



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

Volume 14, Issue 1

Summer 2016

Yard Smart Walk

**Register NOW for the
14th Annual EAC Yard
Smart Garden Walk!**

Saturday, June 25:

9am-12pm – Tour;
12-12:30pm Program/Lunch

Come tour Bloomington-Normal's "growing" network of native gardens!

Learn about invasive plant management in our parks and at our homes.

Walk and Program are FREE; donation requested for lunch.

FreeCycle Event: share your surplus plants (labeled, please!) and garden tools.

Register at:
ecologyactioncenter.org



**Deadline to register is
Thursday, June 23, at 5pm**

Solar Bloomington-Normal Shines Strong

Have you attended a solar power hour presentation yet? There are several upcoming opportunities to join us and find out if solar is right for your home or business.

Solar Bloomington-Normal, a partnership with the Ecology Action Center and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, is only the third of its kind in Illinois. The program offers reduced cost solar installations to participants by leveraging the strength of a vetted contractor, a limited-time offering, community-led outreach, economy of scale, and strong customer education.

The cost per watt for program participants is approximately 20% lower than out of program options. Combined with the excellent incentives currently offered federally and by the state, now is a great time to make a low-risk investment in your energy future.

To take advantage of this low-priced limited time offer, attend a Power Hour and sign up for your free consultation and site assessment, have your contract signed with StraightUp Solar by September 30, and generate your own energy before the end of the year!



Attend one of these upcoming Solar Power Hours (or check the website for other upcoming dates and locations www.solarbloomingtonnormal.com) and find out if solar is right for your home or business:

When: Wednesday, 6/29, 6 p.m.

Where: YWCA Community Room 1201 N. Hershey Road, Bloomington, IL

When: Tuesday, 7/12, 6 p.m.

Where: Uptown Station, Room 409—11 Uptown Circle, Normal, IL 61761 (Parking available in deck on W. Beaufort) *This will also be an opportunity to go out on the balcony overlooking Uptown Circle and the Constitution Trail.*

If your community organization or place of business would like to host a power hour for the public and your employees, please contact Larissa Armstrong at larimstrong@ecologyactioncenter.org.

BN Green Events

June 25, 9 am - 12 pm

Yard Smart Garden Walk
ecologyactioncenter.org

June 28, 4:30 pm

Green Top Grocery
Groundbreaking
greentopgrocery.com

June 29, 6 pm

Solar Bloomington-Normal
presentation at YWCA
Solarbloomingtonnormal.com

July 12, 6 pm

Solar Bloomington-Normal
presentation at Uptown
Station
Solarbloomingtonnormal.com

July 13, 5:30 pm

Rain Barrel Workshop
ecologyactioncenter.org

July 16, 9 am—12 pm

Sugar Creek Stewards
Workday
ecologyactioncenter.org

New! Sugar Creek Stewards Program

Come join us for our third workday of the year on Saturday, July 16! We had great groups come out in May and June to work on Sugar Creek along Constitution Trail in the City of Bloomington and near Anderson Park in the Town of Normal, and removed loads of hemlock, garlic mustard, honeysuckle and other invasive plants, making room for the milkweed, native grasses, and damselflies and butterflies that we saw. In July, we'll be working along Sugar Creek at another cool site in the City of Bloomington!

Learn about rivers and floodplains, the importance of native grasses and flowers to wildlife and humans, and the differences between native, non-native and naturalized plants, as well as invasive and aggressive plants. We will teach you what "the good, the bad, and the ugly" plants look like, and the best ways to remove them, and you can help us take out the bad to make room for the good.

We will work from 9 am to 12 pm on the 3rd Saturday of the month throughout the year – invasives never sleep, so neither can we!

Volunteers must be 18 years old or older (or 14 and accompanied by a parent or guardian) and be able to hike along uneven terrain and safely use basic hand tools such as loppers and bow saws. Please wear long pants, closed toe shoes, and bring your own work gloves and bottle of water (reusable bottle, of course).

To register for this event only, go to <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/event/sugar-creek-stewards-workday-2/>.

To be notified of future Steward Workdays, register as an EAC Volunteer at <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/eac-volunteer-application/>. Details on meeting location and worksite will be provided to registered volunteers prior to the workday.

The Sugar Creek Stewards is a program of the Ecology Action Center, and is supported by the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal. For more information, contact Marcus Ricci at mr Ricci@ecologyactioncenter.org or at 309-454-3169, ext. 15.



**BN ENERGY
BRIGHT**
BNenergyBright.org

Bloomington-Normal Residents:
Home Energy Audits: \$20
Small Business Energy Audit: \$40

**MENTION THIS AD FOR A 50%
DISCOUNT!**



Green Top Grocery groundbreaking on June 28

By Carl Roberts, EAC Volunteer

The Green Top Grocery co-op is inviting Ecology Action Center members and everyone in the community to its groundbreaking party on Tuesday, June 28, at 4:30 p.m. at 921 East Washington in Bloomington (the empty lot next to the Beer Nuts factory). Bring your own shovel!

Ecologically friendly food growth and community ownership are what will make Green Top different from traditional grocery stores. The store, which will open for business in mid-2017, will be "built" on the following guiding principles:

- Many of the products and services will be similar to what is found in other stores, but the number-one priority will be providing healthy foods while promoting a healthy environment.
- Many of the foods featured will come from local, independent farmers and producers.
- Clear labeling, reliable product information and educating the community about healthy eating will be emphasized.

Being a co-op means Green Top Grocery is owned by members of the community, but everyone will be welcome to shop there regardless of whether they are a member. Ways you can be involved will be by shopping there, volunteering for educational events, making tax-deductible contributions through the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation or becoming a co-op owner.

For more information about the groundbreaking or ways you can become involved in this environmentally friendly co-op, see the [Green Top Grocery website](#).

EAC Names Green Award Honorees

Each year, the EAC presents two awards to exceptional environmental stewards. This year's awards were presented at our newest fundraiser, Zymurgy, on June 2.



The McLean County Recycling Award was presented to the Bloomington- Normal Marriott. This Four-Diamond hotel offers single stream recycling throughout the facility, both to customers in every guest room and conference room, but also in offices and kitchens. They are an active participant in local food composting efforts, work closely with local nonprofits to donate furniture, carpeting, and more for reuse, find new homes for other unneeded materials through active use of McLean County Freecycle, and encourage positive behaviors by the full staff by organizing annual trail clean up activities.

The Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award was presented to Jeff Pritts, General Manager of the Bloomington Normal Marriott.

Jeff is a local role model in implementing sustainability practices in a commercial facility. He assertively pursued greater energy efficiency in the hotel by transitioning to more energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems. He insists on low-toxicity cleaning supplies throughout the facility. He has built relationships for the procurement of locally grown and sustainable foods for the business. Mr. Pritts is active with area groups to help share what he has learned through his experiences. Overall, he has gone above and beyond the expectations of his organization to demonstrate positive corporate community involvement and social and environmental responsibility.



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