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CONSERVATION BOARD TOWN OF YORKTOWN

Spring 2010 Conservation Board

10 Tips for Planting a Greener Garden

1. Don't use chemical pesticides. Use natural products only.
2. Add ladybugs or other natural predators to your garden and install fencing to control pests.
3. Plant herbs or flowers that repel insects between vegetable plants...basil, mint, chives, chrysanthemums and marigolds all do the trick.
4. Make (or buy) organic compost and mulch to condition the soil. It's easy to create your own backyard compost pile with coffee grinds and organic scraps.
5. Never use peat in your garden. Peat is taken from and effectively destroys, precious wetland areas.
6. Use traditional tools and not electric ones. Rakes, hoes and shovels work just fine.
7. Plant local species whenever possible.
8. Collect rainwater for watering the garden.
9. Choose disease-resistant, pest-resistant plants and bulbs from cultivated stocks only. Never take plants from the wild.
10. Choose recycled products for use in and around your garden. Use yogurt cups to sprout seeds, recycled lumber to build raised beds, old containers to water, etc. Get creative. Courtesy of sierratradingpost.com

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Mix olive oil with ground sea salt and a little brown sugar to make a natural exfoliating scrub for shower time. Courtesy of FriendsoftheEarth.com

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Get stains out of fabric naturally, by cutting a lemon in half and rubbing it (juicy side down) on the affected area. Lemon is a gentle bleaching agent and will help restore your favorite threads to pristine condition. Courtesy of FriendsoftheEarth.com

Green Spring Cleaning

1. Open the windows. The best way to get dirty air moving out and fresh air moving in. Feel the Breeze.
2. Skip the air fresheners. Chemical fresheners can cause eye, skin and respiratory irritation. Buy fresh flowers in lieu of traditional air fresheners. An open box of baking soda, cedar blocks and dried flowers also add natural fragrance to the room.
3. Use vegetable-based cleaning products instead of harsh chemical cleaners. Vegetable-based cleaners, like those made with coconut oil, are becoming more popular everyday. Even the makers of Clorox have a vegetable-based cleaning line on the market.
4. Vinegar. Natures cleaning miracle. Vinegar can be used to clean about anything. Use it straight to clean kitchen floors or wash windows, mix it with baking soda and essential oils to clean sinks, and even use it to remove stains in your carpet.
5. Get some baking soda too. Multi-purpose baking soda can be used for everything from freshening the air to freshening the carpet or furniture, to scrubbing the toilet or tub.
6. Don't use bleach or any cleaners containing chlorine. The problems with chlorine bleach are numerous-it can burn skin and eyes and prove fatal if swallowed. When it goes down the drain, it becomes toxic to the natural world too.
7. Skip the harsh chemical cleaners in the bathroom. Make that porcelain shine with non-chlorine bleach cleaners or white vinegar and a baking soda-water paste
8. Use natural fiber sponges and rags to do the cleaning. Avoid using paper towels and other one-time use tools.

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9. Skip the antibacterial soap. It's just not necessary. The widespread use of antibacterial soap is also leading to antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria.
10. When you make the switch to natural cleaning products, be sure to safely dispose of any dangerous chemical products. Don't pour them down the drain, into the ground, or into the trash. Read the labels or check with your waste management provider for options.

Courtesy of sierratradingpost.com

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Stop hungry slugs from gobbling up homegrown vegetables: sprinkle used coffee grounds on plant beds as a non-toxic deterrent. And remove used pots and containers from the area-slugs often shelter in these during daylight hours.

Courtesy of FriendsoftheEarth.com

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Greener Package Delivery

Both UPS and FedEx are taking extra steps to make their delivery fleets more fuel efficient. FedEx will soon have more than 300 hybrid and electric vehicles and 1,800 alternative fuel vehicles. The company is also purchasing new fuel saving aircraft in an effort to cut its overall fuel use by 18 percent.

UPS is working with the Environmental Protection Agency and Daimler Chrysler to develop zero emission fuel-cell vehicles and has trained its drivers on fuel-efficient driving techniques. UPS calculated that its trucks waiting to make left turns waste 51,000 gallons of fuel and 558 tons of greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere every 18 months. Drivers are taught to make three right turns instead of a left to keep moving and save fuel. Even the snail-mail U.S. Postal Service is going green by adding alternative-fuel delivery vehicles. Courtesy of Car and Travel Magazine

Glossary of Green Terminology

Acid Rain A term used to describe precipitation that has become acidic (low pH) due to the emission of sulfur oxides from fossil fuel burning power plants.

Alternative Fuels are derived from resources other than petroleum. Some are produced domestically, reducing dependence on foreign oil, and some are derived from renewable sources. Often, they produce less pollution than gasoline or diesel.

Appliance Energy Efficiency Ratings: The ratings under which specified appliances convert energy sources into useful energy, as determined by procedures established by the Department of Energy.

Biodiesel is an alternative fuel made from virgin vegetable oil. Even animal fats like beef tallow and fish oil can be used to make biodiesel fuel. Biodiesel may be blended with conventional diesel to get different blends such as B2 (2 percent biodiesel and 98 percent conventional diesel) or B20 (20 percent biodiesel) or it can be used 100 percent biodiesel (B 100).

Biofuels are any fuels derived from biomass. Agricultural products specifically grown for conversion to biofuels include corn and soybeans. Research is being conducted to improve the conversion of non-grain crops, such as switchgrass and a variety of woody crops, to biofuels. The energy in biomass can be accessed by turning the raw materials of the feedstock, such as starch and cellulose, into a usable form. Transportation fuels are made from biomass through biochemical or thermochemical processes. Known as biofuels, these include ethanol, methanol, biodiesel, biocrude and methane. Courtesy of U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

To be continued next issue…….

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