

EnviroTalk

Spring 2010



Dear EnviroTalk reader,

I'm Sunny Salmon and the folks at EnviroTalk have agreed to print my letters so you can see what it's like to be a salmon.

My first goal in life is to swim all the way to the Pacific Ocean, but my first stop is the Puyallup River. I'm in the river now and I'm sad to say it's harder to travel than I expected. I've had to dodge big pieces of junk that make my habitat unsafe and unhealthy. You know, you could help me and my friends in the future by remembering to recycle things you don't want or throw them in the garbage if they can't be recycled.

Well, I'm going to keep avoiding the pollution and make my way to Commencement Bay. I'll give you an update of my travels in the next issue of EnviroTalk. Until then, you can find me hiding from the pollution somewhere in this issue. Look carefully!

Yours truly,

S. Salmon

SPRING into clean

Give your house a thorough scrub this spring the all-natural way using these three simple greener cleaner recipes.

All purpose cleaner

Use on floors, counters, cabinets and other household surfaces

What you'll need:

1/4 cup baking soda
1/2 cup Borax (found in the laundry section of grocery stores)
1/2 cup vinegar
1 gallon of water

What to do:

1. Mix the ingredients together in a bowl or bucket.
2. Stir vigorously to dissolve the baking soda and Borax.

To make a spray cleaner, reduce this recipe and dissolve the ingredients to avoid clogging the spray bottle. Use with a mop or sponge.

Glass cleaner

Use on windows, mirrors and other glass surfaces

What you'll need:

Club soda
8 or 16 oz. spray bottle

What to do:

Fill the bottle with plain club soda, spray and wipe.

All glass cleaners work best with a lint-free cloth. This won't dry as fast as commercial cleaners but works just as well.

Tub and tile cleaner

Use on ceramic sinks, tubs, showers or tile

What you'll need:

1-2/3 cups baking soda
1/2 cup high-quality liquid soap
1/2 cup water
2 tbsp. white distilled vinegar
16 oz. squeeze container with a squirt flip-top cap (old ketchup or mustard bottle works well)

What to do:

1. Mix baking soda with liquid soap in a bowl.
2. Dilute with the water.
3. Add vinegar last.
4. Stir until lumps are gone. If it pours from container then it's the right consistency, otherwise it's too thick and needs more water.
5. Shake well before using and squirt on surface to be cleaned. Use with a nylon white-backed sponge to prevent scratching.
6. Rinse well.

For more greener cleaner recipes:

www.cityoftacoma.org/greenercleaners

What to do with doggie dōō

It's important to dispose of pet waste properly:

- ⚙ Double bag it and place it in the trash
or
- ⚙ Flush it down the toilet (do not flush clumps of kitty litter)

Why?

Pet waste is raw sewage. It contains fecal coliform bacteria and other disease-causing organisms such as salmonella, roundworms and giardia. When it rains, pet waste left on the ground mixes with stormwater runoff and is carried to our local lakes, streams, rivers and Puget Sound. When too much pet waste contaminates stormwater runoff, water becomes unsafe to drink or swim in.

Download discounts and discover how to prevent stormwater pollution.

**Puget Sound
Starts Here.org**

EcoFind

Hire a pet waste removal service to help you pick up after your pet. They can come to your house once a week to scoop and haul away

pet waste from yards, kennels and dog runs. Look in the phone book or online for pet waste removal service near you.



RECYCLING review

What's NOT recyclable

Here are some items you might be surprised to learn are not recyclable in Tacoma's curbside program. These items should be either reused or thrown in the garbage.

- Anything with food residue
- Caps and lids (plastic and metal)
- Nursery plant containers/trays
- Paper and plastic coffee cups
- Pizza boxes (contaminated with grease/food residue)
- Plastic food storage containers
- Plastic utensils
- Sandwich bags
- Styrofoam products

Find a complete list of what is and isn't recyclable at www.cityoftacoma.org/recyclingreview.

No clippings, no hassle...

grasscycle

Grasscycling is a simple, natural approach to lawn care that leaves grass clippings on the lawn after mowing. Clippings decompose quickly and reduce the need for water and fertilizer.

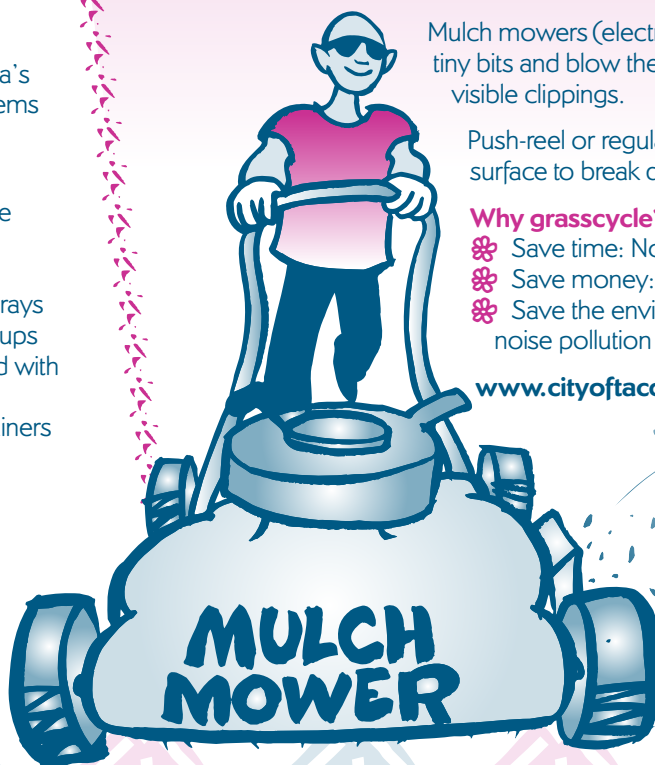
Mulch mowers (electric and gas) chop grass clippings into tiny bits and blow them down into the lawn, leaving no visible clippings.

Push-reel or regular mowers leave clippings on the surface to break down quickly.

Why grasscycle?

- ⚙ Save time: No grass clippings to dispose of
- ⚙ Save money: Reduce water and fertilizer use
- ⚙ Save the environment: Eliminate or reduce air and noise pollution (electric mulch or push-reel mowers)

www.cityoftacoma.org/naturalyards



SELLING YOUR HOME?

GET YOUR SIDE SEWER CHECKED

I NEED A
SEWER
REPAIR
LOAN



Beginning July 1, 2010, houses sold within the Tacoma city limits will be required to have a side-sewer inspection. Repairs will be at the discretion of the buyer and seller.

Benefits include:

- ✕ Reducing backups of sewage into homes, businesses and streets caused by "peak flows" from rainwater and groundwater getting into the wastewater system through broken side sewers.
- ✕ Making sure homebuyers are aware of the condition of their side sewer. As with septic systems, side sewer maintenance is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Need assistance fixing your side sewer?

Ask about the City's low-interest Sewer Conservation Loan Program. Zero-interest loans are also available for households that meet federal low-income requirements.

Sewer Conservation Loan Program requirements:

- ✕ Property must be within the Tacoma city limits
- ✕ Repair must be for an existing structure
- ✕ Applicants must verify ownership, income and good credit history

(253) 591-5585

www.cityoftacoma.org/wastewater

Get cash to 'Make a Splash'

City of Tacoma Surface Water Management awards up to \$50,000 a year in environmental grants to help educate residents and protect and restore our surface water resources. Grants are open to anyone considering projects that focus on preventing stormwater pollution and protecting or restoring Tacoma's surface water resources.

Grant applications must address stormwater pollution or protection and restoration of our local lakes, streams, rivers and Puget Sound.



Applications are available April 12. The application deadline is May 14.

(253) 591-5588

www.cityoftacoma.org/makeasplash

Enviro Q&A

Question: How can I prevent flooding around my home or business?

Answer:

- ▶ Keep storm drains clear of leaves and debris.
- ▶ Make sure gutters are clean.
- ▶ Make sure downspouts are directed at least 10 feet away from your home or business.
- ▶ Use landscape barriers, such as rocks, to prevent bark, dirt and other landscape materials from washing into the street and clogging drains.

To report flooding problems, call 591-5585.

www.cityoftacoma.org/flood



How *green* is Tacoma?

Tacoma residents are actively engaged in recycling, using products made from recycled materials, buying products with less packaging, and using environmentally friendly cleaning products.

That's according to the latest Public Works Environmental Services survey. The August 2009 telephone survey asked 402 residents about their environmental attitudes and actions and satisfaction with the City's Environmental Services utilities. Results were compared with surveys conducted in 2002 and 2005. The survey is intended to help the utilities better understand their customers and improve services and communications.

So how do residents feel about Tacoma's environment?

- ▶ 69 percent say it's good or excellent
- ▶ 63 percent say the City of Tacoma is doing a good or excellent job at protecting the environment

These numbers have been consistent over time, with very similar results in 2002 and 2005.

Residents themselves are also practicing sound environmental behaviors:

- ▶ 97 percent recycle standard curbside recyclables such as paper, cans, plastic and glass
- ▶ 96 percent use products made from recycled materials
- ▶ 94 percent buy products with less packaging
- ▶ 94 percent use non-toxic or non-hazardous cleaning products

What did respondents say about utility services?

- ▶ 87 percent said overall solid waste services were good or excellent
- ▶ 88 percent said wastewater services were good or excellent
- ▶ 76 percent said surface water services were good or excellent

These numbers were similar to or better than the 2005 ratings.

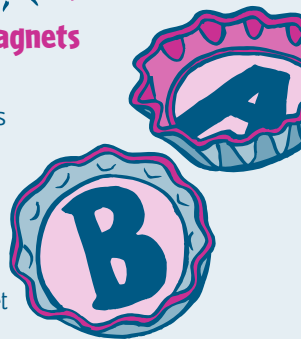
So what's next? In the coming months the Environmental Services utilities will use the survey results to become even more effective.

EnviroKIDS

Magnificent magnets

What you need:

- ✂ 26 bottle caps
- ✂ Craft glue
- ✂ Magnet strips
- ✂ Paintbrush
- ✂ Scissors
- ✂ Self-adhesive foam alphabet (available at craft stores)
- ✂ Paint



Instructions

1. Paint all bottle caps and let dry.
2. Stick letters to the inside of the bottle caps.
3. Cut magnet strips into 26 pieces and glue to the back of the bottle caps.
4. Let the magnets dry and attach them to your fridge.

Make multiple letters to practice spelling or to create messages for your family.

Find more art projects like this at www.cityoftacoma.org/envirokids.

RESOURCE LIST

Spring 2010

RESOURCE

PHONE

WEB SITE

Solid Waste Management
(garbage, recycling, yard waste)

Information line 565-5955

General questions 591-5543

Call-2-Haul 573-2468

EnviroHouse 573-2426

Hazardous waste 591-5418

Landfill scalehouse 593-7724

Wastewater/Surface Water Management

General questions 591-5588

Billing questions 502-2100

TAGRO 502-2150

Street flooding 591-5585

Street sweeping 591-5585

Water pollution hotline 383-2429

www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste

www.cityoftacoma.org/call2haul

www.cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse

www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste

www.cityoftacoma.org/wastewater

www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater

www.tagro.com

www.cityoftacoma.org/flood

www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping

When calling any of the utilities, please have your account number available. Your account number is located at the top of your utility bill.

Compost your yard waste

Give home composting a try this season. It's easier than ever with a range of composting techniques, varying levels of maintenance and a wide variety of systems to choose from.

What is composting?

Composting is the controlled decay of organic matter. Rather than letting nature take its course, a composting system provides an optimal environment to quickly convert organic material to compost.

Why compost?

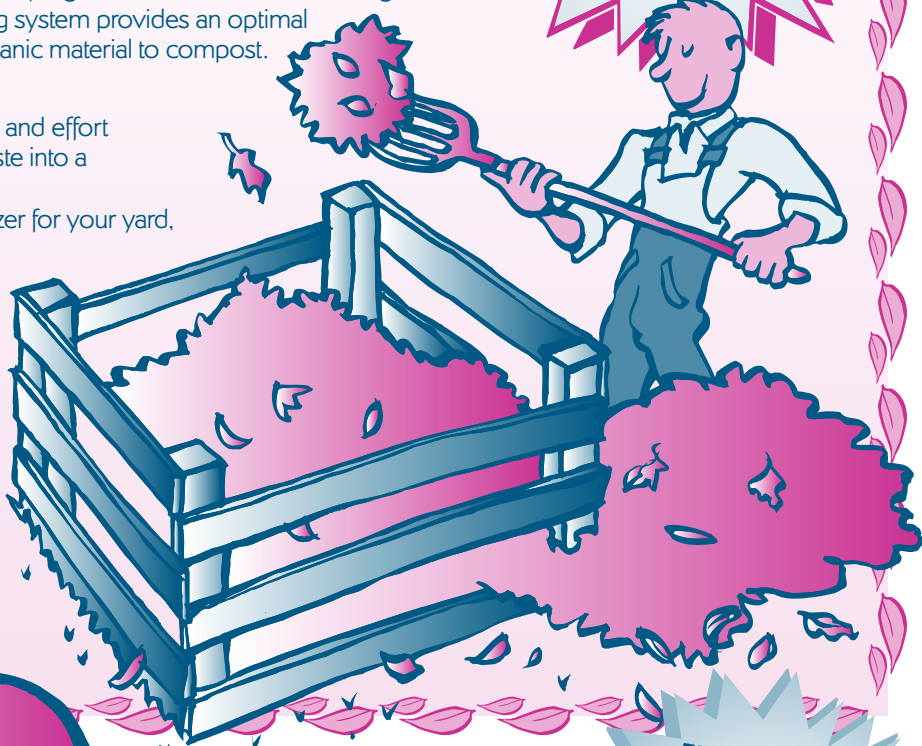
- ✿ Requires very little time, money and effort
- ✿ Turns your yard and garden waste into a usable product
- ✿ Rewards you with organic fertilizer for your yard, garden and indoor plants

Learn more

Learn step-by-step composting how-to's at www.cityoftacoma.org/composting.

View a variety of compost systems and composting in action at the City of Tacoma EnviroHouse (Tacoma Landfill, 3510 S. Mullen St.), www.cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse.

FREE
composting
& natural yard care
workshops
May 6, 13 & 20
(253) 798-4587



Let your Landscape satisfy all five senses

Consider mixing edibles into your landscape, and you'll reap tasty rewards and have a great conversation piece.

Creative use of berries, vegetables and herbs in containers, raised beds and sunny spaces is a great way to get super-fresh and delicious ingredients. And they can look good, too!

For ideas, check out TAGRO's garden of edibles at the EnviroHouse.

TAGRO Potting Soil
is available by the bag
at Portland Avenue
Nursery, GardenSphere
and Gray Lumber.

TAGRO Office

TAGRO Mix and Potting Soil
available for pickup or delivery.
2201 Portland Ave.
(253) 502-2150
www.tagro.com

EnviroHouse

Visit the Puget Sound area's
only permanent green model
home.
Tacoma Landfill
(3510 S. Mullen St.)
(253) 573-2426
www.cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse



EnviroTalk

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We want to hear from you:
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What's that WORD?

Below are 10 facts that can be found in this issue of EnviroTalk. Each sentence has a missing word or phrase. Complete the sentence and then find the word or phrase in the word search below. If you get stumped, the answers are at the bottom. A key to the word search will be featured in the next issue of EnviroTalk.

1. Grasscycling is a simple, natural approach to lawn care.
2. _____ is the controlled decay of organic matter.
3. Give your house a thorough scrub this spring the all-natural way using three simple greener _____ recipes.
4. City of Tacoma Environmental Services awards environmental grants to help educate residents and protect and restore our _____ resources.
5. It's important to dispose of _____ properly.
6. When calling any of the utilities, please have your _____ available.
7. For ideas, check out TAGRO's garden of edibles at the _____.
8. Greasy _____ are not recyclable in Tacoma's curbside program.
9. If your _____ needs repair or replacement, you could be eligible for a low-interest loan through the City of Tacoma's Sewer Conservation Loan Program.
10. Beginning July 1, 2010, houses sold within the Tacoma city limits will be required to have a side-sewer _____.



Answers: 1. Grasscycling, 2. Composting, 3. Cleaner, 4. Surface water, 5. Pet waste, 6. Account number, 7. EnviroHouse, 8. Pizza boxes, 9. Side sewer, 10. Inspection