

THE LATEST DIRT

SUMMER
2005

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER VICTORIA COMPOST EDUCATION CENTRE

Compost Education Centre TOOL SHED GOES GREEN

Sean Lansdell, Compost Educator

The Compost Education Centre has a new addition to our site: a green roof has been installed on our tool shed. The roof has been planted with all native, drought-tolerant species: Nodding Onion, Coastal Strawberry, Common Thrift, and two types of Stonecrop. The living roof was installed by Paradise Cityscapes, a local green roofing company, in a process that spanned a three-day period in April. The project began with the reinforcement of the shed so that it would support the added weight of the plants and their growing medium. The perimeter of the roof was then built up with three 2x4's stacked along each edge. After next covering the roof with a water and root-repellant rubber membrane, the built-up perimeter was framed with 1x8 fascia boards and sealed with metal coping. This framework created a shallow bed for the growing medium, which in this case was a mixture of 75% coarse-ground pumice stone and 25% compost.



There are two basic types of green roofs, extensive and intensive. The types are mainly differentiated by cost, depth of growing medium, and choice of plants. The Compost Education Centre's green roof is extensive in that its installation was relatively cheap and the shallow depth of its growing medium limits the diversity of plant life it can sustain. The more elaborate intensive green roof system is more expensive and much heavier, but it has a deeper growing medium and can therefore sustain more diverse plant life. Both types of roofs lend themselves well to hardscaping—where components such as paths and sitting areas make them a great option for apartment buildings, health care facilities, and hotels.

While living roofs have never come into common usage, they have been used in specific parts of the world as a means of adapting to specific climates. For hundreds of years, green roofing has been practiced in Iceland and Scandinavia, primarily for its capacity to retain heat. Alternately, countries with hotter climates have used green roofs to keep buildings cool.



Initially, green roofs were also appealing for their aesthetic value. We can imagine how good a house would look with plants and grasses in place of asphalt shingles. Fortunately, green roofs have also proven to have a variety of practical benefits for the urban environment. Research undertaken in Europe in the 1960's demonstrated that the technology has a range of benefits including reduced storm water runoff, air and water quality improvements, roof longevity, and energy savings. Since that time, many European states have passed legislation and offer incentives as a way of supporting the industry's growth and revitalizing the urban landscape.



Above: Paradise CityScape crew stand by their finished product

At Right: The completed green roof

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The Greater Victoria

**COMPOST
EDUCATION
CENTRE**

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Hours of Operation

Wed. to Sat. 10 am to 4 pm
Closed on statutory holidays,
long weekends
and the month of December

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Board of Directors

Alex Ball
Kathryn Cook
Angela Deering
Katie Josephson
Tom Watkins
Anitra Winje

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THE LATEST DIRT**

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Newsletter Formatting

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Date (Saturdays)	Topic	Time	Cost
June 11	Small Space Gardening	2-4pm	\$10/free for members
June 18	Gardening Without Pesticides: Controlling Problem Weeds	2-4pm	\$10/\$9 members
July 9	Seed Saving	2-4pm	\$10/free for members
August 6	Composting Basics	11am-1pm	Free
August 6	Gardening Without Pesticides: Planning for Prevention	2-4pm	\$10/\$9 members
August 13	Organic Landscape Design	2-4pm	\$10/free for members
Sept 10	Composting Basics	11am-1pm	Free
Sept 17	Using Common Herbs and Weeds for Healing	2-4pm	\$10/free for members

MUST PRE-REGISTER FOR WORKSHOPS BY CALLING 386-WORM OR EMAILING info@compost.bc.ca



Plant sale participants also had an chance to view the Centre's gardens

Organic Plant Sale a Success

On Saturday May 14th, 382 people participated in the Compost Education's Centre's 2nd Annual Organic Plant Sale.

This market style event featured a variety of hard to find, organically grown annual and perennial veggies, seeds and ornamentals, and gave participants an opportunity to start their gardens off pesticide free this year.

It also gave participants a chance to learn more about organic gardening and composting while feeling good about supporting local growers. Visitors also found delight in strolling through the Compost Education Centre's gardens, finding ideas for their home landscapes and enjoying the beauty of Spring.

Thank you to the following for their support and assistance with the plant sale:

- Local Growers
- North Park Street neighbours
- Volunteers
- Victoria High School
- City of Victoria
- PNH Enterprises

We gratefully acknowledge the core funding support that we receive from the CRD and the City of Victoria. Additional support is provided by the Fernwood Community Association and through the generosity of our Compost Club Members and the residents of Greater Victoria.

PIZZA BOXES AND RIGID PLASTIC PACKAGING CAN NOW BE RECYCLED

Submitted by Anke Bergner, CRD Environmental Services

Did you know that over two million pizzas are delivered throughout our region each year? And that just one day's worth of pizza boxes stacked up would reach the top of Mt. Douglas?

The good news (aside from all that delicious pizza) is that on May 2, the Capital Regional District expanded the blue box curbside recycling program to include pizza boxes. In addition, the program now accepts rigid plastic packaging.

Like pizza boxes, rigid plastic packaging has become commonplace. It's the material that encases many everyday products – from foods like take-out sushi and grocery-store muffins to consumer goods like toys, tools, and electronics. Even the cases around CDs and video cassettes are made of rigid plastic.

A few simple steps are all that is needed to prepare the new materials for recycling. Empty pizza boxes of all food scraps, liners, and inserts. Tear off the lids, or turn the boxes inside out. Then simply add them to your cardboard for pickup.

Preparing your rigid plastic packaging is even easier. Remove all non-plastic attachments, then add the plastic to your blue box. Place lightweight rigid plastics under heavier items to prevent them from blowing away. And remember – plastic bags and styrofoam are NOT accepted.

Last year, our communities' recycling efforts kept over 18,000 tonnes of material from Hartland landfill. With the additional items, the benefits will be even greater.

For more information, please contact the CRD Hotline at 360-3030 or hotline@crd.bc.ca or visit the CRD website at www.crd.bc.ca/es

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE AUGUST CEP

The ever-popular Compost Educator Volunteer Training Program (CEP) will again be offered August 19-21, 2005. Get involved in community compost education by taking this inspiring and informative weekend intensive course.

Formerly known as the Master Composter training, the CEP will equip you to answer all the hard questions about backyard and worm composting at information booths at outreach events throughout the CRD. Over the Friday evening (6-9pm) and Saturday and Sunday (10am-5pm) sessions you will become aware of the value of composting to the environment, the simple principles and methods we promote to make it work, and some pointers on interacting with the public. Staff bring their personal perspective and expertise to create an enjoyable hands-on and interactive learning experience for the participants.

The cost for the 17-hour CEP intensive weekend is a \$100.00 deposit. \$90.00 of this will be refunded after the successful completion of a 30-hour practicum, which consists of at least 20 hours volunteering at community displays in such varied venues as farmers' markets, home shows and mall displays.

Call 386-9676 or email info@compost.bc.ca to sign up or for more information.



VANCITY FUNDS HOMES AND HABITATS PROJECT

Thanks to funding support from Vancity, the Homes and Habitats Project: Phase Two is now in progress!

The Homes and Habitats Project is a partnership between Victoria Habitat for Humanity, and the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre and its partners, collectively called the Wild Garden Party. The purpose of the project is to create ecologically friendly, home based landscapes at a six-unit subdivision in Sidney. These homes are being built with and for low- income families. Features of the landscapes will include:

- Native plants to provide food and habitat for wildlife and to promote ecosystem biodiversity
- Food production using chemical free methods
- Compost for waste reduction and soil amendment
- Water conservation feature

Vancity's generous support has enabled us to hire a part time coordinator, obtain gardening supplies and materials and follow up with a how to manual for others to refer to for future landscaping projects. Thank you, Vancity, for your support of this project.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to the following individuals for their generosity in donating to the Centre.

D. Golto

A. Gallupe

A. Deering

G and R Usipiuk

D. Sanford

J. Oakley

A.M O'Brien

C. Fitzgerald

Annual General Meeting Welcomes New Board Members

This year's AGM on April 17th welcomed Alex Ball and Anitra Winje to the Board of Directors of the Victoria Compost and Conservation Education Society. We also welcomed back Angela Deering and Kathryn Cook, now in their 6th year of volunteering for the Compost Education Centre. Tom Watkins also joined us again after a one-year absence and Katie Josephson celebrated her one-year anniversary on the Board. It's great to have them back!

Thank you and good luck to Pamela Dinn and Steve Young who served on the board of directors and have stepped down due to work and family commitments, respectively.

Thank you also to Colleen Loader who has also stepped down from the board of directors after 3 years of service to pursue other opportunities at the Centre.

Another big thank you goes out to Neil Williams for facilitating the election of officers for the sixth year in a row.

As a special treat, this year's AGM was held on site at the Compost Education Centre amidst the Spring bloom of the organic gardens. It included a Slow Food presentation by professional chef Mara Jernigan, with accompanying Slow Food snacks from Wild Fire Bread and Pastry.

We were also pleased to recognize key volunteers for their outstanding service, and accept the Quality of Life Challenge Award

The following is a list of Board of Directors for 2005 and their positions:

Kathryn Cook-President

Angela Deering- Vice President

Anitra Winje-Secretary

Alex Ball-Treasurer

Tom Watkins-Member at Large/CRD Representative

Katie Josephson-Member at Large

Compost Education Centre Tool Shed Goes Green *(continued from page 1)*



Sealing the frame with metal coping

In North America, the use of green roofing is still ten years behind Europe. Several large European manufacturers tried to bring green roofs to the North American market in the early 1990's, but found that governments and businesses were not generally interested in investing in green technologies. Recently, however, this climate has begun to change. Although Canada may not seem to be overly deficient in green space, there is enough concern about urban sprawl, excessive energy consumption, and the environmental conditions of cities, that governments are beginning to show some support. In 2002, the city of Toronto announced a \$1 million green roofing project that has led to green roofs on Toronto's City Hall and Eastview Community Centre. Recently, the National Research Council of Canada announced an incentive program for energy-efficient buildings, highlighting green roof technology. Groups such

as Green Roofs for Healthy Cities and Rooftop Gardens Resource Group have worked to develop the North American market by providing green roof information, installing demonstration projects, initiating research to highlight the benefits of the technology, and holding conferences that bring together the public and private sectors.

In November of 2004, Canada's Minister of the Environment, Stephane Dion, announced his desire to see trees and flowers on the roof of every federal building. Dion added that green roofs will continue to become a more common feature of Canada's urban landscape and suggested tax incentives as a way of encouraging the industry's growth. With Europe's success, as well as research and incentives beginning to support the North American market, the foundations may be in place to prove Dion right.

For more information on green roofing, check out the website www.greenroofs.org or stop by the Compost Education Centre to see a green roof in action.

THE LATEST DIRT is published quarterly. The deadline for submissions for the Fall issue is August 24, 2005. Submissions to the newsletter can be sent to the Compost Education Centre. Unless otherwise noted, articles appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted only in other not-for-profit publications, with the credit given to the author (when named) and THE LATEST DIRT.

