

# ENVIROBOTALK

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a white polo shirt over a black long-sleeved shirt, is holding a custom-built robot. The robot is constructed from various plastic bottles, including a yellow one at the top, and has colorful streamers and other small components attached to it. The background is a blurred, circular pattern.

MEET  
**BAKURO**  
THE  
**ENVIROBOT**

p. 6 - 7

Spring/Summer 2015

DOWN THE  
**DRAIN**  
p. 3

GET  
**GROWING**  
p. 4

**JAMMING**  
IN THE KITCHEN  
p. 5

## Keep Yards Green and your Family and Pets Safe Using Natural Yard Care

Excess fertilizers, pesticides, bacteria from pet waste and other harmful pollutants from yards and gardens have the potential to harm you and your pets as well as wash into nearby storm drains and pollute local waterways. You can save money and help protect your family's health by using natural yard care techniques. Some of these techniques include building a healthy soil by adding compost, adding mulch to planting beds such as leaves or wood chips, planting the right plant in the right place and watering wisely. For more information on natural yard care, visit **FriendlyTacomaYards.org** or see it in action at the EnviroHouse, visit **cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse** for location and hours of operation.



## Teachers, book the EnviroChallengers for your classroom!

When you need engaging, high-quality environmental science lessons, bring in the EnviroChallengers. This City of Tacoma program teaches environmental lessons with a mix of science, social responsibility and fun in Tacoma's second through eighth grade classrooms for free. When the EnviroChallenger educators are invited into a classroom, they offer a variety of environmental lessons that last approximately 50 minutes each. To find out more information or to book a lesson with the EnviroChallengers, visit **envirochallenger.org**.

*When Curbside Recycling just isn't enough...*

## THE TACOMA RECYCLING CENTER has more for you...

**Styrofoam, glass and so much more can be dropped off for free at the center to help recyclers recycle more!**

For a full list of what you can bring, go to **TacomaRecycles.com**.





# Surface Water Management



Surface Water Management provides an array of services including stewardship of the City's more than 100-year-old stormwater system.

**Professional Engineer Shauna Hansen**, who works at the Center for Urban Waters, provides some insight into the services that this utility provides to the community.

## Q: What is the job of Surface Water Management?

**A:** Surface Water Management is part of the City's Environmental Services Department and its mission is to prevent flooding and protect Tacoma's waterways from polluted runoff. This utility is in charge of many different areas including cleaning and repairing public storm pipes, tracking sources of water pollution and designing storm system improvements to address urban flooding to name a few.

## Q: What do Surface Water Rates help pay for? In other words, do I pay for the rain?

**A:** Surface Water rates pay for more than just storm drains. They pay

for pollution prevention programs including education and outreach activities, business inspections, spill investigations, monitoring, and other programs throughout each of Tacoma's nine watersheds.

## Q: Why is water pollution prevention an important part of Surface Water Management?

**A:** Contrary to popular belief, the biggest source of pollution in Puget Sound is not discharges from industrial businesses. The main source is polluted runoff, which happens when rainwater washes pollutants from thousands of streets, yards and driveways directly into Tacoma's waterways. Part of our services is educating residents about what they can do to prevent polluted runoff and encouraging anyone who sees something spilled on the ground that might cause water pollution to call the Water Pollution Hotline run by Citizens for a Healthy Bay at (253) 383-2429.

## Q: What can the City do to help control street flooding in my neighborhood?

**A:** Environmental Services maintenance crews respond to flooding complaints and clear storm drains when possible. Residents can also help prevent flooding by making sure downspouts are clear and directed away from building foundations and keeping nearby storm drains clear of leaves and debris. For other recommendations, visit [cityoftacoma.org/flood](http://cityoftacoma.org/flood) or call (253) 591-5585 to report street flooding.

## Q: Where can I find more information?

**A:** Anyone looking for more information about Surface Water Management can call (253) 591-5588 or email questions to [SWMUpdates@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:SWMUpdates@cityoftacoma.org). Residents can also visit us at the Center for Urban Waters, open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. More information is available at [cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater](http://cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater). **ET**



# Get Your Garden GROWING this Spring WITH TAGRO

**S**ince 1991 the environmentally friendly products from the City of Tacoma's own TAGRO have been feeding customers' lawns, gardens and trees creating lush landscapes across the community. Using a blend of pasteurized wastewater byproducts called biosolids and other weed-free gardening components, this organic, compost-like soil amendment helps retain moisture, and slowly releases nutrients into the soil.

TAGRO, short for "Tacoma Grow," offers a number of products for home users that are good for the environment and gardeners alike. These products include TAGRO Mix, TAGRO Potting Soil, TAGRO Topsoil and Aged Black Bark.

Ready to get growing? TAGRO soil products are available year-round for pickup or delivery. For more information about TAGRO premium soil amendments, visit [tagro.com](http://tagro.com).

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#### TAGRO LOCATION AND HOURS

- 2201 Portland Ave., Gate 6, in Tacoma
  - Spring hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
  - Summer hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays 8 a.m. to noon.
- 



## Rhubarb Blackberry Lime Jam

The spring edition of Urban Green brought Master Food Preserver Hal Meng in to talk about food preservation techniques that can be used in your home kitchen. Here Hal shares one of his favorite rhubarb, blackberry, and lime jam recipes just in time for canning season.

- 2 cups diced fresh rhubarb
- 2 Tbsp. bottled lime juice
- 1 cup frozen or fresh blackberries
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. lime zest
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. pectin



Using fresh or thawed berries combine all ingredients in a medium pot and cook on high heat for 10 minutes bringing contents to a boil. Continue stirring until rhubarb starts to break down.

Bring contents back to a boil for one minute, then add pectin and continue for another minute at a full boil. Remove from heat and using a canning funnel, ladle the contents into two sterilized half pint jars leaving 1/4" head space. Add sterilized lids and rings and process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and leave jars undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours.

## Greener nontoxic rust remover

### 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.
4. Depending on the size of the tool, you may need more than one lime.
5. Let the salt and lime mixture sit for at least 3 hours.
6. Use a clean, dry cloth to remove the salt and lime mixture.
7. Use a second clean, dry cloth to rub a light coat of olive oil on the tool to prevent future rusting.



## Make a Splash grants

Make a Splash funding provides up to \$4,000 reimbursement for community projects and programs that help educate and involve residents in protecting and restoring Tacoma's waterways and preventing stormwater pollution. The program is open to anyone considering a project within Tacoma city limits. Visit [cityoftacoma.org/MakeaSplash](http://cityoftacoma.org/MakeaSplash) to find details about eligibility requirements, project ideas, and the grant application form. Grant applications will be accepted April 20 through May 22 for projects completed between August 2015 and August 2016.

## Explore the Interactive Tacoma Green Living Guide

The Tacoma Green Living Guide is an online interactive map that highlights environmental features, attributes, and resources in Tacoma. The guide provides residents and visitors with information on green infrastructure, environmental education, transportation options, open space, locally grown food, and more. To start exploring the guide today, visit [cityoftacoma.org/greenliving](http://cityoftacoma.org/greenliving).

## Going green at events

Event-goers may have noticed water fountains sprouting up and bicycle racks appearing at Tacoma events—that's because event organizers are partnering with the City of Tacoma to make local events more sustainable! Events that incorporate sustainability practices like reducing plastic water bottle use, encouraging recycling and composting, and providing incentives for bicycling can earn a Green Excellence or Green Merit certification. Find out more at [cityoftacoma.org/sustainabletacoma](http://cityoftacoma.org/sustainabletacoma).



FEATURE

# The Art of Sustainability



*Cover Photo Features: Hoang Le, third grade student in Mrs. Kinsey's class at Stafford Elementary School and his EnviroBot "Bakuro."*

Inside Mrs. Kinsey's third grade classroom at Stafford Elementary School students are designing, tinkering and creating EnviroBots. Creativity raises the volume level as students cut, tie and share their ideas.

The only rules today:

- Work on the inside of the bot
- Use five recycled or reused items to start
- No glue
- No tape
- And the insides can't rattle

The students' EnviroBots are teaching them about 2 dimensional to 3 dimensional shape and sustainability. They draw their EnviroBot in a 2D format and write a description of it – who it is, how it lives and what it looks like. Then they take their designs and work with repurposed and recycled items like CDs, plastic doo-hickeys, bread ties, pen caps, string, yarn and mesh wrappers to give it life.

"You give them some recycled items and it's amazing what they make," Mrs. Kinsey says, and as if to punctuate, one of the boys near the front of the class throws his head back and his fists shake in the air, "I just found an idea. I did it. I mastered this thing."

This is one of the Arts EnviroChallenger lessons provided for free to Tacoma Public School's kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms by the City of Tacoma.

"We like the EnviroChallenger Arts Program," Mrs. Kinsey said adding, "We do it every year."

The program was started in 2011 through funding generated from the construction of the Landfill Administration and the Recovery and Transfer Buildings. Environmental

Services Solid Waste Division wanted to use the 1 percent of construction costs that would normally be set aside for public art to create an arts and sustainability program that would have a powerful and far reaching impact on the community, Amy McBride, Tacoma Art Administrator explained.

The Arts EnviroChallenger program has met and exceeded those goals. Between 2013 and 2014, the program's three teaching artists have spent four one-hour sessions in more than 300 Tacoma classrooms and worked with about 8,500 students.

"This program really allows students to expand their way of thinking and look at things differently," said Kris Vermeer, one of the program's artists. "The program helps students understand what our garbage

is made out of and where it goes and what happens to it when it leaves their home. It is not uncommon for a student that I have had in a past year come to tell me what else they have made out of their household trash."

The lessons, which meet the Washington State learning requirements, are also age specific. Currently the program has

lessons for Kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms that focus on reusing, reducing and recycling. Environmental Services and the City's Arts Program are hoping to add surface water lessons next year.

The program has a waitlist of almost a hundred classrooms that would like to bring the Arts EnviroChallenger program in to their students before the end of the 2014-15 school year. **ET**

*You give them some recycled items and it's amazing what they make.*

- Mrs. Kinsey,  
Stafford Elementary School,  
Third Grade Teacher

## Help collect the following materials for students to transform into art

- Nets that fruits and vegetables come in
- Pump, spray, squirt bottle tops (nontoxic cleaning, shampoo, dish soaps)
- Pen caps
- Twist-ties, wires from packaging, plastic bread closers
- CD or DVD discs
- Large beads
- Costume Jewelry: especially earrings and beads
- Old Christmas garlands
- String, yarn, ribbons
- Buttons with big holes
- Soft, silky, shiny, or metallic fabric scraps (fleece is especially good)
- Clean, soft pretty socks that do not have mates
- Clean pantyhose or tights
- Papers with unusual/interesting patterns or textures
- Greeting Cards
- Any stickers or self-adhesive labels
- Maps
- Metallic wrapping paper scraps (flat, not crumpled)
- Popular Mechanics/Computer magazines
- Smithsonian magazines
- Science/nature magazines
- Sports Illustrated magazines

**For the safety of our young artists** we ask that all donated materials are **CLEAN AND DRY**.

Supplies can be dropped off at the Tacoma Municipal Building (747 Market St., 2nd floor Customer Service Center, Attn: Naomi Strom-Avila) or call (253) 591-5191 to arrange pick up of large quantities of collected materials.

To find out more about the program  
or how to donate clean items, visit [www.cityoftacoma.org/aec](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/aec).



# When the **sun** is **shining**, a **clean car** starts calling!

Here are 5 car washing tips to help keep our local waterways pollutant free.

- 1 Wash your car on your lawn or gravel to keep the suds out of the streets (diluted soap doesn't harm lawns.)
- 2 Use a nozzle on your hose to cut down on the amount of water you use.
- 3 Use soaps or detergents without phosphates because this removes the oxygen from water which fish need to survive.
- 4 Or use a commercial car wash, where the water not only gets treated, but often also gets reused.
- 5 Residents can learn more about protecting our waterways at **PugetSoundStartsHere.org**.

## Car Wash Fundraiser Tips

The next time you hold a car wash to raise money, make it a fish-friendly event by hosting it at a site that uses a Clean Bay Car Wash Kit from the City of Tacoma. Visit [cityoftacoma.org](http://cityoftacoma.org) and search Cars to learn more. Or sell car wash tickets from the Puget Sound Car Wash Association ([charitycarwash.org](http://charitycarwash.org)), instead.



# Calendar of Events

## APRIL

- 11 **Home Energy Audit: Tools to DIY**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 14 **No Fear Garden Design with Sue Goetz**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., FREE, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, 5400 N. Pearl St., pre-registration required call (253) 798-4708 or email [wburdsall@tpchd.org](mailto:wburdsall@tpchd.org). Find out more at [FriendlyTacomaYards.org](http://FriendlyTacomaYards.org).
- 18 **Garden Soil 101**, 10 a.m. to noon, FREE, TAGRO Visitors Center, 2201 E. Portland Ave., Gate 6., pre-registration required call (253) 798-4133 or visit [harvestpiercecounty.org](http://harvestpiercecounty.org).
- 18 **Backyard Chickens: Getting Started**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 21 **The "Un-Thirsty" Garden with Marianne Binetti**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., FREE, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, 5400 N. Pearl St., pre-registration is required call (253) 798-4708 or email [wburdsall@tpchd.org](mailto:wburdsall@tpchd.org). Find out more at [FriendlyTacomaYards.org](http://FriendlyTacomaYards.org).
- 25 **Native Plants to Enhance Your Habitat**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.

## MAY

- 2 **Native Plant Sale**, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tacoma Nature Center, 1919 S. Tyler St. A list of available plants will be available at [tacomanaturecenter.org](http://tacomanaturecenter.org) on May 1. Find out more by calling (253) 591-6439.
- 2 **Solar Power: How it can Work for You**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 9 **Yard Waste & Worm Bin Composting**, 10:30 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., FREE, pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 16 **Planting and Maintaining Your Summer Vegetable Garden**, FREE, 10 a.m. to noon, TAGRO Visitors Center, 2201 E. Portland Ave., Gate 6., pre-registration required, call (253) 798-4133 or visit [harvestpiercecounty.org](http://harvestpiercecounty.org).
- 16 **Depave and Go Green**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 17 **Rain Barrels: How to Make & Maintain**, 1:30 p.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 25 **Memorial Day, Curbside Collection is NORMAL.**
  - 30 **Puget Sound Starts Here – Family Fun Day**, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., FREE, Foss Waterway Seaport, 705 Dock St., find out more at [pugetsoundstartshere.org](http://pugetsoundstartshere.org).
  - 30 **Residential Rain Garden How-To**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.

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# EnviroKids

## What's that Word?

Complete the sentences below (you'll find the answers in this issue of EnviroTalk) 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 this word search will be featured in the next issue of EnviroTalk.

1. The Arts EnviroChallenger program teaches educational and fun sustainability lessons like the \_\_\_\_\_ featured on the cover.
2. Natural yard care choices like \_\_\_\_\_ help protect your children and pets.
3. Using \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_ can help you grow healthier plants.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ water \_\_\_\_\_ directly into the nearest body of water, which is why it is important to properly dispose of chemicals.
5. Customer's \_\_\_\_\_ help keep our \_\_\_\_\_ clean.
6. This summer consider riding your \_\_\_\_\_ to events.

Y	P	E	Q	G	A	R	D	E	N	I	N	G	Z	F
B	F	M	Z	D	S	M	U	L	C	H	I	N	G	I
K	Q	Y	V	N	X	T	G	G	P	D	S	W	N	F
D	N	G	R	E	Y	H	Z	E	I	W	S	F	S	L
P	Y	M	Y	M	T	P	I	R	A	J	T	W	N	H
J	U	R	A	T	E	S	E	E	L	K	H	J	I	I
D	W	G	Q	G	W	Q	C	J	T	K	Z	A	A	Z
V	F	E	L	C	Y	C	I	B	A	T	D	I	R	T
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Q	O	E	N	V	I	R	O	B	O	T	S	M	B	R
U	Y	T	I	L	I	B	A	N	I	A	T	S	U	S
V	A	Y	H	S	A	B	Z	S	U	R	F	A	C	E
E	G	I	Q	K	E	M	G	R	E	T	A	W	M	L
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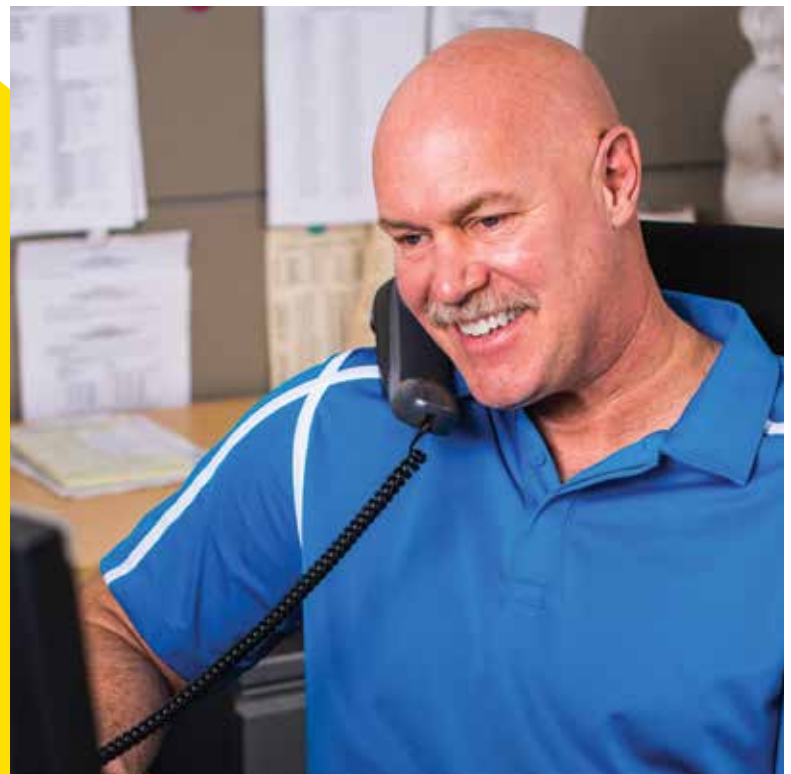
Answers: 1. SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIROBOTS, 2. MULCHING, 3. TAGRO, GARDENING, 4. SURFACE, DRAINS, 5. RATES, WATER, 6. BICYCLE

## MEET DISPATCHER and ROUTE SUPERVISOR Jon Torgerson

Jon assigns garbage truck drivers their routes, so they know where and when to pick up your curbside trash, recycling and food and yard waste. He also meets with people to help them figure out what type of solid waste services they need for their business, which means getting to go to places like manufacturing plants and boats.

"I have been on large sea going tug boats that have enormously powerful engines which are larger than a full sized car," Jon says.

Becoming a dispatcher and route supervisor takes experience and knowledge and is a rewarding career path.





# Events

Calendar of

(continued from page 9)

## JUNE

- 6 **Permeable Pavers – Let the Rain Soak In**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 6 **Residential Landscape Planning & Design**, 1:30 p.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 7 **Harvest Pierce County's Gleaning Kickoff** 2015, 5-7 p.m., FREE, Lincoln Park, 801 S. 37th St., pre-registration required visit [harvestpiercecounty.org](http://harvestpiercecounty.org).
- 13 **Pollinating Garden & Landscape Plants**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 13 **Backyard Chickens: Getting Started**, 1:30 p.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 20 **Garden Bugs, Plant Diseases & Non-Toxic Alternatives**, 10 a.m.–noon, FREE, TAGRO Visitors Center, 2201 E. Portland Ave., Gate 6, pre-registration required call (253) 798-4133 or visit [harvestpiercecounty.org](http://harvestpiercecounty.org).
- 20 **Ductless Heat Pump Advantages & Incentives**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 27 **Principles of Water Efficient Landscaping**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.

## JULY

- 4 **Tacoma Recovery & Transfer Center is CLOSED.**
- 6 **TAGRO summer hours begin**, 2201 E. Portland Ave., Gate 6, Tacoma, [cityoftacoma.org/TAGRO](http://cityoftacoma.org/TAGRO).
- 11 **Yard Waste & Worm Bin Composting**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.

- 12 **Backyard Chickens: Getting Started**, 1:30 pm, FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 18 **Fall and Winter Gardening**, 10 a.m. to noon, FREE, TAGRO Visitors Center, 2201 E. Portland Ave., Gate 6, pre-registration required call (253) 798-4133 or visit [harvestpiercecounty.org](http://harvestpiercecounty.org).
- 18 **Solar Power: How it can Work for You**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.
- 25 **Flower Power & Creepy Crawlies: Gardens, Games & Fun for Kids**, 10:30 a.m., FREE, EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., pre-registration required at [cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse), or call (253) 573-2426.

## AUGUST

- 22 **Make Your Mark Annual Community Drain Marking Event**, 9 a.m. to noon, FREE, pre-registration required by contacting Jeanine Riss, [jriss@healthybay.org](mailto:jriss@healthybay.org) or (253) 383-2429.

## SEPTEMBER

- 7 **Labor Day, Curbside Collection is NORMAL.**
- 19 **Composting Basics**, 10 a.m. to noon, FREE, TAGRO Visitors Center, 2201 E. Portland Ave., Gate 6, pre-registration required call (253) 798-4133 or visit [harvestpiercecounty.org](http://harvestpiercecounty.org).





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

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



## The **Do It Yourselfer's** resources

The EnviroHouse has **ideas** and **information** to help  
with big and small **home and landscape projects!**



[cityoftacoma.org/EnviroHouse](http://cityoftacoma.org/EnviroHouse)  
(253) 573-2426

**EnviroHouse**  
CITY OF TACOMA

Tacoma Recovery & Transfer Center  
3510 S. Mullen St.  
Wed-Fri: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Sat-Sun: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.