, someone suggested that they meet occasionally for a sustainable potluck supper. Everyone would bring a dish created with ingredients grown no farther than 50 miles away. Inventive and delicious food plus lively discussions of topics ranging from the disposal of styrofoam to worm farms and composting strengthened their friendship and united this multi-generational collection of native Portlanders and transplants from North Carolina, Antarctica and the Netherlands in their desire to live more sustainably.

At one of the suppers, someone suggested Barn Raisings as a way to accomplish big tasks just as our farming ancestors gathered to help each other build their barns. Each member of the group could call upon other members of the group to help him or her complete a home or garden project in as environmentally friendly a way as possible.

So far, the group has worked on two Barn Raising projects. Last fall they mulched and pulled weeds in Lonnie's yard. Their second project is more ambitious: the creation of a basement room for Dan Steigerwald so his teenage daughter will have a place to hangout with her friends. The group agrees that if none of them has a project for everyone to work on, they will seek out projects in the yards and homes of people who need their help in the Woodstock Neighborhood.

The Green Team has also staffed a recycling booth at the past two Woodstock Neighborhood Picnics and has worked at neighborhood cleanups in Woodstock and New Columbia. Bill Steimer, a retired attorney in the group, says, if other neighborhoods want to try to start a Green Team, they need to remember that it should first and foremost be fun. Otherwise, no one will want to help.

Twin Rocks Undersea Memorial

Simply put, we take cremated remains, inter them in the center of our handcrafted monuments or allow families to choose a monument that does not inter cremated remains, and gently lower them to the ocean floor in specified areas we have been authorized to utilize by Federal, State and Local Governments. The niches in our uniquely designed monuments create a sea life habitat



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and that is how we are revitalizing our Pacific Ocean.

Our authorization allows us to make placements in many sites along the Ocean coastline; however, we focus on our Signature placement site near the Twin Rocks in Rockaway, Oregon for many reasons. The main reasons are these:

1. The area we are placing the undersea monuments is an old dredge spoil site from the 1940's. They are no longer allowed to use this site and it is in real need of habitat revitalization as a result of the dredge spoils dumping.
2. The Twin Rocks provide an easily accessible icon for family members to use. We find that during the grieving process, it is important to have a recognizable memorial to focus on and nature has provided that with the Twin Rocks.

While the ocean revitalization will not occur 'overnight,' the process has already begun with the monuments we have placed. In the coming years, we will hopefully be able to enjoy larger, more diverse sea life habitats as a result of our undersea monument placements.

We welcome your input and can answer questions you may have about our ocean revitalization project. We try to keep our web site up to date with current information about our marine life habitat project and about us. If you would like to follow our progress, or request further information, we encourage you to see our web site at: www.twinrocksunderseamemorial.

North Portland Cohousing Community to Open in Fall 2009

Daybreak Cohousing, a new Portland cohousing project designed to enable residents to live sustainably in community, will hold a series of socials and tours throughout the summer.

Socials where interested people can meet current members of the Daybreak community will be held from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at various North Portland locations on June 16, July 5 and August 2. The July and August socials will be followed by a tour of the Daybreak site 2525

N. Killingworth St., between N. Wilbur and N. Delaware. For locations of all events, visit www.daybreakcohousing.org or call Sterling at 503-310-7044.

When construction is finished in fall 2009, Daybreak will have 30 self-contained flats and townhouses, one to three bedrooms in size. Units will be sold as condominiums and there will also be some rentals. Located in the Overlook neighborhood of North Portland, Daybreak includes extensive common use areas and amenities that enhance a green lifestyle. The two-thirds of an acre project is three miles from downtown Portland, on a bus line with frequent service and a short walk from the Interstate MAX light rail line—features which invite walking, cycling and convenient access to neighborhood businesses.

U.S. cohousing communities, which number more than 110, are often designed for reducing the carbon footprint of housing in at least three key ways: green building methods and materials; shared community facilities that allow individual homes to be smaller; and sharing of resources, from recreation equipment to garden tools and space. Grace Kim, a principal architect with Schemata Workshop of Seattle, is the primary Daybreak architect. Kim was awarded a national Young Architects Award by the American Institute of Architects in 2008. B&G Builders of Portland is the contractor and was recognized in March by the Build Local Alliance for its use of Forest Stewardship Council certified lumber at Daybreak.

For more information, visit: www.daybreakcohousing.org, email askaboutus@daybreakcohousing.org, or call Sterling at 503-310-7044.

Radio Cab Takes Bold Steps Towards Sustainability

Radio Cab Company, Portland's largest locally owned taxi company, which includes nearly 200 vehicles and 500 drivers, is taking the initiative in sustainable business practices. In February, they became the first private-for-hire transportation service in the greater Portland area to enroll in PGE's Green Source renewable option, allowing Radio Cab's 99-year-old garage at 1613 NW Kearney to receive 100% of its electricity from wind power.

This was the first step toward accomplishing a series

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of goals set by the Green Team that was formed in October 2008 by Bert Fox, Vice-President Radio Cab Board of Directors, after he attended the Portland Sustainability Go Green Conference,

"We were delighted to discover that many of our drivers are extremely knowledgeable about alternative fuels, fuel-efficiency, carbon footprints, and other issues pertaining to sustainability, and they are eager to share this knowledge," says Bert Fox.

The Green Team invited Jaimes Valdez of Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow (BEST) to conduct a Baseline Sustainability Assessment, which the team is using to write Radio Cab's Sustainability Plan.

Other efforts made to further sustainability at Radio Cab include:

- Installing high-efficiency lighting throughout the Radio Cab garage
- Implementing effective at-work recycling that has reduced waste by 50%
- Reducing non-occupant miles through its GPS dispatch system by matching the closest driver to the pick-up address
- Promoting sustainable driving practices that save fuel
- Providing workers new bike racks for approximately 50 bicycles

Changing a cab fleet to fuel-efficient vehicles is a very complex issue since the automotive industry has yet to come up with a vehicle that is both eco-friendly and economical for the cab business. Automakers Toyota and Honda both warn that their hybrids are not certified for commercial use.

In the meantime, Radio Cab is in the process of upgrading its fleet and has reduced its carbon footprint by over 400 tons a year with 10 new Sprinter Vans, 14 new Scions, and 15 additional four and six cylinder vehicles. They are actively researching the viability of hybrids, electric cars and alternative fuels, and are advising the Board of Directors as the technologies develop.

One aspect where Radio Cab has always been sustainable is that their driver-owned shareholders live locally and their income stays in the Portland economy.

For more information about Radio Cab's efforts for more sustainable transportation, go to www.radiocab.net



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IBEW Local 48 Solar Array

Local 48 is proud to announce the installation of a 78 Kilo Watt solar array. In this day and age we all have to look to the future of our planet and wean ourselves off the foreign oil imports; Local 48 has taken a step in a green direction. This array will not only provide forty percent of the Local's electrical usage for the next thirty years but will also be used to train our members on the design and installation of solar arrays. Future apprentices will be able see a large solar installation right next door.

Early on in the planning, we contacted Lee Worley who is the training director for the Local 29 Ironworker Apprenticeship. We asked if Local 29 could help install a steel structure on which we could install our rails and solar panels. Lee thought it would be an excellent learning experience for Local 29 apprentices. In early January when the steel was ready, Lee introduced me to Mark Lautenschlager, an instructor at the school. Mark explained that the apprentices would be doing the job as a training exercise; they would review the prints and plan the job. The apprentices were very professional and did an excellent job.

Local 48 would like to thank Oscar Cerrillo of Star Rentals who donated the lifts for this project. Oscar works closely with our apprenticeship-training center and stepped right up to the plate when I called and asked for his help on this project. Rick Moultrie of Campbell Crane also stepped up in a big way and donated a forty-ton crane and an operator to set all the steel in place. Pat Woods of Morgan Millwright Service has offered to install some bollards to protect the inverters of the solar array.

Dynalectric and Oregon Iron Works provided the material for the Solar Array at just above their cost. Dyna-





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lectric provided the supervision for the Electrical phase of the installation.

The Electrical phase of the installation began in February with an average of ten volunteers a day and over sixty volunteers total; the project ran like a dream come true. Our members were very eager to learn what solar installations are about; their pride and professionalism shined through in the beautiful job they accomplished.

David Johnston , IBEW 48 Business Representative

GreenLight Pallet Co. Announces Portland Facility

As today's manufacturers and retailers transition towards greener and more efficient supply chains, GreenLight Pallet Co., the manufacturer of the UNIPAL 100% recyclable, patented, corrugated pallet system, has completed and

is shipping pallets from its 50,000 square foot manufacturing facility on Marine Drive along the Columbia River in Portland.

As GreenLight Pallet Co. LLC holds the manufacturing and distribution rights of the UNIPAL Pallet and the UNIPAL manufacturing equipment in

the USA, the company's plans to move the UNIPAL Pallet manufacturing system and equipment from its current production in Korea and Spain to Oregon could bring an estimated \$250,000,000 to Oregon's economy. The move will also support the available family wage green technology and clean manufacturing jobs in Portland in line with the city's sustainability goals.

"It's a perfect time to transition into the Portland market," says Jon Girod, GreenLight's founding member. "Our product is 100% green and fulfills our customers' growing need for increased supply chain efficiency at a reduced cost, while also achieving environmental and health and safety targets unfulfilled by wood pallets. The fact that the UNI-

PAL Pallet meets all new export regulations and packaging requirements for international shipping provides the perfect solution for today's manufacturers and retailers." For additional information visit: www.greenlioghtpallet.com

Editor's Note:

With permission from GreenLight we have shortened the original press release in order to include information on a major environmental advantage of their product.

There is growing worldwide concern over the use of wooden pallets that are made from lumber that still contains bark, which is common due to the low grade of lumber used. This bark can be a carrier for translocating quarantined biological pests from one region of the world to others with devastating effects.

One of these translocated pests is the emerald ash borer, which was first reported killing ash trees in Michigan in 2002 and is now found in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. This insect has the potential to eliminate all species of ash trees (Fraxinus spp.) from the American landscape just as Dutch elm disease and chestnut blight eliminated the American elm and chestnut trees.

No one knows for sure how the insect arrived in the U.S., but ash wood pallets, crating, and packing materials carried in cargo ships from around the world are prime suspects. GreenLight's UNIPAL Pallet that is made from recycled cardboard eliminates the chance of any wood or bark from spreading foreign pests.

More info at www.emeraldashborer.info.

Milkmunny.Com Turns Un-Recyclable Juice Cartons Into High Fashion Wallets And Accessories

The creative Portland start-up wants to spread awareness about the challenges of carton recyclability, raise funds for struggling non-profits and promote a new kind of 'trashion' statement all at once.



More than 510,000 tons of milk and juice cartons are generated every year in the United States, but sadly, less than .05% ever get recycled according to an EPA report of (MSW) Municipal Solid Waste). Paper cartons ARE recyclable, however, "because of the wax lining, are not universally recycled. Each locality is different, depending on their recycling process capability", says the (NRC)



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National Recycling Coalition.

That's what got the Portland based industrial designer, John Schreiber, thinking and how Milkmuny.com was created. The first two initial lines of wallets, in 22 styles (from the reclaimed cartons of recognizable brands of both dairy and juice manufacturers) are available online and at specialty retailers. Milkmuny is already designing other lines of recycled products, as well, to be released by the summer of 09.

"There is considerable talk these days about 'green' design but the vast majority of design, both graphic and industrial, is still about promoting consumption," says John, who is also Milkmuny's founder and creative principle. "It's ironic that we continue to dispose of existing products and materials like computers or radios in order to purchase 'greener' ones. I wanted to challenge traditional design thinking and create a mass produced product that didn't expend more energy to create or require more resources to produce but was also aesthetically pleasing and uncompromisingly functional. It's a amazing idea to think that on one hand; here is this ubiquitous but seemingly inconsequential carton so routinely discarded and yet on the other, something that with a little creativity, has the potential to raise money for schools, be an example of innovation in design and reusability – and even create jobs.

Bill Gates once said, "The obstacle to change is not too little caring, rather it's too much complexity." Milkmuny aims to be that simple unassuming answer and example to the complex; the small David to the Goliath that represents our challenges of sustainability.

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The NORMIPro Environmental TASC Force has officially launched its Charter Chapters in over 18 states and in 3 provinces of Canada. More chapters are opening daily and there is an overwhelming interest in this organization.

The TASC Force chapters will hold positions for a



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Valerie Jolie, owner of Northwest Cutting Edge Technologies and NORMI Pro TASC Force Charter Chapter President for the Portland, Oregon area says, "Portlanders have a lot of problems stemming from mold and mildew issues, even in new construction due to air tight homes. Often contractors will work in their own area of expertise, but not see the 'bigger picture' of how environmental pollution attributes to half of all illnesses. Mold/mildew problems, odors (VOCs) and chemical issues often are the cause of mystery illnesses. We are banding 'Green Professionals' together so we can collaborate to work effectively and safely for better results for our clients."

The mission of the TASC Force is to provide resources for these types of professionals who need multi-faceted solution providers for many of their client jobs. This will enable them to have qualified and trusted environmental professionals to refer out or to subcontract in both residential and commercial projects.

Valerie continued, "Another important mission of the TASC Force is to work in conjunction with local government officials, emergency personnel, and other key community leaders in the event of a local or regional disaster. These local chapters will be a one-stop resource for many of the services that would be needed in such a situation."

Member applications are being accepted now for the Portland chapter.

For more information contact:

Valerie Jolie 877-751-3100 ext. 81022

Valerie@NORMIPro.com

Linda Eicher, Director, NORMIPro Environmental TASC Force www.NORMIProETF.com

What's A Home Garden Worth?

By Roger Doiron



With the global economy spiraling downward and Mother Nature preparing to reach upward, it's a good question to ask and a good time to ask it.

There isn't one right answer, of course, but I'll give you mine: \$2149.15. Last year, my wife Jacqueline suggested to me that we calculate the total value of the produce coming out of our garden over the course of the growing season. Initially, the thought of doing that was about as appealing to me as a recreational root canal. I remember replying something like: "OK, so let me get this right: in addition to raising three busy boys, managing two careers, volunteering in a school garden, and growing most of our own produce, you're proposing that we weigh every item that comes out of our garden, write it down in a log book, and spend a few leisurely evenings doing math?" Jacqueline, an economics major in college and a native French speaker, answered with a simple "oui" and so the project began.

There was a lot of work involved, mostly for Jacqueline, but as with gardening itself, it was work with a purpose. It didn't take long for our logbook to start filling up with dates and figures. Although we started eating our first garden salads in late April, we only began recording our harvests as of May 10th, starting first with greens and asparagus. Our last weighable harvest was in the form of a final cutting of Belgian endives forced from roots in our basement.

By the time we had finished weighing it all, we had grown 834 pounds and over six months worth of organic food (we're still eating our own winter squash, onions, garlic, and frozen items like strawberries, green beans, and pesto cubes). Once we had the weights of the 35 main crops we grew, we then calculated what it would have cost us to buy the same items using three different sets of prices: conventional grocery store, farmers' market and organic grocery store (Whole Foods, in our case). The total value came to \$2196.50, \$2431.15, and \$2548.93 respectively. For the other economics majors and number crunchers among you, you can see our crunchy, raw data here: <http://my.kitchengardeners.org/forum/topics/economics-of-home-gardening>

There are things we didn't include like the wild dan-

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delion greens which we reaped but did not sow, the six or so carving pumpkins which we ultimately fed to our compost pile, and the countless snacks of strawberries, beans, peas, and tomatoes that never made it as far as our kitchen scale. There were also things we forgot to weigh like several pounds of grapes, which turned into about 12 jars of jam. As with any growing season, there were hits and misses. The heaviest and most valuable crop was our tomatoes (158 lb/72 kg for a total value of \$524). In terms of misses, our apple tree decided to take the year off and very few of our onions started from seed made it requiring me to buy onion plants.

On the cost side, we had \$130 for seeds and supplies, \$12 for a soil test, and exceptional costs of \$100 for some locally made organic compost we bought for our "This Lawn is Your Lawn" front yard garden (normally, we meet most of our soil fertility needs through our own composting). I don't have a scientific calculation for water costs, but we don't need to water much and, when we do, water is relatively cheap in Maine. Also, I mulch my beds pretty heavily to keep moisture in and weeds down. Let's say \$40 in water. So, if we consider that our out-of-pocket costs were \$282 and the total value generated was \$2431, that means we had a return on investment of 862%. The cost of our labor is not included because we enjoy gardening and the physical work involved. If I am to include my labor costs, I feel I should also include the gym membership fees, country club dues, or doctors' bills I didn't have.

If you really want to play around with the data, you can calculate how much a home garden like ours produces on



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a per acre basis. If you use the \$2400 figure and consider that our garden is roughly 1/25th of an acre, it means that home gardens like ours can gross \$60,000/acre. You can also calculate it on a square foot basis, which in our case works out to be roughly \$1.50/ft². That would mean that a smaller garden of say 400ft² would produce \$600 of produce. Keep in mind that these are averages and that certain crops are more profitable and space efficient than others. A small garden planted primarily with salad greens and trellised tomatoes, for example, is going to produce more economic value per square foot more than one planted with potatoes and squash. We plant a bit of everything because that's the way we like to garden and eat.

Clearly, this data is just for one family (of five), one yard (.3 acre), one garden (roughly 1600 square feet), and one climate (Maine, zone 5b/6), but it gives you some sense of what's possible. If you consider that there are about 90 million households in the US that have some sort of yard, factor in the thousands of new community and school gardens we could be planting, this really could add up. Our savings allowed us to do different things including investing in some weatherization work for our house last fall that is making us a greener household in another way. Some might ask what this would mean for farmers to have more people growing their own food. The local farmers I know welcome it because they correctly believe that the more people discover what fresh, real food tastes like, the more they'll want to taste. In our case, part of our savings helped us to buy better quality, sustainably raised meat from a local CSA farmer.

The economics of home gardening may not be enough to convince President Obama or UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown to plant new gardens at the White House or 10 Downing Street, but the healthy savings their citizens could be making and then reinvesting in their local economies could.

In the end, it might come down to the language we use. Instead of saying, "Honey, I'm going out to the garden to turn the compost pile", perhaps we should say, "Honey, I'm going outside to do a 'green job' and work on our 'organic stimulus package.'" I bet that would get the attention of a few economists, if not a few psychologists!

Roger Doiron is the Founding Director of Kitchen Gardeners International. This article reprinted with permission from their website www.kitchengardeners.org

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For those of you that don't have a green thumb, or the time, or the desire to garden, the folks at Your Backyard Farmer will come to you and grow a garden for you right in your own yard. As their website states: "We provide you with an organic vegetable farm right outside your door, customized to your family's size and dining choices." And: "We do the work, you enjoy the healthful harvest!" Read more at <http://www.yourbackyardfarmer.com>

Then for the hunters and gatherers out there, the urban landscape offers a variety of wild nuts, fruits and berries free for the taking if you know where to look. Rather than spending all your time searching, check out the Urban Edibles website at <http://urbanedibles.org>

Which brings us to Manchester England where over the next three years they are planning to plant thousands of fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, herbs and vegetables in the city's 135 public parks. The plan is for every Mancunian to be within walking distance of a fruit or vegetable patch and the produce will be free to all. The whole idea is in response to the fear that local children no longer know where fruits and vegetables come from. Read the entire article at: http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/s/1109505_fruit_tree_revolution



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SPIN-Farming

While searching the web for gardening information Su came across the SPIN-Farming® website at www.spinfarming.com which presents a whole new perspective on the future of farming. Or is it back yard gardening taken to a new level?

We wish to thank Roxanne Christensen for generously allowing us to print the following excerpts from the SPIN-Farming® website.

Roxanne Christensen is co-founder and President of the Institute for Innovations in Local Farming. In partnership with the Philadelphia Water Department, the Institute operated Somerton Tanks Farm, a prototype sub-acre urban farm that served as the first U.S. test bed for the SPIN-Farming method. The farm received the support of the Pennsylvania Dept. Of Agriculture, the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corp., the City Commerce Department, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

Wally Satzewich operates Wally's Urban Market Garden which is a multi-locational sub-acre urban farm. It is dispersed over 25 residential backyard garden plots in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, that are rented from homeowners. The sites range in size from 500 sq. ft. to 3000 sq. ft., and the growing area totals a half acre. The produce is sold at The Saskatoon Farmers Market.

Wally Satzewich and Gail Vandersteen initially started farming on an acre-sized plot outside of Saskatoon 20 years ago. Thinking that expanding acreage was critical to their success, they bought some farmland adjacent to the South Saskatchewan River 40 miles north of Saskatoon where they eventually grew vegetables on about 20 acres of irrigated land. "This was a site to die for," Ms. Vandersteen said. "It was incredibly beautiful, but the pestilence was incredible too! We couldn't believe what the bugs and deer could do. Not to mention the wind."

"We still lived in the city where we had a couple of small plots to grow crops like radishes and salad mix, which were our most profitable crops. We could grow three crops a year on the same site, pick and process on-site and put the produce into our cooler so it would be fresh for the market."

After six years farming their rural site, the couple realized there was more money to be made growing



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multiple crops intensively in the city, so they sold the farm and became urban growers. "People don't believe you can grow three crops a year in Saskatoon," observes Vandersteen. "They think it's too much work, but the truth is, this is much less work than mechanized, large-scale farming. We used to have a tractor to hill potatoes and cultivate, but we find it's more efficient to do things by hand. Other than a rototiller, all we need is a push-type seeder and a few hand tools."

Mr. Satzewich points out that city growing provides a more controlled environment, with fewer pests, better wind protection and a longer growing season. "We are producing 10-15 different crops and sell thousands of bunches of radishes and green onions and thousands of bags of salad greens and carrots each season. Our volumes are low compared to conventional farming, but we sell high-quality organic products at very high-end prices." The SPIN method is based on their successful experiment in downsizing which emphasizes minimal mechanization and maximum fiscal discipline and planning.

Ms. Christensen contends that the separation of country and city is an outmoded concept. "As development erodes the rural way of life, agriculture is creeping closer and closer to metropolitan areas. SPIN-Farming leverages this trend in a positive way – by capitalizing on limited resources and space. Creating Somerton Tanks Farm using the SPIN method required minimal upfront investment, and it keeps operating overhead low.

"For aspiring farmers, SPIN eliminates the 2 big barriers to entry – sizeable acreage and substantial startup capital. At the same time, its intensive relay growing techniques and precise revenue targeting formulas push yields to unprecedented levels and result in highly profitable income."

In 2003, its first year of operation, Somerton Tanks Farm, located in Northeast Philadelphia, the sixth largest city in the U.S, produced \$26,000 in gross sales from a half-acre of growing space. In 2006 gross sales reached \$68,000. In just four years of operation this demonstration farm achieved levels of productivity and financial success that many agricultural professionals claimed was impossible.

Based on the agricultural and financial breakthroughs that were demonstrated at Somerton Tanks Farm, the state of Pennsylvania funded an economic feasibility study that documented the urban farm's economics and projected its maximum income potential to be \$120,000 from under an acre of growing space.

Ms. Christensen's role at the Institute is to attract and support new farming talent. "The farming profession has been on the decline – and for good reasons. The global economy favors agribusinesses, the amount of available farmland is rapidly shrinking, and family farms continue to go out of business at an unprecedented rate."

But, Christensen contends, SPIN-Farming is a method uniquely suited to entrepreneurs, and it provides a new career path for those who have a calling to farm. It is enticing a new breed of farmer who is keenly interested in matters of principle, but who understands that to have a significant positive impact, they have to function within the existing system, pushing their cause while paying their bills.

As SPIN becomes established and is practiced more and more widely, Christensen says, it will create new farmland closer to metropolitan areas, which, in turn will produce environmental, economic and social benefits. "It offers a compelling value proposition."

SPIN stands for S-mall P-lot IN-tensive

SPIN-Farming is a non-technical, easy-to-learn and inexpensive-to-implement vegetable farming system that makes it possible to earn significant income from land bases under an acre in size. Whether you are new to farming, or want to farm in a new way, SPIN can work for you because:

- Its precise revenue targeting formulas and organic based techniques make it possible to gross \$50,000+ from a half-acre.
- You don't need to own land. You can affordably rent or barter a small piece of land adequate in size for SPIN-Farming production.
- It works in either the city, country or small town.
- It fits into any lifestyle or life cycle.

SPIN is being practiced by first generation farmers because it removes the two big barriers to entry - land and capital - as well as by established farmers who want to diversify or downsize, as well as by part-time hobby farmers.

Editors Note: Martin Barrett and Dan Bravin have brought SPIN-Farming to Portland on their City Garden Farms. You can read more at www.citygardenfarms.com

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Supermarket Greenhouse Grows the Ultimate "Local" Produce

The Whole Foods Market in Millburn, New Jersey commissioned BrightFarm Systems (www.brightfarmsystems.com) to design and install a demonstration scale, sustainable urban greenhouse for growing their own herbs, holding classes, and celebrating the varied facets of sustainable agricultural practices.

The greenhouse system was designed to allow for on site production of high quality, fresh herbs for use in Whole Foods prepared food services as well as for general sale.

The principal challenge for the design team arose from the need to deliver an effective growing system in a room with sub-optimal lighting conditions. The room proposed for the greenhouse space is well proportioned and highly visible as customers enter the main store entrance. The room is, however, open only on one side to natural light.

Central to the design was the application of modern, water efficient, recirculating hydroponics to a series of vertical growing towers, chosen specifically for their ability to make best use of the vertical space directly next to the window façade. Herbs were chosen as an ideal crop to grow in a space with limited light conditions. Fresh herbs are a high value crop and used in large quantities in the store's prepared foods section. www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/millburn/greenhouse.php

Permaculture for the Home Landscape

by Ron Dellapenna

Permaculture is a set of techniques and principles used to create sustainable designs where humans and nature are interconnected. Some areas where permaculture can be used are landscaping/food production, energy efficiency, water management, home building and community design. Resources are used in a sustainable way mimicking the efficiencies found in nature.

There are three basic principles in permaculture:

1. Care of the earth,
2. Care of people,
3. Share the surplus (food, wealth, time).

These principles emphasize community and the environment vs. individualism and consumerism.

A central theme in permaculture is the design of food producing ecological landscapes. These ecological landscapes are a mixture of wildlife gardening and edible landscaping. The former creates or preserves an environment that provides the essentials for wildlife survival, where native plants are emphasized. The latter emphasizes the production of food for human use. The permaculture landscape takes an ecosystem approach, where components provide multiple uses and there is a wide diversity of species. As in natural ecosystems, more complexity means more resilience.

A permaculture landscape is built on a healthy soil ecosystem. Organic material and natural fertilizers are used to enrich the soil which, in turn, feeds the plants in the garden. Compost can be made from yard waste, kitchen scraps and manure, and can be used to supply organic matter and nutrients to the soil. Leaves and grass clippings can be used as mulch that help control weeds, conserve moisture and regulate soil temperature. Composting and mulching return waste, as nutrients to the garden ecosystem, following nature's cyclical pattern.

Some of the planting design methods used in permaculture are interplanting, companion planting, polycultures and guilds. These planting methods use a variety of plants placed in a way that minimizes competition, enhances growth, reduces labor, increases yield and benefits the environment. The edge effect is an important concept in nature and permaculture landscaping. The edge is where two natural systems meet, and it is important because of high biodiversity. Examples would be where a lawn meets a garden or where a garden meets a water feature. The edge effect can be enhanced by making irregular shaped beds and/or by layering plants from short to tall.

Different plant species are selected for various functions such as nitrogen fixation, food production, soil enrichment, medicinal herbs, and wildlife habitat. Below are some examples of how plants can be used in the permaculture garden.

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Whether planted individually or as part of a garden bed, trees have many functions. A properly placed tree can help save on home energy use by casting shade in the summer or blocking the cold winter winds. Shade also provides a microclimate for shade loving plants and the leaves are a source of organic material and minerals to enrich the soil. Trees are food producers for humans and wildlife. Apples, peaches, cherries, pears, walnuts and chestnuts are examples of common food produced by trees. Native trees require less maintenance and can produce food for humans and wildlife such as persimmons, paw paws, serviceberries, and hickories.

Shrubs form the next level in the permaculture garden and, like trees, they provide year round structure. Shrubs such as viburnums, inkberry, and winterberry can provide cover, food and nesting sites for birds, which in return, help keep insects under control. Shrubs planted as hedges can provide privacy, a windbreak and a barrier to some garden pests. Hardy native shrubs such as blueberry, elderberry, raspberry, beach plums and hazelnuts provide food for humans and wildlife.

Perennials are very versatile plants since they can be utilized in small spaces and require less maintenance than annuals. Flowering perennials attract beneficial insects; predators to control pests and pollinators that increase fruit yield. Examples of these insectary plants are: bee balm, butterfly weed, mint and lavender. Perennials are also a source of culinary herbs (sage, chives, oregano) and medicinal herbs (comfrey, coneflower, ginseng). Rhubarb

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and asparagus are examples of two perennial vegetables. Strawberry and creeping thyme, are two perennials that serve both as a groundcover and a food source.

Annuals, though temporary, produce a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Their bounty includes tomatoes, peppers, squash, spinach, lettuce, potatoes, carrots, etc. Some annual vines such as cucumbers and pole beans can be grown on arbors and trees instead of the usual clematis. Some nitrogen fixing annuals provide the important function of supplying available nitrogen to other plants. These legumes include beans and peas. Of course annuals can provide continuous flower blooming for enjoyment through out the growing season.

This was just a very brief introduction to permaculture in the home landscape, but the possibilities are almost endless. Our current agricultural system is heavily dependant on energy from fossil fuels. It takes 10 calories of energy to produce 1 calorie of food. Large amounts of land are converted to agriculture to support a growing human population, reducing wildlife habitat. Most of our suburban landscape is used for aesthetic and recreational value. By applying permaculture to the home landscape we can help prevent habitat loss, reduce energy usage, and by supplying food you save money while eating healthier.

Further reading: Gaia's Garden (Chelsea Green) by Toby Hemenway, 2000.

Ron Della Penna is a professional landscaper, and also an avid Green Living Journal reader who wishes someone would start an edition in eastern Pennsylvan

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Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Celebrating the first year of operations of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, this unique facility in Norway has proven to be a success with 25 national and international institutions depositing more than 400 000 unique seed samples for long-term back up security storage. The seed vault is not a gene bank, but a safety-storage for preservation of duplicate collections of seeds on behalf of gene banks. The seeds in the vault shall only be accessed when the original seed collections have been lost for any reason.

Svalbard Global Seed Vault lies about 1 kilometre from Longyearbyen Airport, at about 130 metres above sea level and consists entirely of an underground facility, blasted out of the permafrost (at about minus 3-4 degrees Celsius). The facility is designed to have an almost "end-less" lifetime.

Svalbard is a unique location for such a facility in multiple ways. Svalbard has perfect climate and geology for underground cold storage. Because of the permafrost, the temperature will never rise above minus 3.5 Celsius. The sandstone at Svalbard is stable to build in and low in radiation. In terms of security, Svalbard scores high compared to the locations of many other gene banks in the world. The infrastructure is good with daily flights and with a reliable source of energy.



Portland Born Website

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The facility consists of three separate underground chambers. Each chamber has the capacity to store 1.5 million different seed samples of 500 seeds each so a maximum of 2,25 billion seeds may be stored. When in full use, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault will represent the world's largest collection of seeds.

Priority will be given to crops that are important for food production and sustainable agriculture, which is of the utmost importance for developing countries where food security is a challenge. More than 7,000 plant species have historically been used in human diets; however, less than 150 species are today used in modern agriculture. Only 12 plant species represent the major vegetable source in today's menu.

The prospects of climate change have been given consideration when searching for the optimal location. The Seed Vault is located at such an altitude and so deep into the mountains that neither the potential rise in sea level nor the melting of the permafrost is considered as a potential threat in the foreseeable future.

For more information go to: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/campaign/svalbard-global-seed-vault.html?id=462220>

Uninvited Home Wreckers?

Abundant in the Northwest, Carpenter Ants are wood-destroying pests that can be as destructive as termites. They're primarily nocturnal and often go unnoticed until infestation is already underway. Sightings of just a few large winged or un-winged black ants inside or close to the home can indicate unwanted activity. Also watch for evidence of 'frass,' the very fine sawdust left behind as they tunnel through wood.



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Carpenter Ants: Friend or Foe?

By Tasha Shives

Carpenter ants are a hot topic every spring and summer. Quite prevalent in the Northwest, these insects thrive in wet, woodsy environments and play a vital role in our forest ecosystems. They help break down dead and decaying trees, recycling them back to forest floors and are also an excellent source of food for many birds and other creatures.

But these busy workers aren't too selective about where they live, as long as wood and moisture are present. That opens up practically infinite real estate opportunities for the primary Carpenter Ant species along the West Coast. Carpenter ants can cause significant wood damage as they excavate deep galleries to establish nests. They do not eat wood, rather they 'chew' through it with large, jaw-like mandibles and kick out fine sawdust particles called 'frass.' They can cause significant wood and structural damage rivaling that of termites.

Primarily nocturnal in nature, ants from just one nest can appear in a variety of forms and sizes. Typical workers vary between 1/4 and about 3/4-inch in size and are significantly larger than typical "sugar" ants that often appear in large numbers in kitchens and bathrooms. They are not heavily active during the day, making it difficult to identify infestations within a home or office building. They usually make their presence known in the spring and sometimes throughout the summer as winged, reproductive 'swarmers' come out in search of a new nesting location. This indicates a mature colony is nearby and they intend to establish satellite colonies within the vicinity.

Northwest carpenter ants are black or dark brownish-black in color and can enter a home in a variety of ways;



they may hitchhike in firewood or simply by crawling along wires or tree limbs/foliage that touch the structure.

There are a few simple things that can help prevent these little unwanted visitors:

- Keep firewood stacked away from the house and only bring in what is needed to burn immediately.
- Trim tree branches and foliage a minimum 6-8 inches from all wooden structures.
- If you have a crawlspace, inspect it regularly for moisture issues and debris that might provide a 'bridge' for ants to access wood.

These prevention techniques, coupled with reduced-toxicity maintenance services from a qualified pest control professional, are the best ways to prevent carpenter ants from nesting in a home or office building. Natural-based insecticides such as boric acid (a salt-like mineral) and pyrethrum (derived from chrysanthemums) are highly effective at both treating and preventing carpenter ant infestations.

NW-based pest management companies can provide regular inspections, share additional preventive techniques and discuss service options should you decide to protect your home or business from carpenter ants.

Tasha Shives is Communications Manager for Alpha Ecological of Vancouver, WA (360) 885-4000 www.alphaecological.com



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Food

How to Decode Egg Cartons

by Laura Sayre

On a recent Saturday afternoon I bought three dozen eggs from my local Wild Oats supermarket. All were large, brown, cage-free, certified organic eggs. The least expensive, at \$3.19, advertised “225 mg of Omega-3 per egg.” The most expensive cost \$4.29 and said “Two eggs contain 400 mg of Omega-3.” These were Grade AA, the highest level in the USDA’s voluntary cosmetic grading system for eggs (all the others were Grade A), and were positioned behind a little shelf tag encouraging me to “Buy Local” (although they didn’t appear to be local). The third dozen cost \$3.49 and said nothing about omega-3 levels.

My observations on cracking open some samples? The priciest eggs had the lowest apparent quality, i.e. pale, flat yolks and loose whites. The best-looking were the \$3.49 eggs, with unknown omega-3 levels. But none looked anywhere near as good as a sample bought directly from a farmer who raises pastured poultry about five miles from where I live and sells eggs for \$3 a dozen.

Conventional egg production — that is to say, the vast majority of egg production in the United States — is not a pretty business. Laying hens are crammed five or six to a cage in stacked rows of cages designed for automated feeding, watering and egg-collecting. As many as 100,000 birds can be confined in a single warehouse, each bird with less than 67 square inches, about two-thirds the size of a sheet of paper, to call its own. The crowded conditions lead to cannibalism and other destructive behavior,

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so the birds’ beaks are cut off at an early age, a procedure that could be likened to cutting off a child’s finger tips, in terms of its impact on the animals’ dexterity and sensory experience. The industry favors windowless warehouses with prolonged artificial light to stimulate maximum egg-laying. When egg production drops off, food is withheld as a way of sending the birds into a forced molt followed by another round of egg laying before being disposed of.

The adoption of practices like these has paralleled the spread of salmonella as a bacterial contaminant in eggs — the reason you’re cautioned not to eat raw cookie dough or Caesar dressing anymore. Crowded conditions, genetic uniformity and the widespread use of antibiotics in industrial agriculture favor the development of new and potentially more devastating pathogens.

All those new kinds of eggs for sale in the supermarket should help you opt out of this system, if you’re willing to spend a little more, right? Well, that depends. Here’s a short guide to some of the most common label claims found in the supermarket egg case:

“Cage Free,” “Free Range” or “Free Roaming”

The terms “Free Range” and “Free Roaming” mean that hens have “been allowed access to the outside,” according to the USDA. There are some third-party verification programs, too. “Free range” usually means the laying hens are raised in large flocks in big open warehouses

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rather than in stacked cages. They can walk around, flap their wings and preen their feathers. But outdoor access is not clearly defined — it is probably very limited, and on dirt or concrete rather than pasture. “Cage-free” does not mean outdoor access.

“Certified Humane”

Humane Farm Animal Care operates a certification program specifying that laying hens are uncaged, with access to perches, nest boxes and dust-bathing areas. There are stocking-density maximums but outdoor access is not required. Beak trimming (but not debeaking) is allowed; starvation to induce molting is prohibited.

“Certified Organic”

Production methods must comply with the USDA National Organic Program, including organic, vegetarian feed, no use of antibiotics and no cages. Debeaking and forced molting by starvation are allowed. Organic standards require producers to “maintain livestock living conditions which accommodate the health and natural behavior of the animals.” How much access to the outdoors this requires for chickens is still being debated. On large organic chicken farms, it may mean nothing more than a small door opening onto a concrete yard.

“Omega 3”

All eggs contain small amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, thought to be beneficial to human health. Omega-3 levels in eggs can be raised by supplementing the birds’ diet with fish oil, flax seed or alfalfa meal (or by simply allowing the birds to forage on lawn or pasture).

Find Fresh Local Eggs

Want to find local, farm-fresh, real eggs for sale near you? Search your ZIP code at www.localharvest.org or www.eatwild.com to find farmers in your area.

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Money Matters

Save Money and Energy with New Tax Credits

by Megan Phelps

Good news! Renewable energy systems just got more affordable. Thanks to new federal income tax credits that went into effect in January 2009, U.S. homeowners can reduce their tax bills if they purchase wind turbines or solar panels. There are tax credits for energy conservation, too, including adding more insulation to your home or buying energy-efficient windows.

All this is good news for the planet, because it encourages renewable energy and reduces the use of polluting fossil fuels. It’s also good news for your wallet, as over time, these types of energy upgrades can save you big bucks.

So how do the savings add up?

Whether you’re buying a wind turbine or new windows, most home energy improvements require spending money now to save later through reduced energy bills. Some of these projects are big investments, costing thousands of dollars.

How it all pencils out will depend on the details of your project, but with the new federal tax credits you can count on getting some money back quickly. For home improvements that reduce energy use, most of the tax credits are in the range of \$300 to \$500. The tax credits for installing new renewable energy systems are even better, covering as much as 30 percent of the cost of

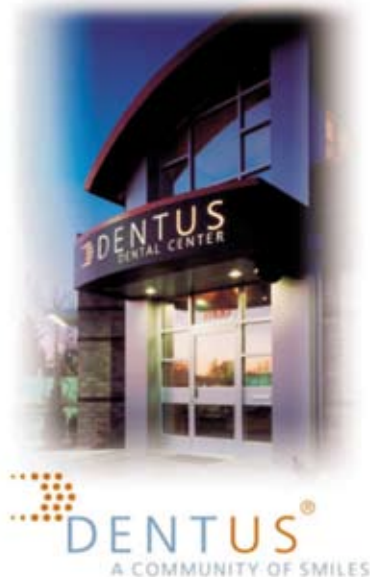


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the system — which can add up to thousands of dollars in cash back. For example, the maximum tax credit for installing a wind turbine is \$4,000.

What exactly is covered?

For a summary of the new incentives, go to www.energytaxincentives.org. It has more details and links to the tax forms you'll need. But here's a general idea of what's included. Each taxpayer can receive up to a total of \$500 for making home improvements to increase energy efficiency, including installing new windows, additional insulation, and more energy-efficient water heaters and furnaces.

The existing tax credits for installing solar panels were extended. That means home solar-electric systems qualify, as do solar water heaters. Both qualify for credits of 30 percent of the cost of the project. (Solar water heating is capped at a \$2,000 credit; solar-electric systems are not capped.)

Now more types of renewable energy systems qualify for tax credits, including wind turbines (up to a maximum of \$4,000).

Tax credits are available for home fuel cells (30 percent of system costs), geothermal heat pumps (up to \$2,000), and even "biomass" stoves,

such as woodstoves or pellet stoves (up to \$300).

There's also a new tax credit for plug-in hybrid-electric cars (\$2,500 to \$7,500), which will apply to vehicles such as the Chevrolet Volt, due to be released in 2010.

Also, an earlier tax credit for gasoline-electric hybrids is still in effect. Toyota and Honda hybrids no longer qualify because of the number of their models that have been sold, but tax credits are still available for Ford, GM and Nissan hybrid cars.

So what else do I need to know?

Before you invest in any of these projects, be sure to read all the fine print. Some of these tax credits have restrictions. For example, eligible replacement windows have the Energy Star designation.

And don't forget that you may be eligible for additional state or local incentives. You can find out more about what's available by visiting the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency: www.dsireusa.org. Check out www.energytrust.org for even more incentives

Megan Phelps is a Senior Editor at Mother Earth News.

Education

Environmental Education Opportunities to Meet Every Student's Needs

By: Joy Perrino Choquette

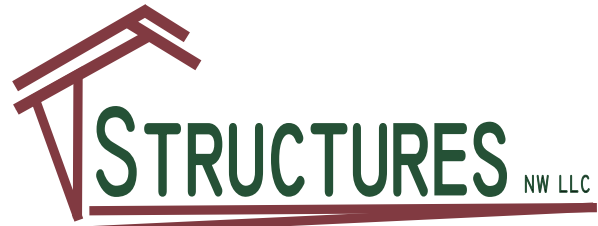
There was a time in the United States when environmental education opportunities were limited. Now, however, a growing interest in all things environmental has significantly increased the number of environmental jobs being created. Education opportunities around green issues are plentiful. Degree and certificate programs as well as hands-on environmental and sustainability education opportunities are sprouting up and thriving throughout the country.

Though there are a wide variety of programs available, this article offers an overview of just a few of the countries most unique environmental programs. There are a number of traditional programs available for individuals interested in obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree in environmentalism. However, some schools offer a twist to conventional programs, such as low-residency options and extensive fieldwork which set them apart from other schools. But certainly not all environmental education comes in the form of a degree program. Hands-on learning programs which immerse students in relevant work and projects are also gaining popularity in the environmental education field.

James Harding, Ph.D., is the director of the master's program in environmental studies at Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont. Harding says that the master's program began in 2006, and initially had 14 students. Since that time, enrollment has swelled to 58 students. "The program has grown well beyond our initial expectations," said Harding. "Our students tell us they are attracted to the program for several reasons."

One of the largest draws, states Harding, is that Green Mountain College maintains a strong base of faculty who come to the college in large part because of their strong commitment to providing solid education around environmental issues. Also, the master's program in environmental studies offers students an opportunity to focus on what they consider to be the most important aspect in the field of environmental studies. "What this means is that our students become environmental experts in their own bioregions—we require them to understand how these basic environmental study topics come to bear in each of their own regions," said Harding. "To this end, students find themselves really exploring their home areas with a sense that understanding the world as a system of bioregions presents a novel and workable way of realizing one's place in the world." Thirdly Harding says, the low-residency format of the degree plan plays an important role in building a community feel for students in the program.

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Each September, students enrolled in the environmental master's degree program come together for three days of, meetings, workshops, and classes. Harding states that this once-a-year residency provides "an important social tether" between students and faculty as well as a shared sense of purpose for the students as a whole.

Most students who enroll in the program do not do so directly after finishing an undergraduate degree, notes Harding. He states that there have also been some significant changes to the program since its inception. One trend he has recently noticed is an increase in the number of military personnel enrolling in the program.

Harding says that many students are looking to change their career trajectory. Some are interested in moving into the education field, others in the public sector, and some are looking for advancement in the environmental field where they are currently employed. Others enroll in the program to increase their personal growth. Whatever the reason for their enrollment, students get a well-rounded environmental education through the program.

Eileen McGurty, Ph.D. is the associate chair of the Environmental Sciences and Policy graduate degree program at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. The program enrollment which McGurty states was "very high" when launched in 1994, slowly decreased in numbers throughout the next several years. However, McGurty states that there has been a rapid rise in enrollment in the past five or six years, something she attributes to an influx in career opportunities and the increasingly complex environmental issues which are present today. "... The complex nature of environmental issues requires the sophisticated understanding offered by a graduate degree," said McGurty. "Our online option is also growing very quickly. It allows for students anywhere in the world to study with a highly regarded university." The graduate program offers students a concentration in environmental monitoring and analysis, ecological management, environmental management and environmental planning.

McGurty states that students enrolled in the program are well versed in both science and policy making. "They can fit many niches in the burgeoning environmental sector," said McGurty. Graduates of the program work in many different sectors, a great number in public service and in nonprofit environments. "Many of our graduates hold positions with government agencies, implementing environmental policies, or in companies that assist other companies in pursuing their environmental goals," said McGurty. Graduates also work directly with companies, which are pursuing a sustainability agenda. Some graduates also go on to work in the private sector.

Another graduate degree program, the Audubon Expedition Institute (AEI), located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, offers students an unusual format of study. Students enrolled in this program, run through Lesley University, travel together on a bus for three out of their four semesters. The bus travels all over the United States,

stopping in various areas to study issues where specific to that region. Students camp out in tents during the 10 week semester. They may study the water as they raft on a river or the local politics of a Native American group as they work with a nonprofit agency in a small town.

Division Director for Environmental Studies, Lily Fessenden Ph.D., states that students visit all parts of an issue as they explore each area on the bus trips. "They also develop a network of people that they come into relationship with," said Fessenden, which helps to develop a very extensive network of resources over the time. Fessenden states that while the program has accepted students from age 16 to 55, most students are in their mid-twenties. Some of the careers which graduates of AEI have gone on to include ecological education coordinator, sustainability coordinator, activist, network coordinator, environmental resource analyst, and land conservation administrator. Many of AEI graduates do end up working in the nonprofit sector, notes Fessenden.

AEI's curriculum began as a program for teens. "It used to be actually a high school program that traveled for a year, called Trailside Country School," said Fessenden. "A number of people were involved in making the undergraduate and graduate degree programs happen. I think what makes it different is that it's experimental." According to Fessenden, the students have a general idea of what region they will be traveling in throughout the semester but they do have some say in where they go. "Some of this is self-directed learning," said Fessenden. "They participate in their education in a very hands-on way."

For individuals who are interested in learning about the environment in a more hands on setting but who don't have the resources or time to pursue a program like AEI, Yestermorrow Design/Build School in Warren, Vermont may be the answer. This program, which was founded in 1980, has seen tremendous growth in the past several years according to Kate Stephenson, interim executive director. Stephenson states that the student body has tripled since 2002. Students come to Yestermorrow from all over the country, some from other countries, to participate in the unique program which offers a wide array of classes throughout the year. Examples of some of the classes offered include carpentry for women, introduction to blacksmithing and building cement coun-

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tertops. "We're seeing a lot of interest in environmental design and remodeling," states Stephenson. She says a lot of students are asking questions like, "How can you fix up old houses and make them more energy efficient?" Student ages range from individuals in their twenties to eighties, with everything in between.

Compared to other sustainable classes, says Stephenson, Yestermorrow teaches classes that are very hands on and practical. She states that a lot of people are seeing that they need to make a change in their lives and are pursuing education through Yestermorrow to help them make that shift. "How are you really going to do this, to change your life? That appeals to people a lot," said Stephenson.

Opportunities for educating oneself about the environment are plentiful and there are many more options than can be included in this article. Please see the resource directory below for other environmental education opportunities. The most challenging part of furthering one's environmental education may be deciding which of the many innovative programs out there to pursue.

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Joy Perrino Choquette is a freelance writer in Vermont and also the founder of EcoMedia LLC, an environmental copywriting business. She enjoys learning new things about the environment every chance she can get.



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Oregon Learning Options

Columbia Gorge Community College (The Dalles) offers a certified wind technician training program.

This spring, 72 Columbia Gorge graduates had jobs waiting, maintaining wind turbines that are going up by the dozens east of the Cascades. Demand for the skilled workers, who can earn \$22 to \$33 an hour depending on experience, is many times what the college is able to provide. The school offers one-year certificates and two-year degrees.

Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) offers a BS in Renewable Energy Engineering at its Klamath Falls and Portland campuses.

According to rankings developed by the Aspen Institute's "Beyond Grey Pinstripes" research survey, Oregon has 3 schools in the Global Top 100.

Beyond Grey Pinstripes is a research survey and alternative ranking of business schools that spotlight innovative full-time MBA programs leading the way in the integration of issues concerning social and environmental stewardship in to the curriculum.

Portland State University ranks 22nd which puts them ahead of such prestigious names as Dartmouth, Duke, and Carnegie Mellon. Willamette University comes in at 58th and Oregon State made the list in the 89th slot.

In 2005, Oregon Tech introduced the first Bachelor of Science in Renewable Energy Systems in North America (now known as Renewable Energy Engineering). Oregon Tech's renewable energy program establishes the engineering principles graduates will need to develop, promote, and implement sustainable energy technologies.

Renewable-energy specific courses include photo-voltaics, energy management and auditing, wind power, biofuels, renewable-energy transportation systems, green building and fuel cells. The Renewable Energy curriculum prepares graduates for engineering careers in the energy sector in general, and the renewable energy in particular.

Portland Community College

The most comprehensive Renewable Energy Systems (RES) training offered in the State of Oregon prepares technicians for solar power, wind power, fuel cell and other renewable energy fields. Students can complete the EET AAS degree and/or the following EET option:

- Associate of Applied Science in EET: Renewable Energy Systems
- One Year Certificate in EET: Renewable Energy Systems (Pending State Approval)

Renewable Energy Systems is an option of the Electronic Engineering Technology (EET) program, giving students a more specialized track to a career in renewable energy field

National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

Jointly operate a 54,000 square foot training center near the Portland airport. They have just installed a 78Kw solar array which will provide 40% of the facilities power needs and be used to train members on the design and installation of solar arrays

Oregon State University & Portland State University

Oregon State University and Portland State University are collaborating to spend \$1.6 million to create green building research programs at both universities. The funding will establish the Oregon Built Environment and Sustainable Technologies (BEST) Green Building Research Laboratory at PSU, where researchers from other Oregon University System institutions and industry can use a suite of infrared cameras and thermal characterization equipment to test everything from green roofs and window glazing to interior moisture levels and a building's surface temperatures. When the equipment is used in conjunction with other federally funded research projects, it will facilitate a broader investigation of the impact of buildings on the urban environment.



Plug Into Your Landscape

Up to now to convert a tree to power you had to burn it in a wood stove to generate heat, but Voltree Power of Canton, MA has created a device that generates electrical current from trees. The device has probes that go into the ground and is able to generate electricity by harnessing the acidity difference between the tree and the soil it is growing from. This electricity can be used to trickle charge a battery.

Voltree Power is testing this as a way to replace solar panels or replaceable batteries for power to remote locations for forest fire sensors, or possibly Homeland security. No harm is done to the tree and it is effective for the life of the tree. www.VoltreePower.com

Ask A Master Recycler

By Dana Jeffries

Is there somewhere to recycle the large blocks of Styrofoam pieces that I get when I buy electronics?

Good news and bad news on block Styrofoam recycling: You CAN recycle it in the Portland metro area, but there are only 2 places that will take it—and one of the sites will charge you a small fee for the blocks.

In addition, the locations might not be very convenient for you. It can be much more effective to either hang on to your Styrofoam blocks until you have a larger load, or gather up block Styrofoam from neighbors or coworkers to make the trip more worthwhile.

Here are the 2 sites that take Styrofoam blocks for recycling:

Pacific Land Clearing at 4044 N Suttle Rd. in Portland, very close to the Portland Expo Center just south of Jantzen Beach, takes your block Styrofoam for free. They have a big bin to drop it in Monday through Saturday from 6 AM to 6 PM. The phone number for PLC is 503-285-8777.

The other drop-off site for recycling block Styrofoam is Total Reclaim at 5805 NE Columbia Blvd. Total Reclaim charges \$5 for up to a trunk load full of foam block packaging, and \$10 for a truck or van load of clean and dry material. They are open Monday through Friday, 8

am to 4:30 pm.

Neither one of these sites will accept the styrofoam packing pellets---'peanuts'---or food styrofoam such as meat trays and egg containers. The peanuts can go to most UPS stores around the metro area. There is currently no recycling site for Styrofoam food packaging.

Editor's Note: Space Pak at 4403 SE Johnson Creek Blvd. in Milwaukie will accept clean, used peanuts. You can reach them at 503.656.7177

The more that I try to go paperless the more CD disks I seem to generate and need to dispose of. How can I recycle my used CDs?

Far West Fibers, with several locations scattered around the metro area, will take CD's and their plastic cases. You must remove the paper inserts from the CD cases. They'll also take your DVD's.

Here are the Far West Fiber recycling depots that take compact discs and DVD's at no charge for recycling:

- N Portland-N Rosa Parks Way at N Denver
- NW Portland-1520 NE Quimby
- SE Portland-4629 SE 17th (SE 17th and Holgate)
- Beaverton- 10750 SW Denny Road, at the SW corner of Highway 217 and Denny Road.
- Hillsboro-6440 SE Alexander St.

CD's, which are made of plastic, a thin layer of aluminum and a thin coating of acrylic, can also be taken to Free Geek in SE Portland at 1731 SE 10th, just south of SE Hawthorne. Free Geek charges a dollar for any amount of CD's. Free Geek is a non-profit organization that works to get computers and other technology re-used. They like a phone call in advance to make sure they can take what you're bringing in, 503-232-9350.

One more drop-off site comes to mind for old CD's and DVD's: E-Tech Recycling in Hillsboro at 1600 NE 25th Ave. Ste. C.

For more information on hours and phone numbers of these drop-off sites for compact discs, call the Metro Recycling Information hotline at 503-234-3000.

Master Recycler- Dana Jeffries

Master Recycler Graduating Class #1, K103 On Air Personality and mother of 2 girls. You can try to keep up with Dana on her web page: www.k103.com/pages/talent_dana.html

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Marketing with Barcode Backtracking

– Tracing Production Sources for Conscientious Customers

by Katie Cordrey

With so many choices in the marketplace, it's not always easy for consumers to tell if the products they are considering for purchase have been manufactured with materials and labor that adhere to the values they'd like to support in business and the world.

Marketing-savvy companies understand that offering a way for customers to trace the origin of the materials and production practices used in their goods is one way to promote sustainability and values-based buying decisions. This enlightened self-interest has led to a remarkably simple method of tracing product backstories.

Leading the flock is New Zealand's outdoor clothing company, Icebreaker. Their tracking system is called, 'Baacode.' The system empowers conscientious customers to trace each garment back to the sheep station where the organic, merino fiber was grown and then follow it through the company's production process.

"For Icebreaker, it's not just about where it's made – it's about how it's made," says Icebreaker CEO Jeremy Moon. "Sweatshops and pollution in the apparel industry are often caused by manufacturers buying fabric without taking responsibility for how that fabric was produced. Rather than sourcing fabric from a middle man, Icebreaker takes responsibility for the entire life-cycle of its garments.

The company recently located an Icebreaker Concept Store in Portland, Oregon and sells through several other Oregon retailers.



Like Icebreaker, west-coast-based Stone-Buhr, has launched its own tracking system. In 2007 the 100-year-old company replaced commodity flour with flour from Columbia Plateau Producers, a Food Alliance-certified group of family farmers located in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

Stone-Buhr's FindTheFarmer.com site allows consumers to enter a lot code to find the farmers who produced the grain used in the product. Bios and information about each farmer is listed in the 'Meet the Farmers' section. There is also an 'Ask the Farmer' feature that allows questions to be submitted for farmer response.

Pacific Fish Trax provides New Seasons customers with information about Oregon-caught albacore tuna bought at the New Seasons stores, via on-site kiosks. After scanning bar-codes on packaged fish, the kiosks display information about the fisherman that caught it, the boat he used, and where it was processed. The pilot project, a collaboration between Oregon State University, the Community Seafood Initiative, and local fisherman, is being tested at New Seasons Markets on North Interstate and on Cedar Hills Boulevard.

To try out Icebreaker's baacode system, visit <http://www.icebreaker.com>. Stone-Buhr's lot tracking is online at <http://www.findthefarmer.com>. More information about Pacific Fish Trax is at <http://www.pacificfishtrax.org>.

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Homesteading Means Home Future Dreaming

By Harriet Fasenfest

Well, friends, it's official. Homesteading, rural or urban, is a movement. It is growing faster than my bean vines. If I ever thought I had a new idea in my head, I do not now. And it is the kids, young couples with children, single 20-somethings wanting to find a better way of living, and a few holdouts from the counterculture generation, who are doing it for real.

And no doubt are working hard. I mean real hard. Reading the tons of blogs and websites from countless numbers of folks both in and out of this country is awe-inspiring. But then I'm still a city girl and will no doubt always be a city girl. I admit to liking to sashaying up to the coffee shop to read the paper and visit with friends. I like going downtown to enjoy lunch or the museum. I like the energy, the efforts, and the culture of the city. So urban homesteading turns out to be a happy middle ground for me.

If I were a younger woman I might head out. I would look for a piece of land that ran next to neighbors and a community of like-minded folks with a college or university nearby. My husband talks about Ithaca, New York, but that's only because we've both got some Currier and Ives image of East Coast winters by the fireplace. He should know better, because we both grew up back east and remember what shoveling snow is really about. Yeah, there's some hot chocolate waiting for you, but, as a kid, not much else by way of value.

Still, we talk about it. We talk about retiring (yep, that conversation) to an eco-village where we can ripen gracefully as "enlightened elders," but then everyone at an eco-village is somewhat enlightened (or imagines they are), which would make us less special than we think we are.

We could go to the countryside in France or Italy or Costa Rica and learn the native language and dotter into the local town with our berets or straw hats and look at all the children playing in the town square, but I'm assuming that by then we will hate to hear kids making noise and will prefer an adult eco-village (not to be confused with a swingers eco-village), and leave the charm of children to those who still have the nerves for it.

Yeah, we think about where we might plant our stake, and then I think about my apple trees, currant bushes, grapevines, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, pears, and all the sweet features that make this home so wonderful, and I think, "Why would I want to go anywhere?"

We should just grow old with these plantings and land and wear a groove into the floorboards of this house and learn what it means to stay put long enough to experience the truest sense of homesteading: staying in place and tending it throughout one's life.

And so, in case you were worrying, I think we will stay here in Portland and don our berets and make it up to Alberta Street to tell whomever will listen all about the glory days (wait, we already do that) and learn to live fully in the community we are already growing old with. Hopefully, together, we will make this city a righteous piece of heaven and a nurturing world for the noisy kids down the block.

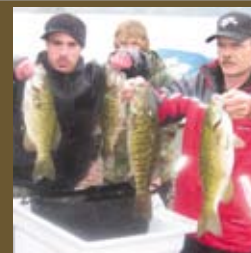
Born and raised in the Bronx, Harriet Fasenfest has lived in the Northwest since 1978. She teaches classes on food preservation at Preserve and lives happily with her husband and children in Portland, Oregon. You can read more of her writing (including a PDF copy of her book "Seamless") & more about her classes at www.portlandpreserve.com. You can also listen to her half hour radio show on K-BOO called "House Holding with Marge and Harriet" on the second Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am. Watch for Harriet's upcoming book on House Holding.

This article was originally published on www.culinate.com and is reprinted here with permission.



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Events

Goldendale Energy Exposition

June 27 & 28 Klickitat County (Wash) Fairground Arena Building

This Event is focused on Responsible Energy Options and is located in the Washington/Oregon Central Columbia River Area (one of the premier energy production areas of the North Western United States). The region is host to existing hydro and wind power projects, and has a genuine potential for solar and bio generation. http://goldendalechamber.org/index.php?option=com_eventlist&Itemid=78&func=details&did=89

Electric Vehicle Awareness Day

Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland, OR, July 11th, 2009, 9:30am to 5pm

Sponsored by Oregon Electric Vehicle Association a non-profit electric vehicle enthusiasts association that promotes electric vehicle education and encourages their safe use.

See innovative conversions of gas burning cars to clean electric vehicles

Answer your questions about electric and Plug-in Hybrid cars

Enjoy EV Awareness Day 2009 with us and see the future! www.oeva.org

Cracked Pots' 10th Annual Garden Art Show!

McMenamins Edgefield, Troutdale, OR, July 21-22, 2009

Cracked Pots' legendary Garden Art Show features more than 80 artists in an enchanted garden setting. You'll see marvelous metal sculpture, glass and tile mosaics, planters, fanciful animals, wind chimes, yard furniture, stacked ceramic and glass, and much more. All art is made from at least 75% reused and recycled materials. Admission is free. www.crackedpots.org

The SolWest Fair

Grant County Fairgrounds, John Day, OR July 24th 25th & 26th, 2009

The Eastern Oregon Renewable Energies Non-profit presents Solwest Fair the last full weekend of each July. SolWest is an occasion for learning, networking, and supporting all types of renewable energy. This three-day event offers engaging activities for all ages and knowledge levels. Participants from around the western region and beyond come to join the SolWest community and learn about energy efficiency, solar and wind energy, alternatively fueled vehicles, and more. www.solwest.org

Wayland Invitational IV Street Drags (Electric Vehicles)

Portland International Speedway, July 24th-25th

John Wayland is going to host his fourth Wayland Invitational race for electric cars. Come see what electric power is all about as NEDRA (National Electric Drag Racing Association) hosts one of the hottest electric vehicle racing events of the year. Electric vehicles (EV) from the newest production cars including the Tesla and Tango, to 11 second street rides, to all-out drag 7 second bikes and rails will be pushing the EV performance envelope for 1/4 mile acceleration prowess. This year it's a fundraiser for autism.

www.plasmaboyracing.com/events.php

Portland's 6th Annual TOUR de COOPS

Saturday, July 25, 2009 11:00am-3:00pm

This is a fun and affordable community event for you, your whole family and all your friends! Chicken owners throughout Portland will open their yards so you can see their coops and meet their chickens. The Tour de Coops is a self-guided tour; you'll have the opportunity to visit up to 25 backyard chicken coops all over East Portland - getting to know your neighbors while learning and sharing urban chicken keeping ideas.

Pre-sale tickets for the Tour de Coops will be available one week prior to the event at various locations around Portland. Price: \$10/booklet. Booklets include addresses & descriptions of each coop and maps with suggested Tour routes.

You can also enter the raffle to win one of two coops (made by local coop designers!), chicken feed and/or gift certificates donated by local nurseries and feed stores! More detailed information on the raffle to come.

www.growing-gardens.org/portland-gardening-resources/chickens.php

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Mid-Summer's Green Festival

Atkinson Park, 16th and Jackson, Oregon City, August 1st, 2009, 11am to 7pm

Come support The Center for a Sustainable Today. Enjoy live music and great food. Come listen to local leaders that are working on putting Oregon City on the map. Join sustainable businesses and organizations that will be vending. Come listen to local industry leaders. Bring your entire family. Invite a friend.

Come support the park. We have been clearing the invasive plants out of this park for a year and are signing on for another. This will be a great time with things to do and people to meet. There will be a raffle.

Bus 32 stops right in front of the park. 503.734.5375
www.sustainabletoday.org

Muddy Boot Organic Festival

St. Philip Neri Church, 2408 SE 16th Ave (near 18th & Division), Portland, OR, Sept. 12th & 13th

A soulful celebration of sustainable living. Respected author, educator, and environmentalist Bill McKibben of 350.org will give the keynote address Friday, September 11th.

- Workshops and exhibits on sustainable living
- Local and healthy organic foods and beverages
- Organic beer and wine
- Kids' activities and entertainment
- Musical entertainment

www.muddyboot.org

The 2009 Green and Solar Tours will occur in Sept and Oct.

Solar Oregon helps to facilitate tours of solar homes and business in communities around the state of Oregon. Collectively, these tours are known as the Oregon Green and Solar Tours.

Watch for dates

www.solaroregon.org/tours/solar-home-tours

GoGreen 09

The Gerding Theater/128 NW Eleventh Avenue, Portland, Oct. 7th 2009, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Full Day Sustainability Conference for Business that inspires, motivates and educates aspiring and established business owners to "go green". Join us and spend a value-packed day connecting with local business leaders, 40 leading eco-visionaries, experts and like-minded individuals who will provide you with the latest knowledge and tools needed to make your business more sustainable and to take your business to the next level.

www.gogreenpdx.com

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