



# Re-Co-Ver Review

Master Composter/Recycler Newsletter

From the MCR Desk

December 2009

During this busy holiday time it is nice to take a deep breath and step back and reflect on the spirit of the season. The fragrant Christmas tree, the lights and decorations, and the festivities warm my heart and bring me to a place of gratitude.

Whatever tradition you embrace, all can celebrate a wish for peace and joy, and the return of light to the world. Light returns to our hemisphere in the form of longer days after the solstice on December 21, and through freely given gifts of caring, love and compassion.

Today I as watched Chum salmon churn their mating dance in springs that flow into the Columbia River, a Chinook tribal member sang a blessing in honor of the earth, its creatures and the creator. Cold sunshine reflected on the river and I reflected on the wonderful gift that we all have been given - our beautiful life-giving earth. Living in the Pacific Northwest, we are lucky to experience such bounty and beauty.

Master Composter/Recyclers have given a bounteous gift of time, talent and thoughtful stewardship of the earth all year-long. This gift is in the true spirit of the season.

My holiday wish for you and yours is peace and happiness in your journey around the sun this coming year. May you enjoy the happiest of winter holidays, and the warmth of hearth and home.

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 web-site or email referenced.

## Slowing Down - by Ian Alexander class of 2009



These days it seems that everything is all about speed and convenience. We all want items that are faster, that get jobs done quicker and make us more efficient. We are sold on the idea that we need to have all these things because who has the time to get things done these days?

However, when one gets into composting or gardening, nature has a set speed that really cannot be set to fast. After one creates a compost bin filled with the right ingredients, it is still going to be 6 weeks or so before we get the fruits of our labors. This natural pace that we often lack in our modern, urban age forces us to take our time and be a bit more patient.

I feel this is a good thing because one lesson I got out of the Master Recycler/Composting program is that often times doing the right thing, ecologically speaking, is as simple as taking an extra second to just think a bit. Once one learns where “away” is in regards to throwing things away, it is harder to just toss something without thinking about it. When one can reuse, recycle or compost an item, it becomes a bit easier to look for those items when making purchases. It is really just turning around the way you look at things. That bag of lettuce that got pushed to the back of the fridge goes from being a waste to be thrown away, to a bit of needed greens for your compost bin. It is good to see local businesses like Burgerville thinking sustainably and giving their customers the ability to recycle/compost after their meals.

This concept is not an earth-shattering idea, but when I’m volunteering at the Vancouver Farmer’s Market, it is the idea that seems to always bring up a ‘light bulb’ moment with many of the people I talk to. It is almost like we Americans have been sold for so long on the idea of buy it, use it, throw it away and get a new one, that we rarely take the time to think about what we are doing, or what we’re buying and why.

It seems that people are eager to change, but they just need people to help them with that shift in thinking. The holiday season is an excellent chance to share our mindfulness of sustainability, when we can encourage our friends, family and community to recycle paper, save/reuse boxes, and perhaps turn to more do-it-yourself crafts for gifts instead of cheap plastic items from China. It is a present that will continue to bring benefits throughout the year!



Ian Alexander and his utili-kilt are both veterans of Afghanistan. He went to an “experimental” school for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and learned lots about the environment. Ian makes a mean compost pile and is a coffee and beer snob. You can often find him staffing the Master Composter/Recycler Booth at the Vancouver Farmer’s Market.

# Recycling and Sustainability News

## Green Holiday Ideas

Holidays don't have to be filled with consumer madness and waste. Try greening up your season with these suggestions:

1. Make your own gift wrapping with fabric (photo right) like a bandanna or fabric scraps. In Japan and Korea, people make an art out of wrapping packages with re-usable fabric. For video of some fun and attractive ways to wrap presents with fabric see <http://www.bobowrap.com/howtos.html>



2. Decorate a recycled paper bag (below). Use children's art designs for a special wrapping for a parent or grandparent. Recycle an old map or a travel



poster to wrap a travel or adventure related gift. Or recycle last years wrapping paper, adding 3-D cut outs and pop-ups or special photos.

3. Recycle all gift boxes, wrapping and packaging you receive. Re-use and decorate boxes. My cellar has a special craft corner where I stash all the wrapping papers, boxes and decorations I've accumulated during the year. I use these materials to mail items and customize wrapping for special occasions.

4. Select gifts that make a difference. How about a set of garden gloves, flower bulbs and open-pollinated seeds

and a trowel? Or a picnic set of attractive cloth napkins, stainless steel drinkware and reusable cutlery? What about giving someone you love a healthy set of green cleaning products in a reusable wicker basket? What *fashionista* could resist an attractive reusable shopping bag (photo right)?



5. Or how about a nice stainless steel or ceramic counter top food scrap compost container ( below right)?

5. You could get really crazy creative and build your own Christmas tree out of recycled bottles. (photo left)

6. But seriously, don't forget to swap out your holiday lights for LEDs this year if you haven't done so already. These can use up to 90% less energy than traditional lights.



With apologies to Bing Crosby, I'm dreaming of a green Christmas! Happy Holidays y'all.

## Volunteer Meeting

Volunteer Recognition Dinner , Thursday, December 17th

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Water Resources Education Center

4600 SE Columbia Way, Vancouver, WA 98661



We hope that you can join us for this special dinner celebration of your contributions to the Master Composter/Recycler Program and the holiday season. The evening's festivities will include a dinner of locally sourced and organic foods, live music by the Fargher Lake Six, awards for all who have completed their volunteer payback hours, as well as special appreciation gifts for all of our volunteers who attend.

The theme of the evening is "Volunteers Planting Seeds for a Green Future." Please be sure to R.S.V.P. by December 10th so that we can prepare the right amount of food and beverage for our guests.

## Volunteer Spotlight



Bill Drummond joined the Master Composter/Recycler Program in 2005. Since then, Bill has contributed at least 40 hours a year to the program, teaching composting workshops, helping to maintain our composting demonstration sites, and staffing community events. An expert composter, Bill is known in his neighborhood for the finely sifted "black gold" in his garden. Besides sharing his waste reduction knowledge and expertise with the community, Bill also *shares the love* with the Humane Society of Southwest Washington, helping to take care of canines. The Master Composter/Recycler Program and the furry denizens at the Humane Society are both fortunate to have Bill Drummond as a volunteer. Thanks Bill for all you do!

## Volunteer Training Set for 2010

At the end of the newsletter you'll find a flyer advertising the upcoming training for the class of 2010 Master Composter/Recyclers. Please help us to share this opportunity with your friends and community. Feel free to print this flyer and post it at your community center, church, grocery store or neighborhood coffee shop. Or perhaps leave one at the dentist or the hairdresser...help us to market our programs and help promote sustainability by recruiting new Master Composter/Recyclers! We look forward to having more great people join our team in 2010.

# Upcoming Volunteer Events and Opportunities



Want to help with a fun project!

There are many ways to contribute your skills to sustainability education and outreach. Help is needed for the following jobs:

**Office work:** Help us prepare teaching materials for the class of 2010. Assemble training manuals etc.

**Writing:** Write an article for our newsletter.

**Outdoor and handy work:** Help with composting demo site maintenance at Columbia Springs. Need to set sign posts in ground. Collect leaves. Build box for self-guided tour brochure.

**Home worm work:** Grow redworms for our spring classes.

**Boop around town work:** Help us market our 2010 training by putting flyers up on community bulletin boards as you do your errands. Print the flyer at the end of this newsletter and post it in the community.

**Creative work:** Design and build a recycling display for the 2010 Farmers's Market.

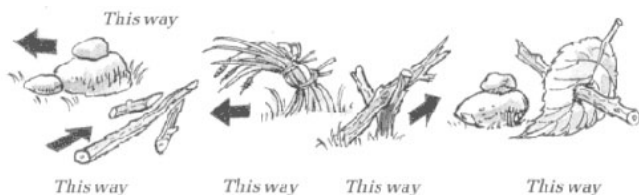
**2010 Training:** Help teach classes, set up classrooms, staff the greeting table and welcome the class of 2010 at the upcoming MCR training. Training begins first week of February.

**Have an sustainability education or outreach idea you want to make happen?** Let's talk about it!

## The annual Clark Conservation District Plant Sale is now open.

Order native plants for low maintenance landscaping, to use in a rain garden or to attract native wild-life. Prices start as low as \$0.60 per plant. Need help finding native plants for your yard? Check out this website. Order your natives now and pick them up in February. Order deadline is February 12th.

For more information, visit the CCD website or call 360-883-1987, extension 5. <http://www.clarkcd.org/>



**Are you tracking your volunteer hours?** Please help us with our program tracking and use the timesheet at the end of this newsletter to a tally of your monthly volunteer hours. Thank you!



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](mailto: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



**Master Composter  
Recycler**

[www.columbiasprings.org/mcr](http://www.columbiasprings.org/mcr)

## Be the Change

### Become a Master Composter Recycler !

Learn about sustainability related topics like backyard composting, vermicomposting, recycling, green building, green cleaning and more.

Registration is open for the  
2010 Master Composter Recycler Program volunteer training.  
This free training will be held Thurs. evenings, Feb. 4 - April 1.

Volunteers exchange 30 hours of “payback” service for the training. Payback can include tabling at community events to share information about composting, waste reduction and recycling techniques, helping to host workshops, assisting with community education programs, and helping to maintain composting demonstration sites.

To help make a more sustainable future in Clark County download a Master Composter Recycler volunteer training application at [www.columbiasprings.org/mcr](http://www.columbiasprings.org/mcr)

Or call 360-882-0936 x 224

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