

EnviroTalk

Spring 2011

How healthy are your cleaning supplies?

If labels on your cleaning products have words such as "caution," "warning," "danger" or "poison," you can easily replace them with non-toxic cleaners — either store-bought or homemade.

In the store

- Look for products that list all ingredients.
- Specific claims such as "phosphate-free" or "chlorine-free" are more meaningful than general claims such as "natural" or "organic."
- Seek products that have been certified by a credible third party, such as EPA's Cradle to Cradle program or Green Seal.

At home

Some of the greenest and least expensive cleaners are the ones you make from ingredients already in your pantry. Here's a list of some common "Greener Cleaner" ingredients:

- Baking soda
- Borax
- Distilled white vinegar
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Lemon juice
- Olive oil

Green cleaning recipes:
www.cityoftacoma.org/greenercleaners

Proper toxic cleaner disposal:
www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste



RESIDENTIAL RAIN GARDEN

ADDED TO ENVIROHOUSE DISPLAYS

Rain gardens are a great way to get the rainwater to soak into the ground rather than puddle in your yard.

What's a rain garden?

A rain garden is a shallow depression landscaped with native plants and designed to catch rainwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as driveways, walkways and roofs. It also serves as an attractive way to add natural habitat to any backyard.

Why build a rain garden?

- ✿ Keep pollutants from reaching local waterways
- ✿ Reduce flooding problems
- ✿ Provide habitat for beneficial birds and insects
- ✿ Refresh local groundwater
- ✿ Low-maintenance landscaping (no need for chemicals!)

Build right for your site. Refer to the WSU Extension's "Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington Homeowners" to build a rain garden that is right for you. For a copy of the guide and Tacoma-specific information, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/raingardens or call (253) 502-2105.

See rain gardens in action at the City of Tacoma EnviroHouse, the Puget Sound area's only permanent model home showcasing green building and natural landscape ideas, materials and techniques to create a healthy home and planet.

EnviroHouse
City of Tacoma Landfill
(3510 S. Mullen St.)
Wed.-Fri.: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.,
Sat.-Sun.: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
www.cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse
(253) 573-2426



GET CASH TO Make a Splash

A City of Tacoma Environmental Grant Program

City of Tacoma Surface Water Management awards up to \$50,000 a year in environmental grants (up to \$4,000 each) to help educate residents and protect and restore our surface water resources.

Grant projects must address stormwater pollution prevention or protection and restoration of our local lakes, streams, rivers and Puget Sound. Educational and behavior change activities are encouraged.

This grant is not meant for projects focusing on water conservation or clean drinking water.

Deadline is Monday, May 16.

www.cityoftacoma.org/makeasplash
(253) 502-2126

I'm composting, now what?

You've diligently tended your leaves, yard trimmings and discarded produce and now you have the dark, rich compost you've been waiting for.

But what do you do with it?

- ✿ **Mulch:** Spread 2-3 inches around plants, trees and shrubs. Benefit: Holds moisture in.
- ✿ **Use as a soil amendment:** Dig 2-4 inches into the soil, then mix in your compost. Benefit: Extra nutrients mean happy plants.
- ✿ **Top-dress your lawn:** Apply 1-3 inches to your lawn, rake in and water. It will eventually settle into the soil and disappear. Benefits: Little or no need for fertilizer.
- ✿ **Make compost tea:** Steep a shovel-full of compost in a 5-gallon bucket for a few days. Then pour on flowers and plants. Benefits: Little or no need for fertilizer.

Not composting at home?

Learn how at
www.cityoftacoma.org/composting.



Got a DIRTY CAR?

Get your car clean without sending soap and grime down the drain and into Puget Sound.

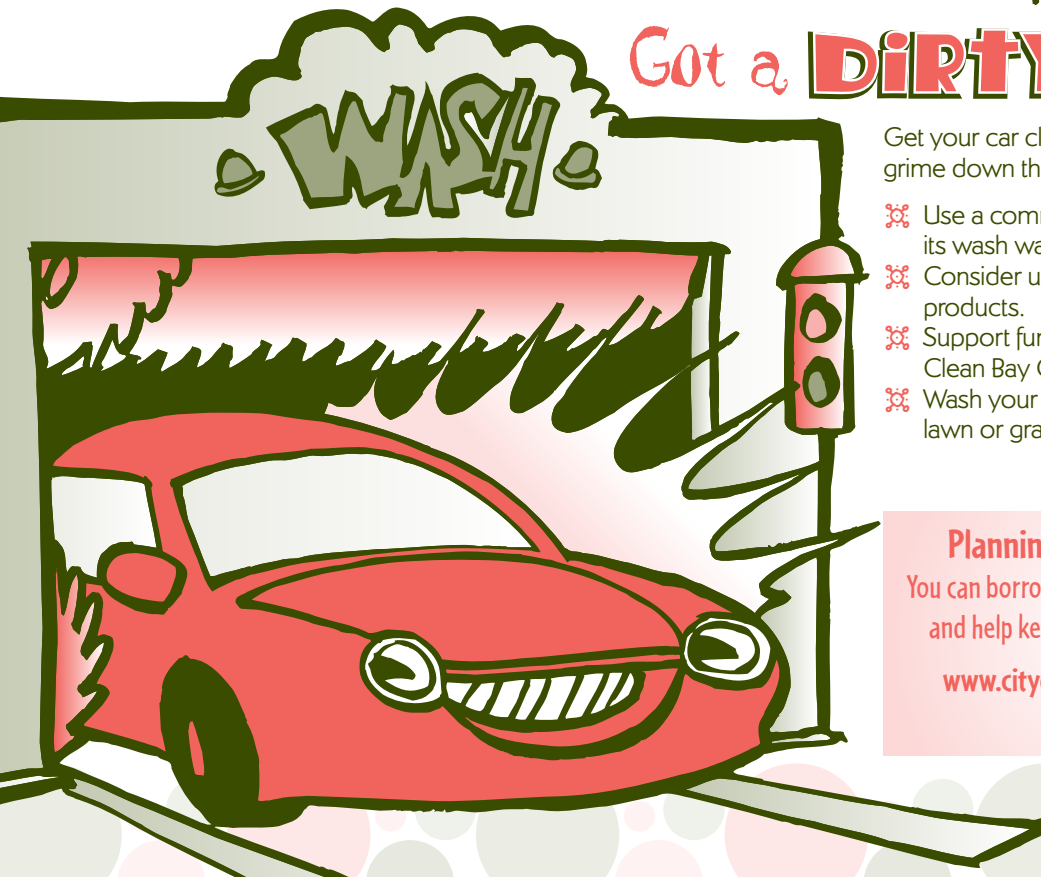
- ✿ Use a commercial car wash that recycles its wash water.
- ✿ Consider using waterless car wash products.
- ✿ Support fundraising car washes that use Clean Bay Car Wash Kits.
- ✿ Wash your car on the lawn or gravel.

**Puget Sound
Starts Here.org**

Planning a charity car wash?

You can borrow a free Clean Bay Car Wash Kit and help keep our local waterways clean.

www.cityoftacoma.org/carwashkits
(253) 502-2220



EnviroKIDS

Make a bouquet of blooms

What you need

- ▶ Colorful tissue paper (saved from gifts)
- ▶ Pipe cleaner
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ Ruler

How to

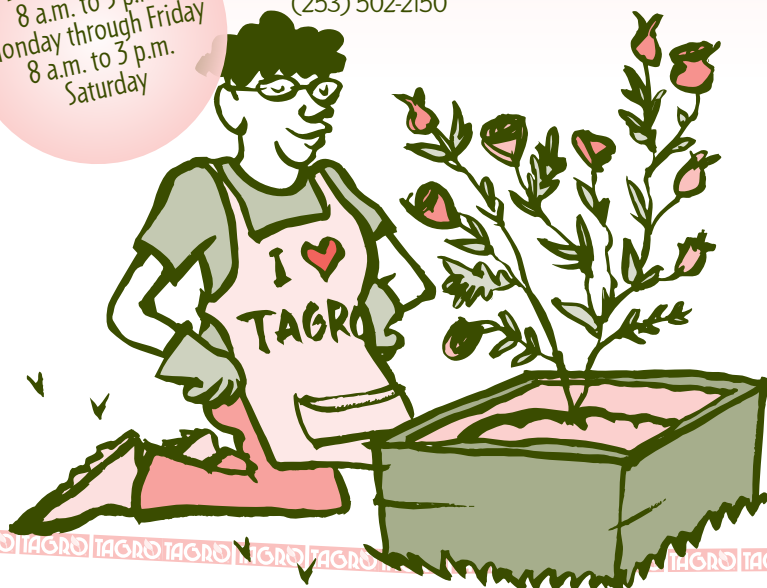
1. Cut tissue paper into 5" x 7" rectangles. Since tissue paper is thin, stack about 15 sheets together.
2. Fold the stack of tissue paper accordion-style horizontally.
3. Wrap the pipe cleaner around the middle of the tissue paper, leaving a long tail for the stem.
4. Trim the ends of the tissue paper to a point on each side to make petals. Or, make half circles to create rose-like petals.
5. Separate each layer of tissue paper to make the flower's petals look full. Gently pull the tissue paper towards the middle.
6. Use different colors and patterns to make a beautiful bouquet for a gift or decoration.

www.cityoftacoma.org/envirokids



It's **cheap**,
It's **sustainable**,
It's **amazing...**
It's **TAGRO**
From trees to lawn,
flowers to veggies, TAGRO
will give a big boost to
whatever you're growing.

SPRING HOURS
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday



TAGRO Mix

\$8 per yard for Tacoma residents

Use for lawns, soil prep or transplanting trees and other plants. Mix with existing soil or treat like a compost.

TAGRO Potting Soil

\$30 per yard

Use in containers or raised beds; no need to mix into existing soil.

Need a lot? Get it delivered for just \$15 per 10 miles (plus cost of product).

2201 Portland Ave., Gate 6, Tacoma

www.tagro.com

(253) 502-2150

2011 RESOURCE LIST

| Resource | Phone | Web site |
|---|----------|--|
| Solid Waste Management (garbage, recycling, yard waste) | | |
| Solid Waste information line (recorded message) | 565-5955 | |
| Solid Waste general questions | 591-5543 | www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste |
| Call-2-Haul | 573-2468 | www.cityoftacoma.org/call2haul |
| EnviroHouse (green bldg. exhibit) | 573-2426 | www.cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse |
| Hazardous waste | 591-5418 | www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste |
| Landfill scalehouse | 593-7724 | |
| Wastewater/Surface water | | |
| General questions | 591-5588 | www.cityoftacoma.org/wastewater |
| Billing questions | 502-2100 | www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater |
| TAGRO | 502-2150 | www.tagro.com |
| Sewer backups | | |
| Street flooding & Street sweeping | 591-5585 | www.cityoftacoma.org/flood www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping |
| Water pollution hotline | 383-2429 | |

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

GREENER CLEANER

Nontoxic rust remover

Drag out your old gardening tools and get them shipshape for planting season.

What you need

- Newspaper ■ Olive oil ■ Lime (*you may need one or more per tool*)
- Table salt ■ Old rags

Directions

1. Lay down newspaper to cover the area where you will be working and lay the rusted tools on the newspaper.
2. Cover the rusty portion(s) of the tool with table salt.
3. Cut the lime in half and squeeze lime juice on to the table salt until the salt is thoroughly saturated. Depending on the size of the tool, you may need more than one lime.
4. Let the salt and lime mixture sit for at least 3 hours.
5. Use a clean, dry cloth to remove the salt and lime mixture.
6. Use a second clean, dry cloth to rub a light coat of olive oil on the tool to prevent future rusting.

www.cityoftacoma.org/greenercleaners



DID YOU KNOW?

... that pet waste 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.

Dispose of pet waste properly:

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

HOW TO MAINTAIN RIGHTS-OF-WAY

You are responsible for making sure vegetation in the planting strip and other rights-of-way around your home are properly maintained.

- ✿ Keep the full width of sidewalks, streets and alleys clear of vegetation and debris.
- ✿ Prune tree limbs to 14 feet above streets and 8 feet above sidewalks.
- ✿ Plant trees with a mature height of less than 25 feet under power lines.
- ✿ Raised bed planters are allowed but require a no-fee permit and must meet height and setback requirements.
- ✿ Vegetation and plants in raised beds near intersections and driveways must not exceed 2 feet in height.

www.cityoftacoma.org/righttree

trees@cityoftacoma.org
(253) 591-2048

Mulch mow...the only way to go

Mulch mowing is an easy approach to natural yard care that anyone can do.

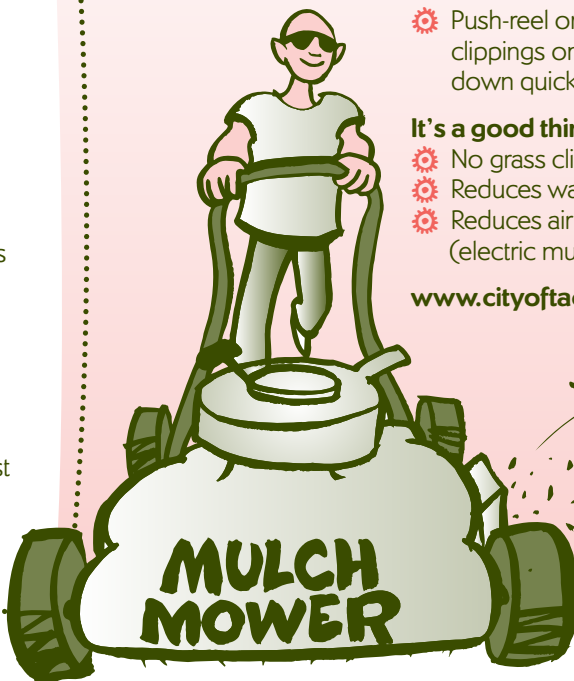
How it works

- ✿ Mulch mowers (electric or gas) chop grass clippings into tiny bits and blow them into the lawn, leaving no visible clippings.
- ✿ Push-reel or regular mowers leave clippings on the surface that break down quickly.

It's a good thing

- ✿ No grass clippings to dispose
- ✿ Reduces water and fertilizer use
- ✿ Reduces air and noise pollution (electric mulch or push-reel mowers)

www.cityoftacoma.org/naturalyards



RECYCLING review

DISCOVER HOW EASY IT IS TO GROW DELICIOUS FOOD

Meet your neighbors, save money, build great community gathering spots, and create delicious and nutritious meals by participating in one of Tacoma's growing number of community gardens.

Want to get involved?

- ☀ Sign up for a plot
- ☀ Help a new garden in your neighborhood
- ☀ Attend a workshop
- ☀ Volunteer or donate to the program

[www.cityoftacoma.org/
communitygardens](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/communitygardens)

kristenm@cascadeland.org
(253) 363-1846



Yard waste

Here are the most common items accepted and not accepted in your yard waste container. Find more recycling information at www.cityoftacoma.org/recyclingreview.

Yard waste – YES

- Beauty bark (*clean*)
- Branches (*broken down to fit in container*)
- Fruit/vegetable matter (small amounts)
- Grass clippings
- Leaves
- Prunings
- Weeds/roots (*dirt shaken off*)

Yard waste – NO

- Bagged yard waste
- Cat litter
- Dirt
- Large amounts of fruit/vegetable matter
- Lumber
- Pet waste
- Rocks
- Separate bundles outside your container
- Sod
- Stumps/logs

SPRING HOME & GARDEN WORKSHOP GUIDE

March

| | | |
|--|------------|--------------|
| 5 Lighting: Tips & Tricks..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 6 Rain Barrels: How to Make & Maintain | 1:30 p.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 12 Composting/Worm Bins..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 19 Water Conservation: Fix-a-leak..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 23 Starting Seeds & Garden Planning..... | 6 p.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 26 Starting Seeds & Garden Planning..... | 10 a.m. | TAGRO office |
| 26 Urban Tree Selection: Type & Placement..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |

April

| | | |
|--|------------|--------------|
| 2 Backyard Chickens: Getting Started | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 9 Composting/Worm Bins..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 13 Soil Prep & Planting Seedlings..... | 6 p.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 16 Soil Prep & Planting Seedlings..... | 10 a.m. | TAGRO office |
| 23 Residential Rain Garden How-to..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 30 Natural Lawn Care & Pest Management | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |

May

| | | |
|---|------------|--------------|
| 7 Spring Cleaning with Greener Cleaners | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 8 Spring Planting..... | 1:30 p.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 11 Planting & Maintaining a Summer Garden.... | 6 p.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 14 Planting & Maintaining a Summer Garden.... | 10 a.m. | TAGRO office |
| 14 Composting/Worm Bins..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |
| 21 Natural Garden Design & Plant Tour..... | 10:30 a.m. | EnviroHouse |

Workshops are open to Tacoma and Pierce County residents. Schedule is subject to change.

For updated information or to register for pink shaded workshops, please visit www.cityoftacoma.org/communitygardens, e-mail kristenm@cascadeland.org or call (253) 363-1846.

For updated information or to register for green shaded workshops, please visit www.cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse, e-mail ehouse@cityoftacoma.org or call (253) 573-2426.

City of Tacoma EnviroHouse:
Tacoma Landfill,
3510 S. Mullen St.

TAGRO office:
2201 Portland Ave., Gate 6, Tacoma.

EnviroTalk

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We want to hear from you:
EnviroTalk@cityoftacoma.org
www.twitter.com/EnviroTalk
(253) 591-5051



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City of Tacoma
Public Works
Environmental Services
747 Market Street, Room 408
Tacoma, Washington 98402-3769

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Don't let your side sewer **SURPRISE** you

Homes constructed before 1980 are likely to have side sewers made of clay or concrete pipes. These pipes – which connect your home's plumbing to the City's sanitary sewer main – can crack, shift out of place, and/or be invaded by roots, causing leakage or blocked pipes.

The City of Tacoma recommends hiring an inspector to check the condition of your home's side sewer if it is more than 25 years old and/or does not have plastic PVC pipe running from your home to the City sewer main.

www.cityoftacoma.org/sidesewer
(253) 591-5588

Need help with repairs?

You may be eligible for a low-interest loan through the City of Tacoma's Sewer Conservation Loan Program.

www.cityoftacoma.org/sewerloan
(253) 502-2159

A cartoon illustration of a man in a red shirt and black pants, digging with a shovel. He has a surprised expression. A thought bubble above him says "I NEED A SEWER REPAIR LOAN!". There are exclamation marks near the hole he is digging.