



Sustainability Newsletter

www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter

August/September 2015

Backyard Compost Kits Offered by the RDBN!

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is excited to announce that subsidized backyard composting kits will be available again in 2015! A limited number of composting bins and mixing tools will be available to Regional District residents. The kits can be pre-purchased starting in August, at a subsidized price of \$40. In September, they can be picked up at locations in Smithers, Houston, Granisle, Burns Lake Fraser Lake, Fort St. James and Vanderhoof. Pickup dates and locations will be announced. For more information call Lynda Fyfe, Sustainability Assistant at 1-800-320-3339.

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- Supporting the Soil Under Your Lawn
- Invasive Plants: Preventing the Spread
- Seasonal Eats: Zucchini!

Expanded Recycling Program at Houston Bottle Depot

In addition to the bins available for cardboard recycling, the Houston Bottle Depot now has bins for the collection of mixed paper and most household food containers (in the bin marked 'food cans and residential plastics'). Please visit the Houston Bottle Depot or call the RDBN for details.

Stay tuned for Compost Program updates!

Visit our Facebook page "Sustainable RDBN"



Health Canada is re-considering how it labels the weed killing chemical Round-up after the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer reclassified the product as "probably carcinogenic" on March 31 2015. The recommended wording is aimed at reducing the exposure to Roundup for residents and human populations, agricultural workers, wildlife, nature and water sources. See more at: <http://bcinvasives.ca/news-events/recent-highlights/health-canada-looks-to-re-label-weed-killer-roundup>.

Past issues are available online at: www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter

If you have any questions or suggestions about the content of this newsletter, please call Lynda Fyfe, Sustainability Assistant for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako at 250-692-3195, toll free: 1-800-320-3339, email: lynda.fyfe@rdbn.bc.ca

2015 is the International Year of Soils! Science has discovered that, living in healthy soil is an amazingly rich community of tiny life forms. These organisms interact with the roots of the plants that we tend, use and enjoy—benefiting our lives in very significant ways. Soil is such a critical resource that degradation of soil threatens the sustainability of human populations.

There's Life Under There! Maintaining Healthy Soil for a Healthy Lawn

What does healthy soil have to do with a healthy lawn? Everything! Dependence on chemical fertilizers and the cosmetic use of pesticides has taken a serious toll—killing the organisms in the soil food web, polluting waterways and creating a vicious cycle that requires more chemicals.

Perhaps an organic lawn may not be perfectly weed free, but is the trade-off worth it? See our reasons to embrace weeds below...

- ◇ **Assess your lawn (see side bar):** If all the positive indicators are present, the soil food web is intact! You can feed your lawn by adding an organic fertilizer—with nitrogen-potassium-phosphorus numbers no higher than 10-10-10—at the beginning or end of the growing season. Grass clippings will provide the nutrients your lawn needs through the summer.
- ◇ **Mow betta!** Keep your cutting blades sharp and mow weekly, when your lawn is dry, cutting only 1 inch and leaving grass clippings on your lawn. When leaves drop in the fall—don't rake them up! Run your lawn mower over them to mulch them in place.
- ◇ **Water wisely:** Lawns need about 1 inch of water per week, rainfall included. Set out an empty tuna can on your lawn and time your sprinkler to determine required watering time.
- ◇ **Revive:** If your lawn is recovering from chemical fertilizers and/or pesticides, plug aeration of the lawn in early spring will add air and reduce compaction. Apply a 1/4 inch layer of compost to your lawn in May or mid-September, and rake so that the grass stands up. You may need to repeat this application for a few years to restore the life in the soil.

Lawn Health Check:

How healthy is your lawn? Earthworms are an indicator; in fact, in response to chemical fertilizers, worms will simply leave the area!



Here are positive signs to look for:

- ⇒ birds are hunting for worms
- ⇒ worm castings are deposited on the soil surface
- ⇒ there are lots of earthworms visible after a soaking rain

Benefits of dandelions: 1. They are the first spring food for the bees, which we rely upon to pollinate our food crops; 2. You can eat them (young leaves in salads, roasted dandelion roots as coffee substitute; flowers can be battered and fried to make fritters...and more); and 3. The flowers are not there for long and they create a show of bright colour after the winter darkness.

An invasive plant is one that is non-native and that causes economic or environmental harm and can spread quickly to new areas. They become invasive because they have no native predators (insects, animals) or diseases that control them.

The Northwest Invasive Plant Council (NWIPC) is one of 13 regional committees that develop programs and initiatives for managing terrestrial and aquatic invasive species in BC. The Regional District of Bulkley -Nechako partners with NWIPC to address the problem of invasive plants in our region.

Invasive plants vary in how quickly and aggressively they can spread. Most take advantage of habitats that are in poor condition or where the ground has been disturbed. **The species of greatest concern are those that invade undisturbed habitats; dominating and out-competing the native plants, and changing the ecosystem.** Often, these plants are escaped ornamentals, and while pretty to look at, can have devastating effects on our natural ecosystems, economic crops and animal forage.

The NWIPC recognizes that “weed” control priorities vary between levels of government and may be confusing. The NWIPC is bound by the BC Weed Control Act and targets plants that the Act deems as Noxious Weeds under the Act or as determined by regional districts and municipalities. Priority control is determined by answers to the following questions:

- How invasive is this species?
- How big is this infestation?
- Is the infestation in an area where this plant is already widespread and established?
- Is there an adjacent ecosystem or industry that must be protected?



Field Scabious: an invasive plant of local concern.

Prevention is key and there are many ways that you can help:

- * keep habitats in healthy condition and minimize soil disturbance;
- * always keep yard waste out of natural or unmanaged areas;
- * learn to identify the most invasive plants in your area (visit <http://nwipc.org/invasive-plants/>);
- * choose native or non-invasive plants for your garden;
- * before leaving an infested area, remove invasive plants and their seeds from vehicles, equipment, clothing and foot-wear, livestock and pets;
- * “Clean, Drain, Dry” your watercraft after use.



The NWIPC offers a **Land Owner Rebate (previously known as the 50/50 Program)** whereby the NWIPC may pay up to half of the cost (to a maximum of \$500 dependent on funding) of invasive plant treatment by a trained invasive plant practitioner. Visit www.nwipc.org to learn more.

Zucchini sets a good example for everything else in the veggie garden - by demonstrating how to be prolific and bountiful! Zucchini apparently, is also a very healthy food containing abundant vitamin C (don't toss the peel though, that is the most nutritious part). Here are a couple of recipes that take advantage of this delicious and locally grown food source.

ZUCCHINI NOODLES WITH ARUGULA PESTO

INGREDIENTS

Pesto (makes enough for several servings)

- ◇ 4 cups packed arugula leaves (or try 1 1/2 cups arugula mixed with 2 1/2 cups of basil to make a milder version)
- ◇ 1/2 cup of walnuts or almonds
- ◇ 2 garlic cloves (crushed)
- ◇ 3/4 cup of grated parmesan cheese
- ◇ juice from 1/2 a lemon
- ◇ 3/4 cup olive oil
- ◇ salt and cracked black pepper



Zucchini noodles can be made with a spiralizer or mandolin, but you really don't need fancy equipment. A veggie peeler makes nice fettucine-shaped noodles and you can make longer, thinner noodles using a grater, placed on its side (see photo below, left). Small to medium sized zucchinis make the best noodles...or are they zoodles?

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the greens, nuts, garlic and parmesan in a food processor and mix on low setting (or chop ingredients and then mix with a mortar and pestle). Slowly drizzle in olive oil and mix until the mixture resembles a coarse paste. Add salt and pepper to taste.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high with a few tablespoons of olive oil. Add zucchini noodles and toss them to coat in the oil.
3. Add a few tablespoons of the pesto mix (see step 1) and toss this with the zucchini noodles. Once the zucchini begins to take on color, it is ready to serve.

QUICK AND TASTY, LAYERED ZUCCHINI Recipe contributed by a busy Burns Lake gardener.

INGREDIENTS

- ◇ salsa (mild, medium or hot to taste)
- ◇ grated zucchini (include tender skin)
- ◇ grated mozzarella cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cover bottom of a baking dish with a layer of salsa.
3. Spread a layer of grated zucchini on top of salsa.
4. Top with grated mozzarella cheese.
5. Bake for 30 minutes or until bubbly.
6. Serve and expect requests for second helpings!!