



## BN Green Events

### September

9/21 Sugar Creek Stewards workday

9/25 Seasons of Change documentary screening

### October

10/16 Rain Barrel Workshop

### November

11/14 Sustainable Gourmet

## EnviroTote Recycled Bags Make a Comeback

When it comes to eliminating our waste, the hierarchy of options from most favored to least favored is as follows: Reduction, Reuse, Recycle, Disposal. Yet, we spend a majority of our time focused on the two least favored options. With a little bit of pre-planning, it is now quite easy to purchase items that can be reused and recycled instead of being thrown in the trash. While it is important for us to continue recycling, our larger problem is that we create too much waste and a large portion of that waste is single-use items.

What is arguably one of if not the worst single-use item is the plastic grocery bag. While quick, easy, and seemingly painless to dispose of, this convenience comes at a cost. In addition to polluting our waterways and environment, plastic bags never truly break down in the landfill. When individuals attempt to do the right thing and recycle plastic bags in a single-stream collection system, plastic bags get caught in the gears of sorting equipment and end up being the main culprit of costly machine malfunctions at recycling sorting facilities.

According to a story published by NPR last spring, the best option is to reuse the same bag for each and every trip to the store. However, reports cited within the article indicate that poor quality reusable bags may actually have a higher carbon footprint than single-use bags.

The EAC is excited to announce the return of our EnviroTote Recycled Grocery Totes which are now available for purchase at the EAC office. These totes are made from a **65% blend of cotton yarn produced from the excess fabric of newly made clothing**, and **35% Bottle Bag material** (made from 100% recycled PET bottles). The extremely long life of these totes plus the recycled fiber content makes these an ideal choice to reduce waste, litter, and natural resource consumption. The totes have a weight capacity of around 50 pounds and are extremely durable. Just how durable are these totes, you may ask? The EAC sold similar totes roughly 15 years ago, which are still spotted around town being used by customers to this day.

The ~~new~~ newly returned EnviroTote can purchased for \$15 at the Ecology Action Center office during our normal business hours, 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.



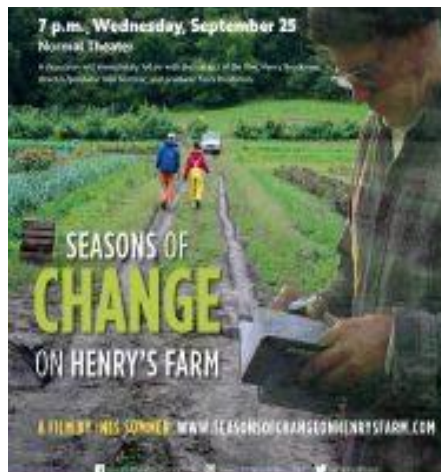
## Seasons of Change

### On Henry's Farm - Documentary

For more than twenty-five years, Henry and Hiroko Brockman have run Henry's Farm, an organic farm right in the middle of the corn belt of Central Illinois. Armed with immense knowledge of soil, plants, and micro-climates, Henry produces over 100 tons of vegetables annually. But Henry knows his body needs a break from the physically demanding work on the farm and decides to take a year's sabbatical with Hiroko in her native Japan. Just as Henry gives his fields time to regenerate their fertility, he will take a year off in Japan, hoping to renew himself. But things do not quite turn out as planned. While Henry's farmhands run the farm in his absence, erratic weather strikes and impacts the crops.

Meanwhile, Henry's sabbatical frees his mind enough to let the global crises that had been at the edge of his consciousness take center stage. He has to acknowledge that things can't continue as before because climate change has already arrived on his farm's doorstep. Seasons of Change on Henry's Farm offers a thoughtful and engaging look at sustainable food production through the story of one farming family. Steeped in images of natural beauty, this quietly observed documentary puts us in Henry's shoes as we learn what's involved in bringing good food to the table, and how biodiversity, adaptability, and resilience are keys to the future.

Seasons of Change on Henry's Farm screening will be held on **Wednesday, September 25 at 7:00 pm** at the Normal Theater, 209 W North Street, Normal.



## You can help address climate change

Climate change continues to be at the forefront of environmental problems, with ramifications becoming more and more apparent. And yet there is a lack of serious collaborative efforts, especially on the large scale, to reduce carbon emissions so as to reduce the impacts of this changing climate, for current and future generations.

Following recent work to repeat our local greenhouse gas emissions inventory, the EAC staff along with stakeholders from around the community is working to create a Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) in order to set targets for reduction of carbon emissions and other air quality pollutants and develop strategies to reach those targets. We hope to complete this collaborative plan later this year and begin community discussions about implementation.

Meanwhile, there are always cost-effective steps we can all take to reduce our carbon footprint. Here are a few options to start:

1. Have a low-cost home energy audit from the EAC to find ways to reduce energy consumption in your home. Sign up at [BNenergyBright.org](http://BNenergyBright.org)
2. Install solar at your home through our group purchase solar program—nearing its end for this year—don't miss out: [SolarBloomingtonNormal.com](http://SolarBloomingtonNormal.com)
3. Low income households may be eligible for low-cost solar through the new Illinois Solar For All program, of which EAC is an educator. See more details on the next page.
4. If you can't get solar at your residence, check out community solar, which is subscription based. Watch for more details from the EAC on community solar options.

## Final Rain Barrel Workshops of the Season

Join us at one of our last rain barrel workshops of the season. Although winter will be here soon, EAC staff is ready to guide you through the necessary steps to prepare your rain barrel for the upcoming months. This workshop is the perfect opportunity to prepare your barrel now and be ready to reap the benefits of early spring storms come 2020. EAC provides all the materials, equipment, and training so that each participant goes home with a high-quality rain harvester at a very low price.

The final fall workshop will be held on **Thursday, October 16**, at 6:00 pm. Workshop fees are \$45 (\$35 EAC member) and includes a 55-gallon rain barrel, additional materials, and instruction on setup and maintenance. Although winter will be here soon, EAC staff is ready to guide you through the necessary steps to prepare your rain barrel for the upcoming months. This workshop is the perfect opportunity to prepare your barrel now and be ready to reap the benefits of early spring storms come 2019.

Workshop space is limited and pre-registration is required; online registration is available at [ecologyactioncenter.org](http://ecologyactioncenter.org). Consult the BN-Green Events calendar on the right side of the home page for dates and registration. Please contact Molly McCready, EAC Education Coordinator, at [mccready@ecologyactioncenter.org](mailto:mccready@ecologyactioncenter.org), or **309-454-3169 0x.12** with any questions.

## Illinois Solar for All is here!

Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) is part of the larger Future Energy Jobs Act passed by the state in 2017. ILSFA is designed to reduce barriers to access solar for low-income households and non-profits and public facilities serving low-income communities.



# Illinois Solar For All

The EAC is one of ten non-profit organizations across the state selected as a grassroots educator for the launch of this program. We are collaborating with the Normal Township and Activity and Recreation Center, Habitat for Humanity, West Bloomington Revitalization Project, and Mid-Central Community Action to host presentations this fall to educate income-eligible members of our community about the ILSFA program.

Upcoming presentations (other dates and locations announced soon):

**Wednesday, 10/9 at 10:30 a.m.** – Activity and Recreation Center, Normal  
**Thursday, 10/17 at 3:00 p.m.** – Mid Central Community Action, Bloomington  
**Wednesday, 10/30 at 10:30 a.m.** – Activity and Recreation Center, Normal  
**Wednesday, 11/6 at 10:30 a.m.** – Activity and Recreation Center, Normal

Join us to learn more about the program and how to go solar and save on future energy bills.

If you have questions about the ILSFA program, please contact Larissa at [larstrong@ecologyactioncenter.org](mailto:larstrong@ecologyactioncenter.org).

## 2019 McLean County HHW a huge success!

On September 7, 2019, the EAC conducted a big experiment with its household hazardous waste collection event. Past events often had long waits and traffic backups due to hundreds of cars arriving at the same time—numbers that were not possible to process without delays.

This year, for the first time, the EAC implemented an appointment only system in order to regulate the flow of traffic to the event to manageable volumes. The experiment was a huge success! Cars were in and out within 20 minutes at the most, with some as fast as six minutes!

Watch for a full post-event report coming soon once we have tallied all of our event data.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, or supported this important service! We are grateful to you.



202 W. College Ave.  
Normal, IL 61761

ecologyactioncenter.org  
309-454-3169



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