



NEWSLETTER

June 2004

Get Yard Smart

Children crawl and play; adults laugh and barbecue; pets sniff, eat and run. These events sound familiar; the lawns of central Illinois can be seen littered with people on any given sunny day. Unfortunately, the sterile green grass can be more than meets the eye when good-intentioned homeowners employ the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to attain an enviable yard. In fact, attempts to “beautify” yards can cause human health concerns:

- *Weedkillers (I.e. 2,4-D) have been linked to rising rates of lymphoma in 75 of 99 human studies according to the National Lymphoma Society*
- *Women who used lawn services had higher rates of breast cancer, according to a Massachusetts study.*
- *Children have been found to be 6 times more likely to have leukemia if their parents used garden pesticide and herbicides once a month or more, according to a Los Angeles study.*
- *Over the long term, several types of cancer, damage to nervous systems, birth defects, and infertility have been associated with exposure to common lawn care products.*

Fortunately, some homeowners around Bloomington-Normal have found that beautiful yards do not have to come with the high price of human health risks. These outdoor lovers have taken steps to work with nature to support native diversity in plants and wildlife in addition to preventing pollution and avoiding or minimizing the use of synthetic pesticides and high-nitrogen fertilizers. Their efforts have resulted in safe places for children, adults, pets and wildlife. A walk in recognition of the yards will take place Saturday June 19 and will include details of the establishment and maintenance of the ecologically safe yards. Look inside for more details.



Look for this logo to ensure your children are playing in environmentally safe yards.

CLOTH BAGS FOR SALE!

The Ecology Action Center has designed new shopping bags complete with the EAC logo for only \$4. Next time your grocery cart is full and the bagger asks “paper or plastic” just say “reusable, cloth and fashionable.” Save room in your garbage and recycling bins and reuse our environmentally safe shopping bags over and over. Bags will be available in July, to place your order now, call (309) 454-3169 or stop by the EAC for more details.



What is the YARD SMART Certification Program?

The Yard Smart Program aims to recognize local homeowners who use ecologically-sustainable practices in their yard care. Yard Smart Certification acknowledges that the homeowner realizes their lawn, garden, and landscaping decisions affect the health of the whole community.

The three categories of certification for the Yard Smart program include:

The Chemical-Free Yard

Homeowners with the Chemical-Free Yard eliminate use of synthetic pesticides which can harm humans, pets wildlife and the environment. They also avoid use of synthetic ammonia fertilizers which can contaminate local groundwater and kill beneficial micro-organisms in the soil. Instead, they choose organic lawn and garden practices. Requirements include:

- Total Elimination of Synthetic Pesticides** (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.) and
- Total Elimination of Synthetic Ammonia-Based Fertilizers**

The Easy on the Earth Yard

Reduces waste and conserves natural resources like water and fossil fuels. Minimizes lawn and promotes a healthy, diverse ecosystem. If synthetic pesticides are needed, homeowners practice Integrated Pest Management with use of the least toxic pesticides. Requirements include:

- Waste Reduction:** Techniques to reduce, reuse, or recycle our natural resources.
- Water Conservation:** Techniques to reduce water use and slow stormwater runoff.
- Energy Use:** Reduce dependence on fossil fuels; ultimately reduces air pollution.

The Wildlife Habitat Yard

Provides the basic requirements for wildlife to survive and flourish. Encourages a diverse wildlife population by landscaping with native plants, supplying adequate food and water, and providing a variety of shelter areas. Requirements include providing for the basic needs of wildlife:

- Food:** Plants with seeds, nuts, fruits or sap and/feeders
- Water:** A clean source for bathing or drinking
- Cover:** Shelter from the weather or predators to survive and raise young.

If you would like to be recognized for maintaining a healthy, ecologically sound yard, you can apply for Yard Smart certification by calling the Ecology Action Center: (309) 454-3169, or by e-mailing us at: eac@ecologyactioncenter. The Yard Smart award is available for a fee of \$15.

Waste Management in New Zealand

This spring I had the opportunity to visit New Zealand with my husband, Tim Kelley, who is the director of the Environmental Health Program at ISU. He received a fellowship to study environmental issues in New Zealand and we spent over 5 weeks touring the country and meeting with environmental professionals. We were able to visit several waste education centers and meet with directors of their programs.

We visited a variety of programs, in both rural and urban areas and found some significant similarities between the waste management in New Zealand and in Illinois. Landfilling is the most common waste disposal method and in rural areas there is pit burning and few recycling opportunities. Most areas that we visited had some type of Pay-As-You-Throw program, primarily an official garbage bag program. In Porirua, the bags cost \$1.15 NZ (about \$0.75 US) each, but collection of garbage and recycling is free. Also common were reuse shops, such as the Trash Palace, located close to landfills that accept used household items and resell them very inexpensively. We also visited the not-for-profit, Zero Waste New Zealand, which has an ambitious vision of reducing waste 80% in the next 20 years. New Zealand was the first country in the world to give women the right to vote and to declare itself nuclear-free, perhaps their waste plan, if successful, will be an example to countries around the world.

EAC director Michelle Covi meets with Phil Hancock of Trash Palace in Wellington, NZ

Freecycle and Save



McLean County has joined the ranks of communities across the country that are offering a free service for individuals with too much stuff. When your garage sales have closed their garage doors and E-bay has you working overtime, do not turn to the curbside garbage pick-up. Take your trash to freecycle.org and turn it into another person's treasure. "Changing the world one gift at a time" is the slogan for the online network called

Freecycle, which began in Tucson, Ariz., in May 2003. Freecycle was started in the hopes of helping to reduce waste in downtown Tucson and now more than 360 cities and 51,000 members participate worldwide. Locally, the Ecology Action Center has joined forces with the community to get rid of trash. The website defines freecycling as "giving away and getting stuff for free in McLean County." Membership numbers for this brand new service are growing which means the amount of free "stuff" to get and give is growing as well. Join the cycle, clean out your closets, basements and attics and find some treasures of your own. For more information on the McLean County freecycle, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mcfreecycle/> or find the local link on the nationwide website called freecycle.org.

Earth Day Energy Fair 2004

The McLean County Recycling Award Winners

Batteries Plus for its diverse battery recycling program— **Business of the Year**

Towanda District Library which uses both sides of each sheet of paper and recycles all paper and containers.

The World of Difference Award Winners

Bill Emmett for his Grand Village of the Kickapoo memorial park

Laurine Brown for her community work in health education.

Heartland Community College Greenspace Team for their restoration projects

Winners of Earth Day Raffle 2004

1. Kathy Watson, Bloomington - Swifty Kayak from WildCountry
2. Patrick O'Donnell, Normal - Le Creuset Cookware from Garlic Press
3. Dianne Lekovish, Bloomington- Binoculars from Zhumell
4. Jan Elfline, Bloomington- Canoe Trip by Mackinaw River Partnership
5. Marilyn Freese, Bloomington -Organic Veggies by Garden on Wheels
6. Mary Steadman, Bloomington - Soil Analysis by Eco-Lawn
7. Lawrence Layden, Normal- Wildlife Prairie Park Overnight Stay
8. Marie Benbow, Bloomington- Spirit of Peoria Family Cruise
9. Isabel Weston, Morris—Massage by Foxes and Hounds
10. Brittany Collins, Normal—Ned Kelley Dinner

Roy Treadway won our door prize, a Vac 500 Foodsaver from Tilia Direct

Household Hazardous Waste Results

On May first over 20 tons of electronics and 340 55 gallon drums of hazardous waste were collected from over 2,200 households that participated in the collection. Thanks to all the great volunteers who helped with the event!

Are you looking for a new internet provider?

If you are in the market for a new, low cost internet service provider, look no further than EcoISP.com. EcoISP is a provider of leading internet services that gives daily updates regarding the state of the environment. The company values ecological sustainability and is dedicated to principles of healthy community and social equality and justice. EcoISP will donate fifty percent of their profits to the Ecology Action Center when customers choose us as their charity. There is a local Bloomington dial-in number. Gain reliable, low-cost internet service and simultaneously help the environment around you using EcoISP.com.

MID-CENTRAL ILLINOIS OPERATION RECYCLE, INC.
D/B/A ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER
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PH: (309) 454-3169 FAX: (309) 454-7508
EMAIL: eac@ecologyactioncenter.org
WEBSITE: www.ecologyactioncenter.org
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Reminders and Thanks

Yard Smart Walk

The Yard Smart Program is sponsoring a Yard Smart Tour on Saturday, June 19. The tour starts at 9:00 a.m. and will feature seven yards in the Bloomington-Normal area that exhibit stages of development in a wild-life habitat. The Yard Smart Campaign is co-sponsored by Living Upstream, JWP Audubon and the Ecology Action Center. The event is free and open to everyone. If you are interested in joining the tour, please call the Ecology Action Center at (309) 454-3169 during the day, or Mary Horgan at (309) 527-5636 after 6 p.m

Earth Day Thanks

Our Earth Day celebration was only possible with the help of the community. Thanks go out to "Backs Against the Wall" who provided great music along with the countless number of businesses who donated goods and services. Our events are only possible because of our volunteers—Thank YOU!

Call for Volunteers

Sugar Creek Arts Festival

Takes place July 10-11. Volunteers are needed. Please call (309) 454-7508 for more information or for other volunteer opportunities



Corn Fest

Takes place August 28-29. Volunteers are needed. Please call (309) 454-7508

Electronics Recycling

Volunteers are needed each month to assist with collection every third Saturday of the month.