

# Take Care OF Texas NEWS you can use

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

JULY 2010

## NEW Take Care of Texas Landscape Publications

Looking for ways to keep your yard healthy and beautiful throughout the hot summer months? Then take a look at six new Take Care of Texas publications designed to help you take care of your lawn while you take care of the environment, year-round.



The Take Care of Texas landscape publications include:

**The "Take Care of Texas" Guide to Yard Care, GI-28,** helps you maintain a healthy yard, save money, and take care of our state's varied landscapes.

**Mulching and Composting: A "Take Care of Texas" Guide, GI-36,** offers quick tips to save money, time, and effort and help your community by mulching and composting.

**Rainwater Harvesting with Rain Barrels: A "Take Care of Texas" Guide, GI-383,** is a brief how-to guide to collecting rainwater to water your plants and save money. It includes instructions on how to build your own rain barrel.

**Managing 10 Common Texas Yard Pests: A "Take Care of Texas" Guide, GI-405,** helps you learn environmentally friendly ways to get rid of these 10 common Texas yard pests.

**Managing Lawn Problems in Texas: A "Take Care of Texas" Guide, GI-407,** is a brief guide to choosing your turf, managing your lawn, and solving common lawn problems.

**Landscape Irrigation: A "Take Care of Texas" Guide, GI-409,** is a brief guide to developing a water-efficient landscape, including tips on using good water techniques and choosing irrigation systems.

To view the publications online, visit [www.takecareoftexas.org/publications](http://www.takecareoftexas.org/publications).

## Now Hitting the Airways: Texas Recycles Computers

The TCEQ has partnered with the Texas Association of Broadcasters to produce and air a public-service announcement for radio that encourages computer recycling. Running for seven weeks beginning June 28, the humorous PSA—to be distributed in English and Spanish versions—aims to educate Texans about the state's computer-recycling program.

Computers contain valuable resources, such as precious metals and copper, that can be reused or recycled. By state law, computer manufacturers are required to offer their Texas consumers a convenient recycling program that is also free at the time of recycling. The



TCEQ encourages Texans to take advantage of these recycling opportunities.

To view a list of manufacturers' recycling Web pages, visit [www.texasrecyclescomputers.org](http://www.texasrecyclescomputers.org).

## Big Savings for Clean Texas Member Garland Environmental Waste Services

Bronze-level Clean Texas member Garland Environmental Waste Services saved more than \$350,000 in fuel costs last year by adhering to a "no idling" policy and optimizing routes and equipment use. Garland Environmental reduced its energy use by 15 percent through energy audits and installation of solar screens and ceiling fans. The



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

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city also began a formal program to reduce its use of office paper that saved 10 percent on office paper purchases and 15 percent of paper consumed.

As part of its community service commitment, Garland Environmental Waste Services has literally taken recycling to the streets, as its employees have gone door to door in neighborhoods with low recycling rates to educate residents about the value of recycling and to distribute bins. Those neighborhoods have seen an increase of 50 percent in recycled waste collected. This active team recently hosted a successful program to distribute recycling bins at a local farmers' market. Overall, residential recycling was up nearly 15 percent last year, saving 1,200 cu yd of landfill space.

For more information about the Clean Texas Program, visit [www.cleantexas.org](http://www.cleantexas.org).

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## New Clean Air Grants Available

The TCEQ is now accepting applications for Texas Emissions Reduction Incentive Grants to help reduce emissions from polluting vehicles and equipment. Applications will be accepted until Aug. 13.

As part of the agency's Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP), these grants offer incentives to replace, repower, or retrofit heavy-duty on-road vehicles, non-road equipment, marine vessels, locomotives, and stationary equipment. Funding is also available for on-site and on-vehicle infrastructure to reduce idling. Projects must reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by at least 25 percent.

Eligible applicants include individuals, businesses, and governments in the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, Dallas-Fort Worth, Beaumont-Port Arthur, Tyler-Longview, and the Austin and San Antonio areas.

For more information, including complete eligibility requirements and copies of the application forms, visit [www.terpgrants.org](http://www.terpgrants.org).

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## Help Your School Take the Energy Star Challenge

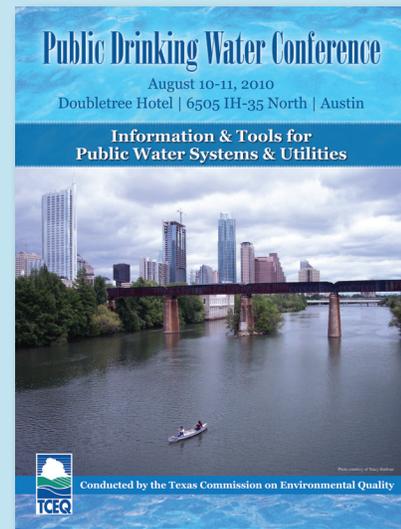
During the back-to-school season, the Energy Star program challenges school administrators and building managers to improve energy efficiency throughout their facilities. School districts can answer this call to action by taking the Energy Star Challenge, a pledge to improve the energy efficiency of our nation's buildings.

The annual energy bill to operate America's primary and secondary schools totals nearly \$8 billion—more than is spent on textbooks and computers combined. Schools that take the Energy Star Challenge can use energy-tracking tools, technical guidance, case studies, and other Energy Star tools and resources to help them improve their energy efficiency.

Nearly 2,000 schools have already earned the Energy Star label for superior energy efficiency. For more information, and to find out how you can encourage your school to be an Energy Star, visit [www.energystar.gov/challenge](http://www.energystar.gov/challenge).



## Public Water System Personnel: Make Plans to Attend the TCEQ Public Drinking Water Conference



Join the TCEQ on August 10–11 for a free two-day seminar that features up-to-date information about operating public drinking water systems and water utilities in Texas.

The conference, to be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Austin, offers the following:

- Presentations on water-related topics.
- Continuing-education units toward your water-operator license for the sessions you attend.
- Opportunities to speak one-on-one about your water system with TCEQ staff in the TCEQ chat room.
- Exhibits by governmental agencies, professional associations, and technical vendors showcasing other resources available to you.

For more information and how to register, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water\\_supply/pdw/conference.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/pdw/conference.html).

## Highlighted TCEQ Publications

*Texas Recycles Computers, GI-408*, tells consumers how to recycle computers and peripherals.

*Common Environmental Requirements for Regulated Oil and Gas Operations, RG-482*, explains agency regulations on oil and gas exploration and production. This publication is not a comprehensive review of such regulations.

*The TCEQ Compliance Commitment (C2) Program, GI-291*, is a brochure for small businesses and local governments outlining the TCEQ program offering free, confidential site visits to identify compliance issues. Companies following up can receive a one-year exemption from scheduled TCEQ inspections.

To order TCEQ publications, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications).



## Take the Survey!

Did you know you can give the TCEQ feedback on the job we are doing? Well, you can, and we want to hear from you.

The TCEQ Customer Satisfaction Survey gives you the opportunity to let us know about your experience working with the agency. If you prefer, you can give us your comments anonymously. We are seeking your feedback on how we can better serve our customers—from your overall satisfaction with the TCEQ to the courteousness and responsiveness of our staff to your opinion about our facilities. And if requested, we will send you a response to your specific comments or questions.

The TCEQ is committed to providing the highest quality customer service. We value your opinion on how we are doing and how we can improve. To make your opinion known, fill a survey out today. Go online at <[www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/customersurvey](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/customersurvey)> or to request a paper copy, call 800-687-4040.

## Take Care of Texas Tips

### *At Home*

### Use the Dishwasher Wisely

Operating automatic dishwashers with a full load can help you save water. Also, you can use your dishwasher's air-dry option or prop the door open after the final rinse to air-dry dishes naturally. Using the heat-dry, rinse-hold, and pre-rinse features sparingly helps you save money. Using a "light wash" feature conserves water. Use detergents without phosphates.

### *Around the Office*

### Tune Up Your Heating and Cooling Systems

Heating and cooling account for 35 percent of an office building's energy use. Save energy and money by tuning up your heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system annually. Even better, service your HVAC before both the heating and the cooling seasons. Systems will decline in performance without regular maintenance. Change (or clean, if reusable) HVAC filters every month during peak cooling or heating seasons. You save energy and money, and your system may last years longer with reasonable yearly maintenance fees.

[www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org)