

Compost Matters

Volume 13 No. 2

March/April 2005

Around the Backyard Bin



"In the Garden", a new series being launched this spring, is designed to bring Plano residents out for a relaxing learning time in the beautiful setting of the Environmental Discovery Center. *"In the Garden"* is offered different days and times in May and on Monday evenings during June. Hour-long presentations on landscaping and garden topics of high

interest to homeowners gardening in our north Texas climate are scheduled.

Presenters include professional landscape designers, Master Gardeners and other horticulture education professionals.

Presentations will take place under the covered pavilion at the Environmental Discovery Center and participants are welcome to bring a picnic supper or snack to enjoy. Talks will include a stroll through the gardens to talk about specific plants, design or maintenance principals. Registration for *"In the Garden"* is being handled through Plano's Parks and Recreation Leisure Education program. Please call 972-769-4234 or register online at www.planoparks.org. The Environmental Discovery Center is located at 4120 West Plano Parkway.



Master Composter Meeting

Mark **Thursday, April 7th** on your calendars for our next Master Composter meeting. **Dr. John Sloan of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station** will be with us to share the results of the research he's been doing on the effects of compost in local soils. **We'll also have our annual Plant Swap that night.** If you're dividing perennials or starting seedlings this spring, set aside your extra plants to bring and share with fellow Master Composters that night. **The meeting will take place in Training Room A at the Parkway Service Center, 4120 West Plano Parkway from 7:00pm – 8:30pm.**

JOIN US FOR TWO TEXAS SMARTSCAPE LAWN & GARDEN EVENTS

Garden Seminars

Saturday, April 9, 2005
9:00am – 5:00pm
CCCCD Spring Creek Campus
Conference Center
2800 Spring Creek Parkway

Register for one or both classes

Landscape Design 101
9:00am – 12:30pm

Fantastic Plants for North Texas
1:30pm – 5:00pm

Instructor is local landscape designer, Bonnie Reese Arnold. Participants will receive a free copy of her book, *Common Sense Landscaping*, and are eligible for a landscape design door prize valued at \$150.

Seating is limited.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

visit www.planoenvironmentalwaste.com to download registration form.



Lawn & Garden Showcase

Saturday, April 23, 2005
10:00am – 2:00pm
Environmental Discovery Center
4120 West Plano Parkway
(West Plano Parkway & Commerce)

- Speakers • Demonstrations
- Garden Vendors • Information Booths

Plano Pure Products Sale
(bags only – compost, topdressing, soil blend, wood mulch)

Parking at Televista and David McDavid Collision Center, 2102 Commerce
No Registration Required

visit www.planoenvironmentalwaste.com for more information.

From the Compost Marketing and Education Supervisor



It's been both fulfilling and inspiring to see how different individuals have embraced their roles as Master Composters and contributed to our community. I've had the pleasure of working with some of these individuals for several years and others for only a short time, but in either case I am affected the same way. The dedication, commitment and effort put forth by these individuals to further the message of composting, recycling and caring for our environment challenges me personally to continue striving for heightened environmental awareness and involvement within the Plano community.

Here is a sampling of the variety of dedicated volunteers representative of the larger Master Composter group: **Connie Haley, Susan Whitaker and Erin Hoffer** don the Compost Doctor coat, play the role and interact with the public in award winning ways at Garden Shows around the area: **Scherle Barth** presents lessons in a way that makes composting and worm composting come alive to young elementary students; **Harry Casto** lends technical know-how and physical strength, helping us accomplish many of

the renovation projects at the Environmental Discovery Gardens while **Dan McNeill, Grace Errington and Fran Bolin** meet and greet the public as they shop at the Household Chemical Center. **Nancy Furth** wows residents with her knowledge and skills as she teaches YardWise classes; **Garvis and Jeanne Spain** faithfully help at Environmental Discovery Garden workdays and the Great American Clean-up year after year.

Thank you very much for all the ways you've touched residents within the Plano community. Your enthusiasm for composting is contagious to those around you and others in our program. This spring offers many opportunities for volunteer service. I challenge all of you to set aside some time this spring to volunteer at one or more of the composting events we've scheduled for the Plano community. This would be a really easy time to finish the hours you need for your Master Composter certification or compost thermometer. Take a minute to peruse the opportunities below and then give me a call or send an email to let me know how you can help.

Heather Merchant

Youth Happenings

The spring months are packed with youth programs at the Environmental Discovery Gardens. Visiting groups include home schools, pre-school classes, Girl Scout troops, PISD environmental clubs, individual classrooms and even the entire first grade level from Dooley Elementary. In addition, the *Kids in the Garden* after-school gardening club has started. Presentation topics range from composting and recycling to backyard habitats, life cycles, soil science



and plant parts. Whatever the chosen topic, children are having fun learning about it! Fifty students from **Bowman Middle School's Environmental Club** spent about three hours at the Environmental Discovery Center analyzing what's in the trash and how to environmentally manage it. They toured the Trinity Waste Services Recycling Municipal Facility before arriving at our site to get their hands dirty turning and watering compost piles. They also toured our Household Chemical Center and paint recycling program before returning to school.

THE COMPOST DOCTOR IS IN



Susan Whitaker & Mai Tang consult with patients.

The Doctor Booth where "free soil prescriptions" are given has debuted at several Garden Shows this spring with rave reviews. The booth is the brainchild of Roger Minehane, Compost Marketing Coordinator, who also designed and built it. So far this spring the Doctor Booth has promoted *Plano Pure* Products at the Family First Event at the Plano Center, the North Texas Nursery Growers Association Trade Show, The Neil Sperry All Garden Show, and the grand openings of the Garden Centers at the WalMart Stores in McKinney, Allen, Greenville and Plano. Stop by and get your own prescription for: Wood Mulch from Dr. Les Watering, Compost from Dr. E.Z. Diggins; Soil Blend from Dr. Les F. Fert; and Topdressing from Dr. Bess Forgrass.

SPECIAL MOTHER'S DAY PROGRAM



Looking for something special to do with your mom for Mother's Day this year? Pack a picnic lunch and bring her to the Environmental Discovery Center to enjoy the gardens and the "In The Garden" presentation from 1:30pm – 2:30pm, Sunday May 8th. Landscape designer Dave Ilfry (also known as *Native Dave*) will do a program entitled, *Texas Tough Blooming Perennials*, that you're guaranteed to enjoy! Call 972-769-4234 or register online at www.planoparks.org. The Environmental Discovery Center is located at 4120 West Plano Parkway.

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

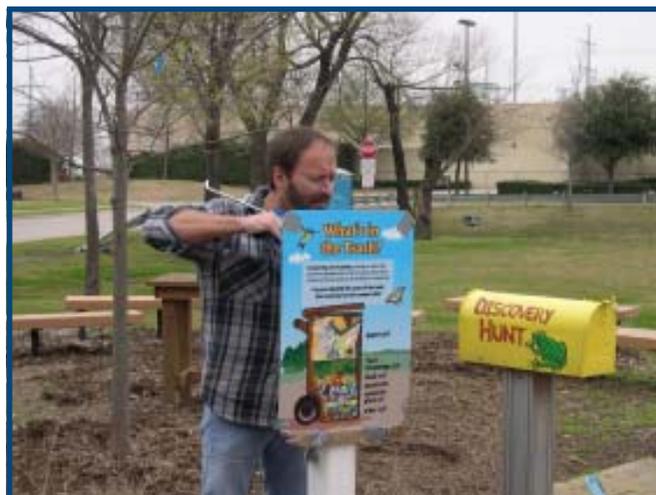


- Congratulations to the following volunteers who recently completed Presentation training in order to help teach our Compost 101 and YardWise classes: **Erin Hoffer, Darryl McCarthy, Scherle Barth, Ramiro Ortiz, Connie Haley, Susan Whitaker, Anna Miller and Marilyn Miller-Anderson.**
- Many thanks to **Nancy Furth** for hours spent developing PowerPoint presentations and hand-outs for the YardWise classes and teaching YardWise 2 and 3 classes in February.
- Thanks also go to **Ramiro Ortiz** for teaching the Compost 101 class.
- Kudos to **Connie Haley, Susan Whitaker, Erin Hoffer, John Sloan and Marilyn Miller-Anderson** for the outstanding jobs they did manning the Dr. Booth at the Neil Sperry Garden Show.
- Much appreciation goes to **Candace Fountoulakis** for her work inventorying the plant material at the Environmental Discovery Center and mapping it out for a future brochure.
- Heartfelt thanks to **Harry Casto, Brenda Steib, Erin Hoffer, Claudia Dubuisson, Candace Fountoulakis, Jeanne Spain, Dan McNeill, Sherrian Jones, Susan Whitaker and her husband, and Connie Haley** for their help at recent workdays at the Environmental Discovery Gardens.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Please call Heather at 972-769-4111 or email her at: heatherm@plano.gov to let her know of your willingness to help with any of the following activities.

- **Texas SmartScape Lawn & Garden Showcase, Saturday April 23rd**, 8:00am – 3:00pm. Duties: Help with welcome table, compost information booth, *Plano Pure* Product sales and loading, set-up, clean-up, compost pile building demonstration.
- **Texas SmartScape Garden Seminars, Saturday, April 9th**, 8:00am – 5:00pm. Duties: Help with check-in of participants, set up of materials, Compost Doctor booth.
- **Work Day, Environmental Discovery Gardens, Saturday, April 9th**, 8:00am – 12:00noon.
- **Paint the archway for the Bird & Butterfly garden**
- **Help with registering people for brush drop-off at the Custer Rod Facility, Saturdays April 9th, 16th, 30th, May 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th**, 8:00 – 11:00am or 11:00am – 2:00pm.
- **Man a compost information table at Whole Foods Earth Day Fair, Friday, April 22nd**, 12:00noon – 4:00pm
- **Help install a storage shed at the Environmental Discovery Center, Saturday, April 2nd**, 8:00am – 12:00noon
- **Help assemble customer sample display boxes of *Plano Pure* Products for retail locations.** Requires carpentry skills.
- **Help teach children's programs.** Weekdays, variable morning and afternoon times.



HARRY CASTO FIXING A SIGN AT ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER

UPCOMING EVENTS

*All events take place at the Environmental
Discovery Center, 4120 West Plano Parkway
unless otherwise noted*

Thursday, April 7, 2005

Master Composter Meeting & Plant Swap
7:00pm – 8:30pm

Saturday, April 9, 2005

Texas SmartScape Lawn & Garden Seminars
9:00am – 12:30pm and 1:30pm – 5:00pm
Collin County Community College Conference Center
Spring Creek Campus

Saturday, April 9, 2005

Workday at Environmental Discovery Garden
9:00am – 12:00noon

Friday, April 22, 2005

Earth Day Fair
Whole Foods
12:00noon – 4:00pm

Saturday, April 23, 2005

Texas SmartScape Lawn & Garden Showcase
10:00am – 2:00pm

Saturday, May 7, 2005

Workday at Environmental Discovery Garden
8:00am – 12noon

May 12, 2005

Plano Community Awards
5:30pm
Courtyard Theater, 1509 Ave H

NEWS YOU CAN USE



- **Order *Plano Pure* Products** online at: www.plano.gov/pure_products
- **Exchange unwanted items** or search for things you need at the Plano Materials Exchange: www.planomatem.com
- **Purchase *Plano Pure* Products** at the Custer Road Facility, 9901 Custer Rd. at Ridgeview, 1 mile north of McDermott or from a variety of local retailers. Visit www.planopure.com for a complete listing of retail locations.



City of Plano
Environmental Waste Services Division
P. O. Box 860358
Plano, Tx 75086-0358