

Take Care OF Texas NEWS you can use

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

APRIL 2009

Take Care of Texas: Save Money. Save Water. Save Energy.



Interested in learning more about water conservation and rainwater harvesting for your home? The TCEQ is partnering with The Home Depot to host a free Earth Day consumer education event on April 18, 2009, at 16 Home Depot stores across Texas.

Participants will learn tips to help save water, energy, and money, and view a demonstration of how to build a rain barrel using simple materials that can be purchased at your neighborhood The Home Depot store.

For \$50, participants can build their own rain barrels to take home (optional).

For more information, visit <www.takecareoftexas.org> or contact a participating Home Depot.

ABILENE 4590 Southwest Dr. 325-690-1032	HOUSTON 6810 Gulf Fwy. 713-649-1108
AMARILLO 2410 S. Georgia St. 806-468-9100	LAREDO 5710 San Bernardo Ave. 956-753-8831
AUSTIN 1200 Barbara Jordan Blvd. 512-703-4110	LUBBOCK 5801 W. Loop 289 806-788-1484
BEAUMONT 3910 Eastex Fwy. 409-892-4131	MIDLAND 4009 N. Midland Dr. 432-694-8700
CORPUS CHRISTI 5041 S. Padre Island Dr. 361-993-1400	SAN ANGELO 4363 Houston Harte Exwy. 325-223-0439
FORT WORTH 1157 Bridgewood Dr. 817-496-3212	SELMA 8138 Agora Pkwy. 210-945-8160
EL PASO 7545 N. Mesa 915-585-2319	TYLER 3901 Old Jacksonville Hwy. 903-581-8513
HARLINGEN 4710 S. Exwy. 83 956-440-7779	WACO 5605 W. Waco Dr. 254-772-8177

Need a Spring Family Project? Plant a Garden!



If you are looking for something new and different to do with your kids this spring, consider planting a garden. Gardening can be a great way to teach children about the environment, and you can create a fun and educational garden at home or school in just a few steps.

Choose your site. Find an area with good sun and access to water. Children can help decide the garden's shape by drawing shapes on paper and talking about how you might arrange flowers, herbs, or vegetables in those shapes.

Decide what to grow. Regional gardening books and seed catalogs can help you determine which plants will grow best in your area and can help you educate children about plant life and the environment. Plants adapted to the area will be much easier to grow and keep healthy. If you choose to start some plants from seed, let the kids create garden markers using either names or drawings to identify the plants as they grow.

Help your plants grow and make it fun. Many nurseries and garden centers sell small spades and rakes that are the right size for children, and make it fun for them to participate. Start a calendar to note when you plant seeds and how long it takes them to grow. Keep track of showers by placing a rain gauge in the garden. Use a magnifying glass to examine the leaves, flowers, and insects.

For more information and tips on gardening, visit <www.yardwise.org>.

Save Water. Save Money.



Water is a precious resource in Texas. As a Texan, you can do your part to conserve our state's water by making small changes in your daily habits. Visit <www.TakeCareOfTexas.org> to learn how to save water (and energy) in your home or office. Become an individual environmental leader and save money in the process.

Organizations can also do their part to conserve Texas water. A good example is Fort Hood, a Clean Texas Gold-level



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member. Through public education and distribution of low-flow plumbing fixtures, Fort Hood has helped its community reduce water usage by more than 300 million gallons over the past two years. That's enough water to provide for the in-home water needs of at least 9,000 people for an entire year.

If you know of an organization doing its part to protect the natural resources of Texas, recommend membership in Clean Texas. Visit <www.CleanTexas.org>, or contact us at <ems@tceq.state.tx.us>.

Water IQ Teaches Texans to Conserve

Based on current population projections in the 2007 state water plan, "Water for Texas 2007," about 85 percent of the state's projected population will not have enough water by 2060 in drought conditions. Water conservation is critical for meeting the state's long-term water needs.

The "Water IQ" statewide public awareness program teaches Texans the importance of water conservation. Managed by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), Water IQ provides information on water-efficient practices, raises awareness about the importance of water conservation, and helps Texans use less water.



Water IQ is designed to complement and support existing local and regional water conservation efforts. Communities are encouraged to use Water IQ and provide a link from their Web sites to the Water IQ site. For more information, or to find out how you can use Water IQ in your local area, visit <www.wateriq.org>.

Keep Texas Beautiful Helps Clean Up Texas Waterways

Keep Texas Beautiful partners with the TCEQ to operate the Texas Waterway Cleanup Program. The program helps communities and organizations establish waterway cleanups and litter-prevention activities to improve and maintain the quality of freshwater surface water. Running year-round, the program provides participants with free gloves, trash bags, litter-pickup tools, posters, educational activities, and more.



Keep Texas Beautiful reports the following results from its 2008 fall cleanups:

- A total of 184 cleanup and water quality education events
- Approximately 11,276 participating Texans
- More than 5,200 volunteers younger than 18
- Over 185,000 pounds of debris collected
- More than 486 miles of cleaned waterways

Spring cleanups are already under way. To find out more information or how you can become involved, visit <www.ktb.org>.

Don't Forget!

TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference

May 12-14

You can still register to attend Texas' premier environmental educational forum May 12-14 at the Austin Convention Center.

For more information, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html>.

Agricultural Waste Pesticide Collections Report Success in 2008

The TCEQ Agricultural Waste Pesticide Collection program offers agricultural producers who use pesticides in Texas an opportunity to dispose of unwanted pesticides and other products that may pose a hazard to them, their families, and their surrounding farming and ranching communities. Participation in the program is voluntary, and the collections are conducted at no cost to the participants.

Twelve collections were held in 2008, drawing 925 participants and collecting 132.79 tons of waste. Items collected include: pesticides; herbicides and other agricultural chemicals; paint; power-steering fluid; oil; gasoline; oil filters; fluorescent bulbs; grease; lead-acid batteries; transmission fluid; brake fluid; diesel fuel; and properly rinsed, plastic-pesticide containers.

For more information on the Agricultural Waste Pesticide Collection program, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/AgWaste/agwaste.html>.

We Are Going Paperless!

We will discontinue mailing hard copies of this newsletter on May 1, 2009. If you currently receive a hard copy, please provide us with an e-mail address to receive notifications of new issues available online. There are two ways you may request to receive these notifications via e-mail:

1. **Go to <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/education/info/enviro_news.html> and follow the instructions to sign up.**
2. **E-mail us at <educate@tceq.state.tx.us>.**

Any subscriber who has not contacted us with a valid e-mail address by May 1, 2009, will no longer receive *Take Care of Texas News You Can Use*. You can always sign up at a later date if you wish. If you already receive the newsletter notifications via e-mail, you do not need to contact us at this time.

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