

# ENVIROTalk

Summer 2009

## 2good2toss.com boasts new look and price limit

Now it's easier than ever to post or browse reusable items on 2good2toss.com, which features an improved look and navigation as well as a higher price limit of \$199.

Whether you want to give away or sell items that are too good to go to the landfill or you want to browse for bargains, check out 2good2toss.com for a variety of items in more than 40 categories, including listings for local garage sales.

By using 2good2toss.com, you're helping save landfill space, disposal costs and reduce methane emissions.

For more information:  
(253) 573-2415

[www.2good2toss.com](http://www.2good2toss.com)

2GOOD2TOSS.COM

## EXPLORE the "GREEN" OUTDOORS

Summer is a great time to get out of the house and spend quality time with friends and family. Whether you are going for a day trip or a weeklong getaway, here are a few tips to make your picnic or camping adventure more environmentally friendly:

- ❁ Pack durable dishes and silverware that can be reused.
- ❁ Check your local secondhand store for gently used gear like lanterns, cook stoves and coolers.
- ❁ Instead of buying a new vinyl tablecloth, bring an old fabric one from home or use a large beach towel.
- ❁ Reuse a plastic bag to store all your recyclable items. When you get home, dump the contents into your blue recycling container.
- ❁ Purchase food items with minimal packaging so you have less to throw away.
- ❁ Bring a reusable water bottle from home that you can fill at the park, or bring a large jug and drink from a reusable cup.
- ❁ Use biodegradable soaps and detergents to wash dishes, clothes and yourself. (Note: you should never bathe in a lake or stream using soap. Even biodegradable soap can harm aquatic life.)
- ❁ Deter pesky mosquitoes by using citronella candles or netted outdoor tents.

For more seasonal waste reduction tips:  
[www.cityoftacoma.org/wastefree](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/wastefree)



# SOAK IT UP!

## Low-impact landscapes functional...and fabulous

Rain gardens can be a great option for homeowners looking for a functional, low-maintenance landscaping feature that incorporates both environmental and aesthetic value. Add some pavers and a bench or two and you can turn this functional tool into a serene space for relaxing.

### Benefits include:

- Keeping pollutants from reaching local waterways
- Reducing flooding problems
- Providing habitat for beneficial birds and insects
- Refreshing local groundwater
- Reducing yard maintenance

For basic assistance and guidance with placement, sizing and plant selection, call (253) 591-5588 or e-mail [mhoppin@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:mhoppin@cityoftacoma.org).

For more information:

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

Check out the EnviroHouse for other low-impact landscaping ideas, including rain barrels, pervious pavement, native plants and more. Located at the Tacoma Landfill (3510 S. Mullen St.), the EnviroHouse is a permanent model home showcasing green building and natural landscaping ideas, materials and techniques to create a healthy home and planet.

For more information:  
(253) 573-2426

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



## EcoFind

### It's in the Bag

Reusable grocery bags are great for keeping pesky plastic sacks out of the landfill and out of the environment, but what about plastic produce bags? Though they are recyclable, often times they are too soiled and must be thrown in the trash. Now you can avoid using plastic produce bags altogether by investing in reusable ones. Reusable produce bags are generally made of all natural or organic cotton and feature a drawstring closure. They are also washable and very durable and can usually hold up to two-and-a-half times more produce than a flimsy plastic bag.

To purchase reusable produce bags, visit your local health food store or an online retailer.



## PLASTIC PLANT POTS

**Q: Can I recycle the plastic pots and trays that come with annuals, perennials, shrubs and other plants?**

**A:** No, all types of plastic plant containers (pots, baskets, trays, hangers) should be reused or thrown in the garbage. Ask retailers if they'll take back their containers for reuse.

Please remember...

The Tacoma Landfill, Recycling Center and Household Hazardous Waste Facility will be closed on the Fourth of July. Garbage, recycling and yard waste collection will remain on regular schedule for both Fourth of July and Labor Day.

# Central Treatment Plant upgrades UP & RUNNING

The City of Tacoma just completed a \$95 million upgrade of its Central Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Upgrades include:

- ✿ Additional wastewater treatment capacity to handle major storms, and urban growth through 2020
- ✿ Upgrades to parts of the existing plant that are more than 40 years old
- ✿ A new wet weather treatment process that allows for quick treatment during heavy rain

A major storm in January was the first “real world” test of the new peak wet weather treatment process, and it passed with flying colors. During this heavy rainstorm, 130 million gallons

flowed through the plant each day, compared with the average 20 million gallons per day. The new peak wet weather treatment process was able to quickly treat 40 million gallons of flow that, in the past, would have overflowed as partially treated wastewater to the Puyallup River or untreated wastewater to the Foss Waterway.

**TAGRO**  
has a new home!  
The folks who make your favorite soil amendment and a new demonstration garden. Come by and say hi.

## Gardening on the cheap with TAGRO

Whether your gardening pleasure is a lush lawn, fabulous flowers or you have a voracious appetite for growing your own veggies, TAGRO soil amendments can be an inexpensive (even free) way to give your efforts a big boost.

### TAGRO Mix

**Self-load:** Bring a shovel and some buckets and shovel your own for free!

**Bulk:** \$8 per yard (for Tacoma residents)

### TAGRO Potting Soil

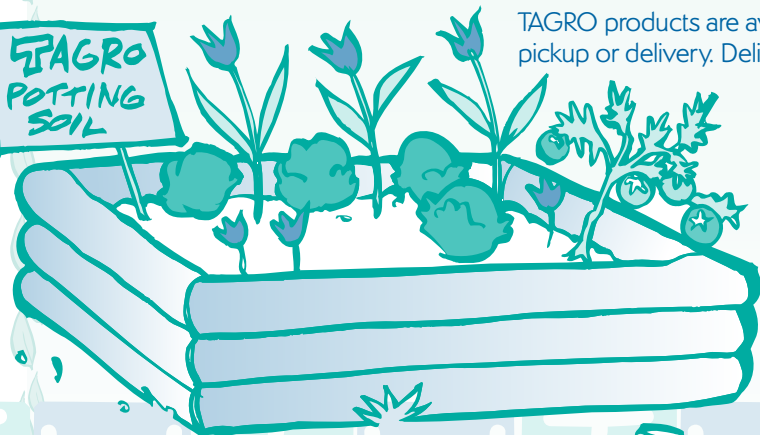
**Self-load:** Get a cart’s worth (approx. 4 cubic feet) of this good stuff for only \$5!

**Bulk:** \$30 per yard

**By the bag:** Available at Portland Avenue Nursery, GardenSphere and Gray Lumber. Prices vary.

TAGRO products are available year-round for pickup or delivery. Delivery charge is \$15 for every 10 miles.

2201 Portland Ave.  
Gate 5/6  
(253) 502-2150  
[www.tagro.com](http://www.tagro.com)



## DID YOU KNOW?

... that cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world (approximately 4.3 trillion per year)?

Cigarette butts tossed into the street don’t just vanish, they get washed down our storm drains and collect in our local waterways, creating a toxic mess that can take 25 years to disintegrate.

One cigarette butt might not seem like much, but they all add up.

If you smoke, please dispose of your cigarette butt in a proper receptacle, such as a “butt can” or personal ash tray.

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

## Keep an eye out for pollution

If you see activities that might threaten the health of our local waterways, call Tacoma’s 24-hour Water Pollution Hotline at (253) 383-2429. (You may remain anonymous.)

Types of activities you should report include:

- ▶ Construction site runoff
- ▶ Accidental spills
- ▶ Leaking dumpsters
- ▶ Discolored or detergent-like water running into storm drains
- ▶ People dumping oil, chemicals or other waste into or near City storm drains, creeks, lakes or Commencement Bay.

*The hotline is a joint effort between the City of Tacoma and Citizens for a Healthy Bay.*

# Mark a drain, save a fish

Water that goes down Tacoma's storm drains flows directly – untreated – into Tacoma's waterways, carrying with it all the pollutants picked up along the way.

The City of Tacoma's storm drain marking program offers a friendly reminder that stormwater drains directly to the nearest lake, stream or Commencement Bay. This effort is a partnership of the City of Tacoma, Citizens for a Healthy Bay and the Pierce Conservation District Stream Team.

## Would you or your group like to volunteer to mark storm drains?

To arrange for materials, contact CHB volunteer coordinator Jeanine Riss at (253) 383-2429 or e-mail [volunteer@healthybay.org](mailto:volunteer@healthybay.org).

### Greener cleaning essentials

You might have seen recipes for various environmentally safe cleaners, but do you know what all of those ingredients do? Below are eight essential ingredients used in "Greener Cleaner" recipes with a short description about why they are so useful.

- ☒ **Baking soda** works as a scrubbing agent and reacts with water, vinegar or lemon by fizzing, which helps speed up cleaning.
- ☒ **Borax** disinfects, bleaches and deodorizes.
- ☒ **Distilled white vinegar** disinfects and breaks up dirt.
- ☒ **Hydrogen peroxide** disinfects and bleaches.
- ☒ **Lemon juice** cuts grease and, when mixed with sunlight, can bleach surfaces.
- ☒ **Olive oil** picks up dirt and polishes wood; even the cheaper grades work well.
- ☒ **Tea tree oil** disinfects and deodorizes.
- ☒ **Essential oils** add a "clean" smell to your homemade cleaners. Some of the most popular essential oils include lavender, citrus and eucalyptus.



Find greener cleaner recipes at [www.cityoftacoma.org/greenercleaners](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/greenercleaners).

## RESOURCE LIST SUMMER 2009

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEB SITE
Call-2-Haul .....	573-2468	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/call2haul">www.cityoftacoma.org/call2haul</a>
EnviroHouse (green building exhibit).....	573-2426	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/EnviroHouse">www.cityoftacoma.org/EnviroHouse</a>
Garbage.....	591-5543	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/garbage">www.cityoftacoma.org/garbage</a>
Hazardous waste .....	591-5418	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste">www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste</a>
Landfill scalehouse .....	593-7724	
Recycling .....	591-5543	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/recycle">www.cityoftacoma.org/recycle</a>
Sewer backups .....	591-5585	
Solid Waste Management information line (recorded message only) .....	565-5955	
Solid waste (general questions) .....	591-5543	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste">www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste</a>
Street flooding.....	591-5585	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/flood">www.cityoftacoma.org/flood</a>
TAGRO .....	502-2150	<a href="http://www.tagro.com">www.tagro.com</a>
Wastewater/Surface water (general questions).....	591-5588	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/wastewater">www.cityoftacoma.org/wastewater</a> <a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater">www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater</a>
Wastewater/Surface water (billing questions).....	502-2100	
Water conservation.....	502-8723	
Water pollution hotline.....	383-2429	
Yard waste .....	591-5543	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/yardwaste">www.cityoftacoma.org/yardwaste</a>
Leaves.....		<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/leaves">www.cityoftacoma.org/leaves</a>
Street sweeping.....	591-5585	<a href="http://www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping">www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping</a>

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



If you're getting rid of reusable items, find a new home for them instead of disposing of them as garbage.

**2good2toss.com:** Free online resource where you can give away or sell (up to \$199) your reusable items.

**Goodwill and ReHarvest Center:** Donation stations for reusable household items, electronics and building materials. Located at the City of Tacoma Recycling Center (Tacoma Landfill).

## CALL & WE'LL HAUL YOUR OVERSIZED JUNK

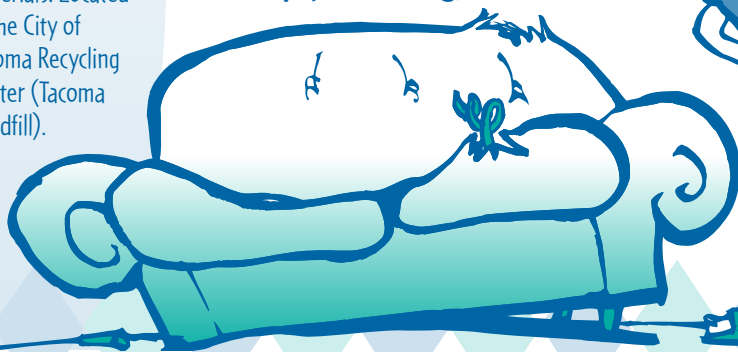
Get rid of large useless household items with Call-2-Haul, a curbside and self-haul bulk disposal service available by appointment to Solid Waste Management single-family residential customers at no additional charge.

**Qualified customers are allowed two visits per year. Each visit, you're allowed:**

- ▶ Up to 3 large items (refrigerators, water heaters, sofas, etc.)
- ▶ Up to 15 boxes or bags — light enough for one person to lift — of smaller household junk (clothing, toys, microwaves, etc.)

**Schedule an appointment** (curbside or self-haul):  
(253) 573-2468 (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., weekdays)  
[www.tacomaservices.org](http://www.tacomaservices.org)

For more information:  
(253) 573-2468  
[www.cityoftacoma.org/call2haul](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/call2haul)

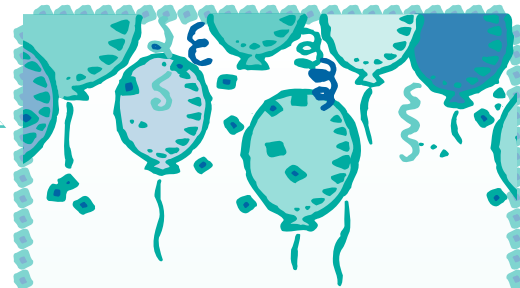
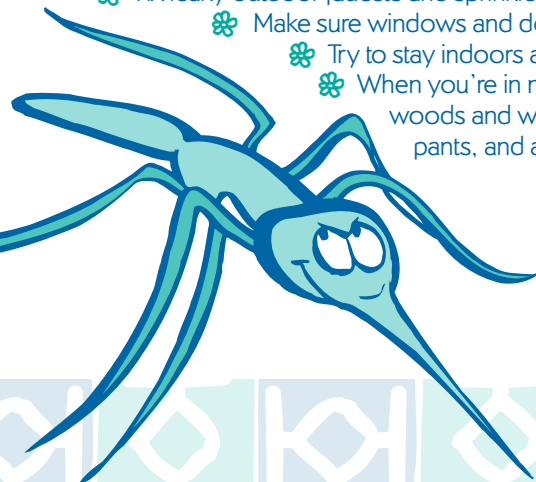


## Help exile West Nile

The odds of getting West Nile virus from a mosquito bite are minimal – and we'd like to keep it that way. Help discourage mosquito populations and avoid annoying bug bites by following these simple steps:

- ✿ Empty anything around your house that holds standing water (old tires, buckets, plastic covers, toys, etc.).
- ✿ Change the water at least twice a week in birdbaths, fountains, pet bowls and wading pools.
- ✿ Clean clogged roof gutters and make sure they drain properly.
- ✿ Fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.
- ✿ Make sure windows and doors are "bug tight."
- ✿ Try to stay indoors at dawn and dusk.
- ✿ When you're in mosquito-infested areas such as woods and wetlands, wear long sleeves and pants, and apply insect repellent with DEET.

For more information:  
(253) 798-6578  
(Health Department)  
[www.cityoftacoma.org/westnilevirus](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/westnilevirus)



## EnviroKIDS

And the winner is...

Tacoma students showed their green side as well as their artistic side when they entered the 2009 EnviroChallenger/EnviroKids Earth Day art contest. More than 100 students entered the contest, which asked elementary and middle school students to show what Tacoma would look like if everyone used the five Rs – reduce, reuse, recycle, respect and responsible – at home, at school and in their community.

The winners are:

### Grades K-2 Division:

- ✗ First place, **Brett Delozier**, second grade, Point Defiance Elementary
- ✗ Second place, **Gena Garnica**, second grade, Point Defiance Elementary
- ✗ Third place, **Katie Franz**, second grade, Crescent Heights Elementary

### Grades 3-5 Division:

- ✗ First place, **Henry Vo**, third grade, DeLong Elementary
- ✗ Second place, **Kylie Waddill**, fifth grade, Lister Elementary
- ✗ Third place, **Eduard Tekmenzhi**, fifth grade, Lister Elementary

### Grades 6-8 Division:

- ✗ First place, **Aarjay Narayan**, sixth grade, Truman Middle School
- ✗ Second place, **Lisa Vo**, sixth grade, Hunt Middle School
- ✗ Third place, **Larisa Trimble**, sixth grade, Hunt Middle School

To view the winning works of art:  
[www.cityoftacoma.org/envirokids](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/envirokids)



# envirotalk

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We want your feedback and story suggestions. Please leave us a message at (253) 591-5051 or e-mail [envirotalk@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:envirotalk@cityoftacoma.org).



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Tacoma, Washington 98402-3769

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## Got a DIRTY CAR? Wash it the fish-friendly way

**Get your car clean without sending soap and grime down the storm drain:**

- ✿ 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

A few soap suds going down the storm drain might not seem like much, but it all adds up. Please don't wash your car in the driveway or on the street.

### Planning a charity car wash?

Make your organization's next fundraising car wash fish-friendly by using a free, easy-to-use Clean Bay Car Wash Kit from the City of Tacoma.

For more information:  
(253) 502-2220

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

