

# THE LATEST DIRT

Summer/  
Fall  
2014

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COMPOST EDUCATION CENTRE

## Rainy Days Open House



In April of this year, the Victoria Compost Education Centre in partnership with the CRD, hosted its first annual Rainy Days Rainwater Harvesting Open House.

It was a beautiful sunny day and more than 125 people attended three one hour training workshops on rain water harvesting.

The CRD, City of Victoria, District of Saanich, along with CANARM, Down Under Irrigation, Ayre Pump Services and Van Isle Water ran educational tables at our beautifully blooming demonstration site, with all the newest products and information on rainwater harvesting available in the Greater Victoria region.

Thanks to funding from the Royal Bank Blue Water Project, the Compost Education Centre was able to offer rain water harvesting cistern kits at a highly subsidized price, which allowed many happy community members to get started harvesting rainwater at home!

We are so excited about our fabulous new working 400 imperial gallon rainwater catchment system (pictured at right), which adds to the rich educational tapestry of our already bustling demonstration site. Come check out this giant beauty any time Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm.



**Don't miss our Fall Rainy Days Open House on Saturday September 13th from 10am-3pm!**





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**Hours of Operation**  
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## August Organic Plant Sale 2014

Here at the Compost Education Centre, we always enjoy watching beautiful starts leave the sale to find their new homes in gardens around town. We'll be hosting our 2nd plant sale of the year on **Saturday August 16th from 10am-1pm**. This is a great opportunity to pick up some great veggie starts such as broccoli, kale and chard varieties for healthy winter eating!



## Growing the Seeds of Community

***Support food justice and security in your own backyard by joining the Grow a Row community!***

The "Grow a Row" project is an initiative that began in 1988 in Winnipeg and has grown to include over 85 communities across Canada. The premise of Grow a Row is simple – plant an extra row of vegetables in your garden to give to those in need! Last year, 1,630 kilograms of food were donated through the Grow a Row Program, providing healthy local produce to Our Place, YMCA/ YWCA Youth Housing Initiative & Young Moms program, Burnside Gorge Community Association, S.A.F.F.E. Dinner Group @ Vic West Community Centre, and the Sooke Food Bank.



**The Compost Education Centre accepts produce donations on Saturdays only from 10am-4pm from mid-May to the end of September**

We gratefully acknowledge the core funding support that we receive from the CRD and the City of Victoria. Additional support is provided through the generosity of our community funders, Compost Club Members and the residents of CRD.

# Pollinators Unite!

On June 14th, the Compost Education Centre hosted its first annual Pollination Education Day. This fantastic open house-style event highlighted the importance of pollination and beneficial insects. Without pollinators, humans and wildlife wouldn't have much to eat! Bees, butterflies, wasps and even bats, ants, birds and beetles pollinate over 90% of the planet's flowering plants and over 75% of human food crops. Community members enjoyed a fun-filled and interactive day of education about creating habitat for pollinators, and what to plant in your garden to attract these valuable animals and insects.

Our Site Manager Alysha along with her intrepid summer intern Emily, planted a garden to provide food and habitat for pollinators and other beneficial insects here at the Centre. The goal of this garden is to provide forage for these little helpers throughout the growing season. Plant varieties were selected based on flowering time (spring/summer/fall), colour, flower shape, and species they attract.



## What Can You Do to Help Pollinators?

**Use local native plants.** Research suggests native plants are four times more attractive to native bees than invasive species. In gardens, heirloom varieties of herbs and perennials can also provide good foraging

**Choose several colours of flowers.** Flower colors that particularly attract bees are blue, purple, white and yellow

**Plant flowers in clumps.** Flowers planted in clumps are more likely to attract pollinators than individual plants scattered throughout a garden

**Include flowers of different shapes.** Bees come in all different sizes, have different tongue lengths and will feed on different shaped flowers. Providing a diversity of flower shapes means more bees will benefit

**Have a diversity of plants flowering all season.** By having several plant species flowering at once, and a sequence of plants flowering through spring summer and fall, you can support a range of bee species that fly at different times of the season

### Make a "Bee Bath"

Did you know bees need a place to land safely and drink water? The bees in your garden are thirsty but are unable to land in conventional bird baths because they will end up crashing into the water without the safety of a landing pad. You can help them out by building a bee drinking station, following the instructions from the David Suzuki Foundation below!

- Line a shallow bowl or plate with rocks
- Add water, but leave the rocks as islands to serve as landing pads
- Place the bath at the ground level in your garden (Put it near "problem plants", those that get aphids, for example, and the beneficial insects that come to drink will look after them)
- Refresh the water daily, adding just enough to evaporate by day's end



# Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Time	Cost
July 19	Summer Pruning	2pm - 4pm	\$20 (Members: \$15)
July 26	DIY Rain Barrels	10am - 1pm	FREE (drop-in)
Aug 9	Composting Basics	10am - 12pm	FREE
Aug 9	INTENSIVE: Natural Beekeeping	1pm - 4pm	\$25 (Members: \$20)
Aug 16	August Organic Plant Sale	10am - 1pm	FREE
Aug 23	INTENSIVE: Aquaponics	1pm - 4pm	\$25 (Members: \$20)
Sept 6	Soil Science 101	10am - 12pm	FREE
Sept 6	Seed Saving	2pm - 4pm	\$20 (Members: \$15)
Sept 13	RAINY DAYS OPEN HOUSE	10am - 3pm	FREE (drop-in)
Oct 4	Composting Basics	10 - 12pm	FREE
Oct 4	Grow the Best Garlic	2pm - 4pm	\$20 (Members: \$15)
Oct 18	Worm Composting	10am- 12pm	FREE
Oct 25	Advanced Composting	10am - 12pm	FREE

*Workshops subject to change without notice.*

**MUST PRE-REGISTER FOR WORKSHOPS AT [WWW.COMPOSTEDUCATION.EVENTBRITE.CA](http://WWW.COMPOSTEDUCATION.EVENTBRITE.CA)**



**Giving  
Goes  
Green!**

Giving to the Compost Ed. Centre is easy! Save time and paper by submitting your donations on-line through Canada Helps.org. Simply surf over to [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org) and type in "Compost". Our name is on the top of the search results. Or, visit our website and click the Canada Helps link. And of course, donations are still happily accepted!

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## Nadine on Mat Leave

Nadine has recently expanded her family and welcomed baby Cali into the world! Marika will once again be taking over as Executive Director while she is on maternity leave. Nadine started in 2007 and to date has been the longest running Executive Director the organization has ever had. We wish her luck in this next chapter of her life, but expect she will at least return when it is time to harvest the raspberries!



Nadine looking a little nutty at Plant-A-Fruit Tree Day

**Did you know?... Victoria receives 24 inches of rain annually compared with Port Renfrew which receives the most rainfall annually in BC at a whopping 145 inches!**