

Take Care of Texas NEWS you can use

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

FEBRUARY 2010

TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference: May 4-5

Plan to attend the TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference, held at the Austin Convention Center on May 4-5. This annual event is Texas' premier environmental educational forum, considered by many to be one of the best in the country.

Features for this year's conference include:

- in-depth training on the latest regulatory information;
- more than 400 exhibits showcasing leading environmental organizations and technology;
- up to 10 hours of continuing education credits offered for geoscientists, engineers, attorneys, and other professionals; and
- opportunities for networking and meeting one-on-one with TCEQ staff.

**Environmental
TRADE
FAIR
and Conference**

This year's conference also will offer a new educational track, Introduction to Environmental Regulations.

Attendee registration begins Feb. 22. For more information, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html.

Countdown to Earth Day



April 22 marks the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, a day when millions participate in events to help protect and improve the environment. Earth Day events include waterway and litter cleanups, recycling collections, and educational opportunities.

These activities help encourage all people to find new and creative ways to do their part for the environment.

This year, get involved by sharing online how you take care of the environment every day. Post your story on the Take Care of Texas Web site at www.takecareoftexas.org/share-your-story/. Use the online pledge calculator to find out how much water, energy, and money you can save this year.

If you want to encourage others to do their part for Earth Day—and every day—try posting the Take Care of Texas Countdown to Earth Day widget on your Web site, Facebook page, or blog. For simple posting instructions, visit www.takecareoftexas.org/tcot-widgets/.

Clean Texas Member—DFW Airport—Dedicated to Environment and Education

Dallas/Fort Worth Airport (DFW Airport), a Clean Texas member at the platinum level, is committed to protecting the environment while supporting education. Through partnerships and studies, the airport has enriched the learning process for graduate students in the DFW area, while making environmental improvements at its facility.



The DFW Airport conducted a cooperative study with University of North Texas graduate students in which they developed land-cover classification maps for the Bear Creek Watershed and sub-watersheds on and near airport property. The maps were used as an integral part of biological and habitat assessments, and as a tool for future development of a master hydrology study for the DFW Airport.

In addition, the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) collaborated with the DFW Airport on a study to minimize the environmental impact of deicing operations. As a result of the study, UTA received a \$400,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to further its research. According to UTA, the model developed from the study proves that minimal environmental impact from deicing is possible in a system as complex as DFW's.

For more information about the Clean Texas Program or becoming a member, visit www.cleantexas.org.

Don't Forget! TCEQ's Dam Safety Workshops Feb. 11 and 25

The TCEQ will host two Dam Safety Workshops to present information on issues affecting anyone who owns or operates a dam. Topics will include new state dam safety laws and regulations, emergency action plans, and maintenance issues.



The workshops will take place at the following locations:

- Feb. 11, New Braunfels
- Feb. 25, Decatur

For more information and how to register, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/dam-safety.html.



An environmental message brought to you by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division.

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Vegetable Planting Guide Helps Simplify Spring Gardening

Planting a vegetable garden can be a fun, rewarding project that can be successful even in small spaces. In fact, according to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, one of every three families does some type of home gardening, with most gardens located in urban areas.



One of the most important steps in planting a successful vegetable garden is selecting your crops. Texas AgriLife's Spring Planting Guide helps make it easy to determine what crops will grow best in your region. The guide also indicates the best time of year to plant each crop.

To use the Spring Planting Guide, visit <aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/earthkind/ekgarden14.html>.

2010 CARE Grants Available



A community-based program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program works with county and local governments, tribes, nonprofit organizations and universities to help reduce pollution at the local level. Since 2005, the grant projects have reached 68 communities in 34 states and territories.

In 2009, the CARE program granted \$2 million to nine communities for projects addressing various issues, including waste and stormwater, air and water pollution, and hazardous waste disposal.

The EPA is accepting applications for 2010 CARE grants through March 9. For more information, including application instructions, visit <www.epa.gov/care/>.

Mark Your Calendar

Free Petroleum Storage Tank Compliance Workshops

TCEQ's Small Business and Local Government Assistance program is offering free Petroleum Storage Tank (PST) Compliance Workshops to help PST owners and operators comply with state and federal regulations. The workshop will explain how to use TCEQ's latest compliance tool, the *Petroleum Storage Tank PST Super Guide: A Comprehensive Guide to Compliance in Texas* (RG-475).

Workshops are scheduled through April 22. For more information and how to register, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/sblga/pst_wkshp.html>.

Highlighted TCEQ Publications

Mercury Convenience Switch Collection Program Report: A Report to the 81st Texas Legislature, SFR-086/09, is the fourth annual report of the mercury convenience switch collection program.

2009 Emissions Inventory Guidelines, RG-360A/09, is a guide to the Emissions Inventory for industrial facilities that produce air emissions and must report their annual emissions to the TCEQ.

The TCEQ Border Initiative, GI-392, provides general information on the TCEQ's comprehensive, cooperative effort to serve border residents.

To order TCEQ publications, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications>.

Take Care of Texas Tips

At Home

Use Fewer Toxic Cleaning Products

Using fewer toxic cleaning products can reduce pollutants in both the air and water, and help improve the air quality in your house. Using baking soda as a deodorizer eliminates the need for aerosols. Dissolve 4 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 quart of water for an all-purpose cleaner, and use vinegar to dissolve mineral deposits and remove soap scum and mildew. To open clogs, try a plunger first. If that doesn't work, pour ½ cup of baking soda down the drain, add ½ cup of white vinegar, and cover the drain.



Around the Office

Choose Environmentally Friendly Landscaping

Encourage your landscape maintenance company to use environmentally friendly landscaping methods and pass some of the savings on to you. Spreading a thin layer of compost on the grass every spring and putting mulch around trees and shrubs can keep your office landscape beautiful and save you money. Compost and mulch can cut the need for watering in half and make your plants more resistant to drought, disease, and pests of all kinds, reducing the need for pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. For more information, visit <www.yardwise.org>.

www.takecareoftexas.org