

# Bordentown City Environmental Commission NEWSLETTER

Issue 6, Spring/Summer 2004

## GARDEN GREENER THIS SPRING



We asked Mike McGrath, host of "You Bet Your Garden" on WHYY radio, what simple change could people make that would allow them to garden easier, cheaper and with the least impact on the environment. He replied "That's easy - its simply to stop using chemicals.

Not to substitute organic controls for them - just STOP. One of my main issues with agricultural chemicals is not just their danger, but their absolute uselessness. People are often surprised how much better their landscape looks without toxins and steroids holding their plants back."



According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, chemical applications to residential lawns and gardens account for nearly 10% of common water pollution and 3% of toxic water pollution. Studies have shown that gardeners typically ignore the instructions on the chemicals they apply to their yards and generally apply more than the recommended dosages. 70 million pounds of pesticides are applied to residential lawns and gardens annually.

Pesticides are designed to kill living organisms. They are designed to kill pests and can also harm birds in your garden and insects considered beneficial to your garden. Over-application of pesticides creates the potential for larger infestations in the

future. Pesticides and fertilizers run-off into our streams and rivers, changing the chemistry of the water and causing harm to the aquatic life specially developed to live in our rivers.

It's easy to garden without chemicals and here are a few pointers that might help:

- Choose plants that naturally grow in your area. Plant native species and your garden will be full of plants that require little care because they are adapted to the soil and climate in your garden.
- Apply mulch as a barrier to weeds. Apply organic mulch around your plants because it prevents weeds from sprouting, shades the ground and helps retain more moisture.
- Make your soil richer naturally. You can enrich your soil by adding natural mulches like straw, bark and shredded leaves. You can go one step further and compost your kitchen waste with grass cutting and leaves for a super-rich soil food.
- Leave grass clippings in the lawn. Clippings act as a natural mulch and fertiliser. Set your lawn mower height higher to discourage weed growth.

Try adopting any of these practices this summer and you'll see a difference in your yard and know that a difference has been made to your environment. Please see the box on the next page for valuable resources to help you garden greener.

### **BCEC CONTACT INFORMATION**

BCEC meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of every month, and are open to the public.

Meetings are held at the Carlslake Community Center at 7:00PM.

Check out the BCEC website at [WWW.BCEC.US](http://WWW.BCEC.US)

Email may be sent to the BCEC at: [mail@bcec.us](mailto:mail@bcec.us)

Mail may be sent to  
BCEC  
c/o  
Bordentown  
City Hall  
324 Farnsworth  
Avenue  
Bordentown, NJ  
08505

# COMMUNITY WORKS

## Earth Day Grocery Bag Project

For the second year students from the Peter Muschal and Clara Barton schools in Bordentown participated in the Earth Day Grocery Bag project. This project is a great way for all who live in the community to know about Earth Day and benefit from the hard work of these school kids. During early April, the students at Peter Muschal and at Clara Barton decorated paper grocery bags with colorful drawings and slogans that express their concern for the environment, both global and local. Bordentown City Environmental Commission (BCEC) members distributed these bags to the Shoprite and Acme supermarkets in town, where they were available for all shoppers to enjoy on Earth Day, April 22nd.

## Spring Stream Clean-up

Bordentown grown-ups had an opportunity to celebrate Earth Day, too! On April 24, local volunteers gathered on Elizabeth Street and spent three hours cleaning up an area of Thornton Creek. The volunteers gladly sacrificed a beautiful spring Saturday to pull 23 extra-large bags

full of trash, 3 bags of recyclables, 3 fifty-five gallon drums, 6 automobile tires, 20 metal shelf brackets, 2 lawn chairs, 2 wheelbarrows, 1 bicycle and 1 lawnmower from the area surrounding the creek. Much of this material was pulled from the creek and allowed the creek to flow more naturally. Bordentown merchants App's Hardware, Wirth Lumberama, Farnsworth Pastry Shop and Oliver, A Bistro contributed goods, food and coffee to the effort.



*Peter Muschal School students display Earth Day artwork*



## Green Gardening Resources

You can get all the answers to your gardening questions on "You Bet Your Garden." This lively, informative radio show is broadcast on WHYY 91 FM on Saturday mornings at 11:00 a.m.

More general information about pesticides can be had by calling New Jersey Environmental Federation's Pesticide Coordinator (609) 767-1110

Native plants can be found at Wild Earth Native Plant Nursery, Jackson, NJ (908) 308-9777

## Community Calendar

### May 21

*Bike to Work Day*  
[www.bikeleague.org/educenter/bikemonth.htm](http://www.bikeleague.org/educenter/bikemonth.htm)

### May 29

*Delaware River Canoe Trip*  
17 mile canoe/kayak trip from Fireman's Eddy (Lambertville) to Bordentown Beach.  
[gfluck@marsh-friends.org](mailto:gfluck@marsh-friends.org)

### May 22 & 24

*Tour de Sol The Great American Transportation Festival.*  
March 22 at Burlington Day, Burlington City & March 24 at the State Capitol, Trenton  
[www.nesea.org](http://www.nesea.org)

### June 13

*Burlington County Earth Fair*  
Historic Smithville Park  
609-265-5958

### June 19 - 20

*Fathers' Day Canoe Trip*  
Explore the Mullica River with Pinelands Preservation Alliance

[www.pinelandsalliance.org](http://www.pinelandsalliance.org)

If you want to receive the BCEC Quarterly Newsletter by email, send an email to [mail@bcec.us](mailto:mail@bcec.us)