

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



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northandover.com

Spring 2007



# North Andover receives more grant funding

In our last issue of the newsletter, we announced that the Town of North Andover had received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to help expand school recycling programs. Since then, the Town has been awarded additional grant funds for public space recycling containers, rain barrels, and water conservation devices.

Grant funds will pay for 10 public space recycling containers for beverage bottles and cans. These new recycling containers will be placed in high-traffic areas where people commonly consume soft drinks, including the High School and Middle School. The North Andover Department of Public Works will empty the containers on Mondays, Wednesdays,



and Fridays at the same time that they collect trash from the public trash barrels around town. We will be assisted by the environmental club at the High School and are working on identifying a partner at the Middle School.



This is the second year that we've received grant funds to purchase rain barrels. This year's grant will provide a discount for an additional 50 rain barrels. (Our past grant brought 78 rain barrels to North Andover.) Rain barrels collect water from the roof each time it rains, storing it for use during dry weather. Just 1/4 inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof will fill two barrels. By capturing this rainwater, we reduce storm water runoff and provide naturally soft water that garden and house plants will love. While supplies last, these rain barrels will be made available to North Andover residents at a discounted rate (see box).

The remaining grant funds will provide water conservation devices, including six-

position, automatic shut-off garden hose nozzles; rain gauges to help prevent over-watering; low-flow showerheads with shut-off; low-flow kitchen faucet aerators; and leak detection dye tablets to test the seal between the tank and the bowl of a toilet. These devices will be given away by the NASWAC at events throughout the year. Look for them wherever we have our information and education table set up. For starters, the devices will be available to those picking up rain barrels on April 21.



## Let the rains begin!

The New England Rain Barrel Company makes 55-gallon, blue, recycled-content plastic rain barrels as a way to conserve water, recycle plastic containers, and help the environment. These barrels come with super-safe lids that are permanently affixed with just a six-inch, mesh-covered opening at the top. The barrels have two spigots, one for a garden hose and one for overflow.

For a limited time, the rain barrels can be purchased by North Andover residents

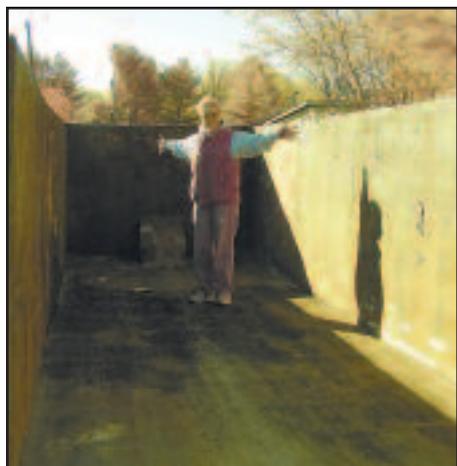
for \$56.50 each, a discount of more than \$30 from the normal retail price of \$89. Orders for this year's supply of rain barrels will be accepted through April 13. Residents who order barrels will be able to pick them up on Saturday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the North Andover Public Works Building, 384 Osgood Street.

If you're interested in ordering a rain barrel, call The New England Rain Barrel Company at 978-977-3135 or order online at [www.nerainbarrel.com](http://www.nerainbarrel.com).

# Because it's the only Earth we have...

North Andover is holding its fifth annual Earth Day Cleanup on Saturday, April 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We will be hitting the streets, parks, and ball fields to pick up litter, so come lend a hand. Your family, neighborhood, scout troop, or church can adopt an area or street to clean. We suggest that you pick an area that you see on a regular basis so that you can take pride in your work afterwards! If you don't have an area in mind, we'll be happy to recommend a place in need of attention.

Dumpsters have been donated by Wheelabrator and trash collected through our cleanup efforts will be disposed of free of charge. So, please bring your day's collection back to the DPW and place it in the Wheelabrator dumpster which will be on site temporarily for this event.



You'll be able to stay hydrated and fueled on water and snacks donated again this year by Wild Oats. Organic fruit, cookies, and water can be picked up along with other supplies if you check-in on the morning of the cleanup.

Check-in opens at 8:30 a.m. and is located at the DPW. If you need supplies (thick contractor trash bags, work gloves, and bucket) or if you will need help getting your full bags back to the DPW, please check-in before starting your day. If you have a favorite pair of gloves, we suggest that you use your own. Also, you might want to bring along a five-gallon bucket. It's easier to collect trash into a bucket and then fill your bag than it is to carry and fill the bags. At check-in, you will also receive a cell phone number to call if we can help you haul your bags back to the dumpster.

Once you are all set with supplies, hit the streets when convenient for your weekend schedule, and remember to bring your full bags to the DPW. The dumpster will be removed first thing Monday morning.

If you have a pickup truck and can help transport bags during and after the cleanup, we could use your help with that. Call us to volunteer yourself and your truck.

To participate, send an e-mail to [recycle@townofnorthandover.com](mailto:recycle@townofnorthandover.com) or call DPW at 978-685-0950 with the street(s)



you'll be cleaning up or with your request for an area assignment. We're keeping a list so we can ensure as many areas are adopted as possible.

A special thanks to our 700 past volunteers for all their hard work. Together, they have picked up 120 cubic yards of trash and litter from our town.



The Recycling Calendar and Information postcard you are used to getting each year WILL NOT be mail to you this year. Instead, this information will be published in the next edition of this newsletter, which is due out the first week of July. Remember to clip-and-save!



# 10 Tips for Creating Compost

You can make your own backyard compost. The ingredients you'll need are readily available—"green" and "brown" organic waste, water, and air. After you've mixed these ingredients and given them some time to cook, you'll have a finished compost that will make a nutritious amendment for your soil.

Follow these steps to create your own compost:

1. Choose a level area in your yard. You don't want your compost bin or pile to be in the way, but you don't want it too far away from your source of organic material either. You'll need at least a 3 by 5 foot area to give your pile or bin room to

2. Select a spot that is out of direct sunlight most of the day.
3. Make sure that you have access to water nearby and a hose that will reach the spot.
4. Use a heap, build your own bin, or purchase a commercial compost bin. The size and type will depend on how much organic material you have available and how fast you want your compost to cook.
5. Layer "brown" yard waste, such as dry leaves and dead plants, with "green" organic waste, such as grass clippings and fruit and vegetable scraps. You'll want about 2 parts

"green" for every one part "brown." If you are grasscycling most of your lawn clippings, coffee grounds are a good "green" organic material (even though they are colored brown); coffee grounds are a source of nitrogen, as are other "greens." Mix the material as you fill your compost bin or build your heap. Be sure that food scraps are at least 10 inches below the surface of the pile—this will keep unwanted visitors away.



6. Chop larger waste, such as twigs, into smaller pieces. You can chop this material manually using trimmers or loppers, or you can run twigs and branches through a chipper/shredder. (You could share a chipper/shredder with your neighbors or rent one.) Chopping this woody waste will help it rot more quickly.
7. Turn the pile at least every other week. Use a pitchfork, a shovel, or a compost turner. Be sure that the material is thoroughly mixed each time you turn it. The more often you turn your pile, the more quickly your material will decompose.
8. Add water if your pile becomes dry. Mix the water evenly through the material. During most weather conditions, your pile should be moist but not soaking wet. If your pile becomes soggy during wet weather, turn and mix the material to add air and help dry it out. A tarp can help keep your composting materials from getting too wet during heavy rains.
9. Give your compost up to six months to cook and cure. For faster compost, turn the pile more often. When the

- waste has become dark and crumbly, you have compost!
10. Spread the compost as mulch around trees or under bushes, mix it into your garden soil, or combine it with soil or sand to make a great potting soil.

For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/composting/by\\_compost.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/composting/by_compost.htm) or contact the Cooperative Extension Service.

## DO compost these:

- Grass clippings
- Twigs and leaves
- Coffee grounds, filters, and tea bags
- Egg shells (ground into tiny pieces)
- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Shredded newspaper
- Dryer lint

## DON'T put these in the pile:

- Diseased plants
- Weeds that have gone to seed
- Plants that are spread by runners, such as Morning Glory or Buttercup
- Cat, dog, hog, or human waste
- Chemically treated wood products
- Glossy or coated papers
- Ashes
- Meat and fish scraps and bones
- Oils and other fatty food products
- Milk products



## A composter's diary

Do worms have lungs? Can corks go in compost piles? These are just two of the questions handled by compost hotline operator Spring Gillard at City Farmer, Vancouver, British Columbia's non-profit

urban agriculture group that has been thriving for 25 years. Gillard began her diary with online posts in 1996. Through humorous stories, silly scenes, and even a compost "rap," the posts touched on the essentials of composting, alternatives to pesticides, organic and edible landscapes, compost teas, drug-free lawns, rainwater harvesting, and urban agriculture in big cities. Laugh and learn as you read *Diary of a Compost Hotline Operator: Edible Essays on City Farming* by Spring Gillard (New Society Publishers, 2003).

## The Possibilities Are Endless... Compost!

International Compost Awareness Week is May 6-12, 2007. Compost Awareness Week would be a great time to show off your compost pile to the neighbors, start a new pile, buy compost to use in your garden, or plant a tree using compost to prepare the soil. For more information, visit [www.CompostingCouncil.org](http://www.CompostingCouncil.org) and click on "Compost Week."

# How green is your party?

We're fast approaching the season of graduation parties and weddings. Each year in the United States, more than 2.7 million youth graduate from high school, nearly 1.2 million adults graduate from college, and 2.27 million couples marry. That's over 6 million pieces of paper—just for the diplomas and marriage certificates. When you add to it the invitations, announcements, greeting cards, and thank-you notes, as well as the special clothes, the decorations, the food, and the gifts, you have a huge pile of stuff, some of which almost immediately becomes waste.

For instance, if you purchase a "Congratulations, Graduate!" banner, what happens to it after the party? What becomes of the wedding reception centerpieces? How about the envelopes that held the invitations, cards, and other correspondence? If you use paper plates and cups for the party, where are they at the end of the day? As you can see, these celebrations have the potential to leave behind a lot of waste.

You can make your festive occasions

less wasteful. Whether you are hosting a graduation party, a wedding reception, a family reunion, a retirement celebration, or a business or school meeting, you can plan ahead and create less waste. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- Avoid a lot of extra paper in invitations, such as double envelopes and reply card envelopes. If you need replies, request a phone call, an e-mail, or include a stamped, self-addressed postcard.
- For less formal events, e-mail your invitations. Remember to call to invite people who don't have e-mail addresses!
- Print everything, from invitations to programs, on recycled-content paper.
- Look for used clothing for the occasion. If you need formal wear, costumes, and or just a different summer dress, shop at secondhand or vintage stores. Accept hand-me-downs with thanks!
- Rent or borrow apparel that you won't use again. For the men, rent tuxes or

suits or borrow a friend's jacket for the event. Women can also rent many items or borrow from a friend or relative. If you often attend semi-formal events, create a "swap shop" with your friends so that you can trade clothes and have something new-to-you to wear.

- Decorate with what you already have. For instance, if you're toasting a graduate, decorate with childhood photos.
- Use washable and reusable plates, cups, napkins, and tablecloths. If you are hosting an event and don't have enough for the number of guests who will be attending, rent or borrow extras. Minimize your use of disposables, and you'll minimize your waste.
- Whatever kind of party you're hosting, recycle! Be sure that beverage container recycling bins are located near each trash bin. For multi-day events, such as family reunions or meetings, be sure to provide newspaper recycling, too.

- Send leftovers home with guests. Donate unopened and non-perishable leftover food to a food pantry.
- Avoid party favors. Your guests are there to share your special event—not to take a goodie bag home! If you think you must give some kind of party favors, give things that are consumable, such as candy, cookies, teas, or coffees.
- If you register for gifts, be sure to register for things you really need and will use.
- Instead of gifts, ask guests to donate to a cause or charitable organization or to bring canned or boxed goods to donate to a food pantry.
- When you buy gifts, look for durable and reusable products. Or, consider giving future events that the recipient will enjoy, such as a museum membership, theater tickets, movie passes, or restaurant gift certificates.
- Donate or re-gift items that you can't use rather than storing what you don't need and won't use.



# Share the good news about Earth Day

In the early 1960s, Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, proposed a nationwide conservation tour to President John F. Kennedy. The tour, which took place in September 1963, was overshadowed by other events. However, six years later, in the summer of 1969, Nelson got the idea for a national “teach-in” about the environment. Planning began for this teach-in, which was dubbed Earth Day and set for April 22, 1970. A call went out. And Americans responded.

Going into that first Earth Day, no one could have predicted what was about to occur. School children, college students, community leaders, public officials, and citizens mobilized a huge, grassroots effort. By April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans, or 10 percent of our nation’s population in that year, took part.

This demonstration for the environment brought about sweeping changes at the federal and state levels. Later that same year, President Richard Nixon established the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by Executive Order. In the years that followed, dozens of environmental laws were passed, protecting our coastlines, clearing our air, and cleaning up our water supplies.

Today, nearly 40 years later, the successes of Earth Day are readily apparent. The worst of our day-to-day environmental problems have been addressed. In most places and by most standards, we have cleaner air and safer water than we did four decades ago.

However, this year and every year, Earth Day reminds us that there is still work to be done. We’ve cleaned up many of our old messes, but we aren’t finished. Plus, we need to continue to monitor our progress, making adjustments and improvements as testing and technology change. And, of course, along the way, we’ve created some new problems, such as the huge pile of electronics that we discard each year.

The good news is that Earth Day—then and now—is about individuals acting to make a difference. Today, you can make that difference. Get involved. Reduce the amount of waste in your life—conserve energy, save water, and create less trash. Recycle all that you can, providing useful materials to the manufacturing process. And, spread the word, especially to children and youth. Someday soon this will be their environment. Show them how and why to take care of it now.



## A checklist for the planet



It’s almost Earth Day. Are you ready? Use this checklist to help you evaluate your actions. This will also give you some ideas for improving your planet-friendly habits.

- I turn off the lights when I leave the room.
- I have replaced at least some of my incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents.
- I turn off TVs, games, music players, and computers when I’m not using them.
- When I purchase new electrical appliances and electronics, I look for the “Energy Star” certification.
- I keep my showers short.
- I turn off the water while brushing my teeth.
- I walk or bike for short trips instead of hopping in the car.
- I plan my errands and trips so that I drive the fewest possible miles and spend the least possible amount of time stuck in traffic or sitting at stop-lights.
- I turn off my engine and walk inside rather than idling in drive-through lanes.
- I buy secondhand and used goods whenever possible.
- I am creative in reusing what I have by finding new uses for old stuff.
- I’m a regular at the local library, borrowing books, movies, CDs, and more.
- I use both sides of paper.
- I recycle all of the materials accepted in my local program.
- When I travel, I look for and use recycling bins for beverage containers and newspapers.
- I use refillable water bottles.
- I never mix hazardous chemicals or other hazardous waste with my household trash.



## QUOTES REQUOTED

Every increased  
possession loads  
us with a new  
weariness.

John Ruskin, 1819–1900  
Author and Social Critic

## Eco Action through Action Sports

The X Games are all about extreme action on the ramps and the slopes. But the organizers are also serious about extreme environmental activity. From on-site recycling and environmental education for spectators to clean energy credits to offset carbon emissions created by the event, the X Games are walking their talk, or should we say “grinding their rail.”

Here are a few of the eco-friendly actions that have been a part of the recent Winter and Summer X Games. The plastic bottles from Winter X 10 were used to create 21,000 snow jackets insulated with fiberfill made from recycled plastic beverage bottles. The 360 truckloads of dirt used to build the Moto X track for Summer X 12 will be reused to build tracks at future action sports events. The skateboard ramps at the summer games were made from wood grown in sustainable forests or built using reclaimed wood from previous events. This wood will be reused for future events.

For more information about the X Games “Environmentality,” visit <http://disney.go.com/environmentality/xgames/index.html>.



## WHAT'S UP?

The Town's new and improved website is up and running. You can access it at [www.TownofNorthAndover.com/recycle](http://www.TownofNorthAndover.com/recycle).



Calling all small businesses! Please remember that you are welcome to use the Recycling Drop-Off Center. Collect your recyclables at work and drop them off at the Center.



DPW now accepts scrap metal, such as old metal swing sets or bicycles, on the third Saturday of each month as part of the special once-a-month drop-off for hard-to-handle wastes.



North Andover's Spring Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Day will be Saturday, April 21 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. HHW includes household chemicals, lawn and garden products, and automotive fluids. Residents are allowed to drop off HHW at no charge. If you only have a small amount of material, consider consolidating it with a neighbor's, which will save the town money. The Town pays for the collection and proper disposal of all of the HHW received.



**We want your suggestions, questions and comments!**

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Please recycle this publication after you have read it!

# The challenge has been issued

Our neighbor and sometimes-rival Andover has issued the challenge. Which of our towns can have the most people pledge to "Change a Light—Change the World"? You can pledge your support by going to [www.EnergyStar.gov](http://www.EnergyStar.gov) and making this commitment: "I pledge to do my part to save energy and help reduce the risks of global climate change by replacing at least one light in my home with an ENERGY STAR qualified one." The action you need to take is simple. Replace one of your incandescent light bulbs with a compact fluorescent bulb. Better yet—replace five!



Global climate change is a fact, but decreasing human energy consumption can make a difference. The electricity in most homes comes from power plants that burn fossil fuels, such as coal and oil. Burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These greenhouse gases capture heat in our atmosphere and warm our global climate. If we use energy more efficiently, we'll reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Most homes still use incandescent light bulbs, which were invented 125 years ago. Only 10 percent of the electricity used by an incandescent bulb produces light, while the other 90 percent escapes as heat. Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use 1/3 the energy and last up to 10 times longer than incandescents. CFLs create the same amount of light with 70 percent less heat, saving the environment while you save on your electric bill. Every CFL can prevent nearly



500 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions over its lifetime, or about 150 pounds per year.

CFLs are available to fit most light fixtures and have been improved since they were first introduced. The light is warmer, and new CFLs don't flicker. Home Depot and Rocky's Ace Hardware in North Andover have large selections. While you're at it, buy some as gifts!

Now is the time to make your pledge and change your bulbs! You can access the pledge sign-up and check out the latest race totals right from the homepage of the Andover/North Andover League of Women Voters website, [www.lwv-andovers.org/](http://www.lwv-andovers.org/).

At last count, Andover had 222 pledges, and we only had 136. Let's get energized and pull ahead. Urge your

friends and family to make the switch, too!

Please remember—CFLs, like all fluorescent bulbs, contain mercury, so they must be disposed of properly. The DPW accepts all fluorescent bulbs, free of charge, on the third Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon.

### Other Websites of Interest

#### 10% Challenge

[www.10percentchallenge.org](http://www.10percentchallenge.org)

#### An Inconvenient Truth

[www.climatecrisis.net](http://www.climatecrisis.net)

#### Climate Change Education

[www.climatechangeeducation.org/kids/index.html](http://www.climatechangeeducation.org/kids/index.html)

#### Kids 4 Clean Air

[www.clean-air-kids.org.uk/index.html](http://www.clean-air-kids.org.uk/index.html)

#### NOAA Education

[www.education.noaa.gov/tclimate.html](http://www.education.noaa.gov/tclimate.html)

#### Stop Global Warming

[www.stopglobalwarming.org/default.asp](http://www.stopglobalwarming.org/default.asp)

#### Environmental Defense

[www.fightglobalwarming.com](http://www.fightglobalwarming.com)

## Too much stuff? De-clutter your house!

### Take part in the Town-Wide Yard Sale Weekend, June 23 and 24

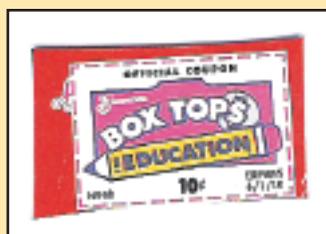
Are you ready for some spring cleaning? Have your kids outgrown piles of clothes and toys? Are you ready to part with your aunt's old dishes? Start sorting, tag your unwanted treasures, and get ready to sell, sell, sell!

On Saturday, June 23, and Sunday, June 24, the North Andover Solid Waste Advisory Committee will help promote town-wide yard sale days. If you plan to hold a yard sale on one or both of these days, register with us. There is a \$10 fee that will help pay for advertising in and around North Andover. Go to our web-

site, [www.TownofNorthAndover.com/recycle](http://www.TownofNorthAndover.com/recycle), to download the registration form. Then mail the form, along with your \$10 check, to the Department of Public Works, 384 Osgood Street, North Andover, MA 01845.

In order to advertise your sale address on this year's flyer, we will need to receive your registration form by Friday, June 8.

Last year, 32 households took part in our first annual town-wide yard sale days. Let's increase that number and reuse even more this year!



Since 1996, General Mills, maker of popular cereals such as Cheerios and Lucky Charms, has been helping schools raise money through the "Box Tops for Education" program. Schools collect box tops, send them in, and get paid for each eligible box top. The list of products included in this program keeps growing. No longer just cereal, you'll also find the Box Tops for Education logo on some frozen food boxes, paper products, and plastic bags. For a complete list-

ing, check [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com).

Dawn Saraceno, the Box Tops Coordinator at Thomson Elementary School, has a goal of raising \$1,800 from boxtops this year. In the fall, Thomson Elementary received a check for \$800 after just three months of collecting. Nice work, Dawn!

Anyone in town interested in saving boxtops from General Mills items to help the schools should place the boxtops in an envelope and mail them to their local elementary school. Please write "Attention PTO/Boxtops" on the envelope.



You recycle bottles, cans, and newspapers, but what about grass? Do you recycle your grass clippings? If not, you should! When you "grasscycle," you simply let clippings drop back onto the lawn as you mow. Nature takes care of the rest!

Grass clippings provide your lawn with nitrogen, a food that it needs. In fact, letting your grass clippings drop back onto the lawn each mowing season may cut in half the amount of lawn food (fertilizer) that you'll need. Grass clippings, which are 80 to 90 percent water, provide some of the moisture your lawn needs, meaning you water less often, too.

Grasscycling also saves you time. When you grasscycle, mowing takes about one-third less time. So if your lawn takes an hour to mow when you bag the grass, it will only take about 40 minutes when you grasscycle. The way we see it, that's 20 more minutes for taking a walk, reading a favorite book, or napping!

Any mower can be a grasscycling mower. Mulching mowers will chop the grass blades into tiny pieces. However, other mowers can grasscycle, too. Simply remove the bag attachment from your mower and insert the "chute cover," a safety device that covers the hole where the bag is normally attached.

No matter what kind of mower you use, you should be "trimming" your grass. In other words, give it regular trims, not one big "haircut." Each time you mow, you should trim the top one-third or less off your lawn. If the grass is growing quickly, you may have to mow more than once a week. The small clippings will quickly begin to rot before the next mowing. If you chop off more than one-third in a single mowing, it is hard on the grass plants and you leave behind long clippings that take longer to break down.