



Re-Co-Ver Review

Master Composter/Recycler Newsletter

From the MCR Desk

November 2009

"All the fertile areas of this planet have at least once passed through the bodies of earthworms."

- Charles Darwin

Each year, the average American throws away about 1,200 lbs of recyclable organic waste. Organic waste in a landfill does no good at all. The nutrients are lost to natural cycles, and the waste breaks down anaerobically (without oxygen) generating greenhouse gasses.

Organic waste placed in a compost bin rots more productively. Microbes, fungi, insects and worms slowly decompose the stuff into a sustainable source of nutrients that can feed the earth and your garden.

This year our workshops taught close to 420 households in Clark County how to enrich the earth by composting their organic waste. If each of these households composts their organics, and consists of an average of 3 people, 756 tons of organic waste could be diverted from the waste stream annually by these households. The nutrients stay in the cycle of life, and less greenhouse gasses and energy waste are generated.

Master Composter/Recyclers make a difference. Thank you all for sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm for waste reduction - and for making our composting workshops possible.

My best,

Jo Anne Dolan

Master Composter/Recycler Coordinator

Sustainability Programs Director, Columbia Springs



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Please note: All links in the MCR newsletters are live. This means that when you hold your cursor over a green-colored link and click you should be directed to the website or email referenced.

Recycling and Sustainability News



New Plastics Recycling Plant Planned in Region

In a community that could use some good news regarding employment, a new plastics bottle recycling plant is scheduled to be built across the Columbia River in St. Helens, bringing to Columbia County 50 new job opportunities.

Scheduled to be constructed on Port of St. Helens-owned property, the ORPET plant is a partnership between private investors, such as Portland, Oregon-based Denton Plastics (touted as the state's largest plastics processor), and the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC), the administrator of Oregon's 37-year-old bottle deposit redemption program. Non-carbonated water products were added to the state's redemption program this past January.

Representatives say the processing facility will be the first of its kind in our region, and it's expected the plant will convert millions of polyethylene terephthalate plastic bottles annually into material suitable for construction, manufacturing and packaging applications.

The project intends to seek the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building certification in building the ORPET facility. The facility is expected to be constructed using building materials that contain recycled content; will include a solution that allows the plant to harvest rainwater; and will be powered via the use of solar panels. A variety of other features to conserve energy will be included as well. The plant is scheduled to begin operations in the second quarter of 2010.

Plastic Bag News Update

According to [a report](#) in *USA Today*, retail giant Target will be giving customers a nickel discount for every reusable bag used at check-out. The program followed a successful 100-store pilot project, which experienced a 58-percent reduction in plastic bags used at participating stores.

Not to be outdone by its rival, several California Wal-Mart stores are phasing out single-use plastic bags as part of a test program seeking to reduce waste. At the stores participating in the trial, consumers can only use their own reusable bags or the ones available for purchase at the store.

Drugstore chain CVS launched a bag reduction plan of its own — the GreenBagTag initiative — offering \$1 on customers' CVS cards for every four times they make purchases and carry the store-bought goods home in their own reusable bags and have their GreenBagTag scanned. Consumers can buy the tag for 99 cents, but can only have one tag scanned per day, per household.

Help us to keep spreading the word about using re-usable shopping bags. Clark County Solid Waste Program's "Got Bag" project distributes window clings to put on your drivers side window as a gentle reminder to bring the reusable bag into the store when shopping. We have window clings that you can share!



Volunteer Meeting



November Volunteer Meeting , Thursday, November 19

6:30- 8:00 p.m., 78th Street Conference Center

4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver, WA 98665

We all know that plastics make our lives easier in many ways, but things that make our lives easier can also be deadly to other life forms. Swirling around in the Pacific Ocean is a confluence of bits of plastic - a vast gyre of non-biodegradable waste called the Great Garbage Patch. Amy Carpenter, Coordinator of the Environmental Education Outreach Program at Columbia Springs will share an audiovisual presentation that explores this region and will discuss the implications of ocean life as many creatures come into contact with this new “man-made” ecosystem.

We'll also discuss ways we can rethink our use of plastics to make a difference in our and the planet's health.

The Operations Center is located in Vancouver, about a mile and a half west of Hwy 205 via Padden Pkwy. And 1.5 miles east of I-5 via the 78th St. exit.

Volunteer Spotlight



Which Master Composter/Recycler can teach you all about sturgeon, the eruption of Mount Saint Helens, and how to recycle, garden organically, and make compost? And which one looked fabulous recycling her mother's vintage 1960's frock at the Vancouver Green Drinks Halloween party at CREAM/Habitat for Humanity Restore? That would be Ginger May, community volunteer and naturalist extraordinaire! Ginger, who has been with the MCR program since 2005, works at Vancouver's Water Resources Education Center as an Education Specialist.

The multifaceted Ginger has also been a Waste Reduction Specialist with Waste Connections in Vancouver and an interpretive ranger at Mt. Saint Helens Visitor Center. When not volunteering for the Master Composter/Recycler or the Naturally Beautiful Backyards Programs, Ginger enjoys adventures such as a recent African Safari honeymoon with her husband Ed.

Ginger's husband has accepted a job in Carson City, Nevada and Ginger is leaving us to join him in December. Bon Voyage Ginger. Your wisdom, kind heart and special smile will be missed.

Upcoming Volunteer Events and Opportunities

Many of you new volunteers have completed or exceeded your commitment of 30 hours of payback. And many veterans have completed their 15 hours or more. Gracias, merci, and arigato! If you are still working on it, here's an added incentive to get your hours in - if you have completed your hours by our December holiday volunteer recognition party - you will receive a beautiful item of clothing - something warm and fuzzy to go with the warm and fuzzy feeling you all deserve for doing your good deeds for the community and the planet.

You may have seen some of our veterans sporting these stylish MCR clothing articles. If you are short of 30 hours, there are many ways and opportunities to get your hours in. I would be happy to help you find a way to make a contribution that is fun and meaningful for you. I'll be contacting those of you who might need help catching up on hours. In the meantime, here are some jobs that need doers!



Our Friendly Wormologists at MCR's
Nov.7th Family Wormshop



- * Help us prepare teaching materials for the class of 2010. Assemble training manuals.
- * Write an article for our newsletter.
- * Help with composting demo site maintenance at Columbia Springs. Need to set posts in ground. Collect leaves. Build box for self-guided tour brochure.
- * Grow worms for our spring classes
- * Help us market our 2010 training, put flyers up on community bulletin boards

Earth-friendly Gardening for Clean Water Monday, Nov.16, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. CASEE, Brush Prairie WA Explore the connections between water quality and gardening practices. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. For more information email nbb@columbiasprings.org or call 360-882-0936 x 225

COLUMBIA GROVE - WOOD'S LANDING



Circle of Life/Return of the Chum Salmon Celebration Saturday, Dec. 5, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Wood Family and Columbia Springs invite you to celebrate the return of the Chum Salmon at Columbia Grove and the Wood's property on the Columbia River. Salmon viewing and lunch. *RSVP: Lorie Wood-Gordon (503) 465-1898 or Alishia Topper at atopper@columbiasprings.org*



The Master Composter/Recycler Program is funded
by Clark County Solid Waste Program
and administered by Columbia Springs.



Comments, questions, suggestions, brainstorm, anything at all...mcr@columbiasprings.org (360) 882-0936 x 224 Or stop on by the Heron House at Columbia Springs, 12602 SE Evergreen HWY, Vancouver, WA 98683