



Live Green in Plano Volunteer News August 2008

Live Green in Plano Volunteers,

Enthusiastic, passionately green and ready to make a difference describes the 23 volunteers who completed the fifth session of *Live Green in Plano* training this summer. Ready, willing and able, you will soon be meeting them at events and volunteer projects. Please welcome them to our ever-growing ranks. If you have a friend, colleague or family member you think might be interested in joining this trend-setting group, be sure to tell them that the next training session will be held Thursday, Nov. 6 through Saturday, Nov. 8. Contact Deb Bliss at debb@plano.gov to register.



Our May Volunteer Recognition Picnic was much more than fascinating conversation and a delicious, international potluck of foods low on the food chain. Thirty volunteers were thanked and honored for their dedication and hours of service. **Juanette Alley, Tony and Mary Day, Maria Gant, Janice Hernandez, Ruby Jambalos, Barri Montgomery, Lois Schafer and Melissa**

Wright received incentive gifts for completing their 24 hours of volunteer service in the *Live Green in Plano Volunteer* program. Texas Master Composter Certification was awarded to **Mary and Tony Day, Cooweesta Hendrickson, Joanna Pylko, Greg Sidon and Mary Grace Tiongco**. Our committed and dependable Reuse Center Volunteers, **Otto Spieler, Jinx Smith, Tony Pinka, Mary Grace Tiongco, Ruby Jambalos and Lois Schafer**, received special thank you gifts. **Jan Eppard, Ruby Jambalos, Fred Karr, Nancy Liao, Barri Montgomery, Tony Pinka, Lois Schafer, and Brenda Steib** received coupons for free delivery of *Texas Pure* products for serving more than 100 hours.

It's volunteer energy, personalities, participation and support that breathe life into the Sustainability and Environmental Services programs!

Deb Bliss

Sustainability Volunteer Coordinator
City of Plano

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Get Involved!

E-mail debb@plano.gov

Gas Guzzling Lawns

Rethinking Turf Management

Is your turf cut and trimmed each week with gasoline-powered machines? One hour of mowing is the equivalent of driving 350 miles in terms of emitting pollutants. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), each weekend about 54 million Americans mow their lawns using 800 million gallons of gas per year and producing 5 percent of our nation's air pollution. Garden equipment, unregulated until recently, releases high levels of carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides.

Live Green in Plano Volunteer, Greg Sidon, took up the quest for a lawncare machine with a zero carbon footprint. He replaced his gas mower with a push reel mower found online at [People Powered Machines](#). "I feel good that I'm not burning gasoline or using electricity to mow my lawn," he said. "It feels a lot safer to use." It takes less space to store in the garage and the exercise he gets using are added benefits. Greg is enjoying it so much, he has volunteered to cut several neighbors' lawns, extending the air quality benefit to his block!



Is a push reel mower an option for you? It is if:

- Your lawn is less than 8,000 sq. ft.
- Your lawn is not composed of Bermuda or Zoysia.
- The person mowing in your family HAS asthma or a respiratory condition.
- You want to do your part to improve air quality in the Metroplex.

Look for light, quiet and maneuverable mowers that have non-contact cutting systems. They don't require sharpening. [Compare mowers](#).

Other ways to reduce pollution from your lawn:

- Delay or curtail gas mowing on Ozone Action Days.
- Refuel carefully to avoid a gas spill which causes groundwater contamination and air pollution through fuel evaporation.
- Use compost and slow release natural fertilizers.

- Avoid petroleum-based synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.
- Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard.
- Expand gardens, paths, seating areas and use of groundcovers.



Be YardWise, Earn Up to \$200!

YardWise is a simple four-step program designed to create and maintain a healthy yard with less cost, work, waste and water. A limited number of YardWise landscape rebates, up to \$200, are available to Plano residents who complete the following simple steps:

1. Attend all four YardWise education classes.
2. Complete and submit a rebate application.
3. Submit photos of the landscape before and after the YardWise conversion.
4. Submit copies of receipts for plant materials used in the converted landscape.

Schedule for Yardwise classes:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| September 4, 11, 18, 25 | 7-9 PM |
| November 15 | 8 AM - 5 PM |
| February 7, 2009 | 8 AM - 5 PM |
| May 9, 2009 | 8 AM - 5 PM |

For [registration information](#) or call (972) 769-4228.

Learn Green to Live Green Fieldtrip

See How Two North Texas Families are Living Green

Are you ready to make some green changes in your home and don't know where to begin? Join us for a tour that will inspire you!

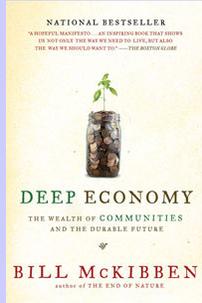
Touring the grounds at the Mortenson home you will see rainwater harvesting, a rainwater-fed goldfish pond, two rain gardens, three different methods of composting, shredding and chipping of leaves and twigs on site, a National Wildlife Habitat, a green "living" roof, a woodland garden and greenhouse for propagation. All of this, by the way, is on an average city creek lot, which means that it can easily be imitated.



The Westbrook home demonstrates how efficient an all-electric 2,713 sq. ft. home can be operated with an average monthly electric bill of \$69. This passive solar design home

was built in 1996 with Structural Insulated Panel walls and a geothermal heat pump. A wind turbine was recently added.

Join us Saturday, October 4 from 1:30-5:30 p.m. We'll meet at the Senior Center, 401 W. 16th St. in Plano and ride in their bus. Seating is limited so reserve your spot now. Contact Deb Bliss at (972) 769-4313 or debb@plano.gov



Book Review: Deep Economy

Every once in awhile, you read a book that turns your perspective upside down. This was the case for me with Deep Economy. Author Bill McKibben challenges us to measure our success not by the Gross National Product but by how we build community, durability and human satisfaction. Our culture's fixation on growth has increased economic inequality and insecurity, produced enormous pollution problems and has not made us any happier as a nation. There are not enough resources or energy on earth to continue our current rate of production and consumption.

Instead of producing more stuff and focusing on increased efficiency, he suggests we change our sense of progress, change some habits and get a world view. He urges us to think in terms of "ecological economics", the "embedded energy" in a final product including the "cost of consumption", the damage and disease to a local economy at each phase: extraction, production, distribution, consumption and disposal. We can't get richer for the long term by impoverishing the world.

McKibben suggests pursuing prosperity through local interdependence: regions producing more of their own food, generating more of their own energy, creating more of their own culture and entertainment. Valuing membership in a community rather than ownership. It is morphing from consumer to participant that will make localism a reality.

The image becomes clearer through his explorations of: farmer's markets, Community Supported Agriculture programs, urban farms, innovative work schedules, the intimacy and importance of local radio stations, cogeneration energy plants, the Netherlands' promotion of cycling (where one quarter of all trips are made via bike paths), complementary currency, co-housing and planned eco-villages.

He challenges us to create an eco-village within our existing neighborhoods by getting to know our neighbors, their skills and gifts. It can open rewarding relationships that build community and generate the interdependence that will help us adapt to the changes we need to make in the future.

Though McKibben's work is a harsh dose of reality, it contains a hopeful message. It is human energy that creates change and that can help us create a durable future.

Learn Green to Live Green Fieldtrip:

Coppell Community Gardens and Farmers' Market

It was a sunny, May Saturday morning in Coppell when we visited two community garden sites, each with about 60 plots and spoke with the volunteer gardeners as they tended their beds. There was a lot of activity because food must be cleaned and weighed and ready by 10 a.m. each Saturday for collection by Metrocrest Services and the Senior Center.



This program was started by the City of Coppell and Amanda Van Hoozier in 1998. It is organized as a non-profit board and funded by the City. Gardeners pay \$10 per year and donate 90 percent of their harvest. They agree to keep their area weeded and planted and use organic maintenance methods. There is a harvest feast for gardeners each fall. Compost demonstrations are provided to the public every Saturday at 9 a.m. as they work their piles.



Seeing such robust and fruitful plants so early in the season amazed us. We learned these gardeners add compost to the beds each season and supplement with a natural fertilizer by Medina (found at Lowe's) containing molasses, green sand and kelp. Beds are well-mulched to prevent evaporation.

A stop at Coppell's Farmer's Market provided more conversations with local producers. Bags of fresh cheese, eggs, meat, produce, baked goods and plants soon made the trip back to Plano.

If you are interested in participating in the Plano Community Garden, contact [Erin Hoffer](#) (972) 769-4228.