



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **LITTER & THE NICKEL BAG**

We have recently completed the 12th annual Oak Ridges community clean up and have noticed a marked reduction (I would estimate about 90%) in the amount of plastic shopping bags being collected since the establishment of the nickel a bag fee.

During my term on the board of the Don Watershed Regeneration Council there was a visitor from the UK examining how we deal with our litter. Much of their rubbish is comprised of plastic 'carrier' bags we were told. From our own experience, I was able to affirm that the fee per bag has greatly reduced the plastic bag component of community litter and suggested they implement our idea as we have yet to pick up any reusable shopping bags.

Now it looks as if the fee per bag might be rescinded.

Here are some plastic bag facts: <http://www.greenerfootprints.com/plastic-bag-facts/>

- Canadians use 9-15 billion plastic shopping bags every year
- Every piece of plastic ever made still exists
- Plastic bags are made from non-renewable petrochemical resources
- Five minutes versus 1000 years – bag is used for 5 minutes but takes 1000 years to break down
- Plastic bags kill birds, wildlife, and livestock
- Plastic bags block drains, leading to flooding
- Canadian plastic bags have been found as far away as Scotland
- Plastic bags don't biodegrade, they photodegrade. Photodegradation is a chemical reaction between plastic and sunlight. It means that the plastic bags break down into smaller and smaller toxic bits contaminating soil and waterways.
- Not all litter is deliberate. Up to 47% of wind borne litter escaping from landfills is plastic.

There has been some effort to initiate the use of biodegradable shopping bags. I think we could go further, expanding to bread bags. However, streams of recycling could easily be contaminated unless it is very obvious that the bags are compostable. Like our green bin bags, they would have to be uncoloured, somewhat transparent and not be covered with graphics. That would be a hard marketing sell, but a challenge worth exploring.

Gloria Marsh

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## Fast and Simple Summer Energy Savings Tips

Learning new and improved ways to save energy throughout the year is important to all of us and with the hot summer months ahead, we would like to offer up additional tips that can help reduce your electricity costs. Here are some options to try out in your home to save money and keep cool!

- Turn up the thermostat! Set your central air conditioner (CAC) for 25° C when you are home and 28° C when away or, when possible, shut it off.
- Consider replacing your old air conditioner with an ENERGY STAR qualified model – the saveONenergy Heating & Cooling Incentive program offers up to \$650 on eligible replacement central heating systems and ENERGY STAR® qualified central cooling systems. For further information, please visit [www.powerstream.saveonenergy.ca/heatingandcooling](http://www.powerstream.saveonenergy.ca/heatingandcooling).
- Replace air conditioning filters once a month & save 5% of your cooling cost ; dirty filters restrict air flow and can cause the coil to freeze up which will increase energy use.
- Use ceiling fans wisely ; they create enough air movement in a room to make it feel cooler by several degrees and make sure the blades are changed to the counter clockwise position so that the cool air is blowing downwards for optimum efficiency and comfort.
- Close your drapes or shades during the day. Windows are one of the largest sources of heat gain in your home. Keeping them closed helps keep unwanted heat out.
- Operate pool filters and cleaning devices efficiently – shorten the operating hours and switch their use to off peak hours and ideally during night time and consider replacing pool pumps and motors with updated, more energy efficient equipment if possible.
- Use alternative cooking methods for those hot summer nights! Fire up your barbeque and grill away or make more use of your microwave oven.

### On the road again!

Come by & visit our Conservation booth during the saveONenergy Exchange Events at select Canadian Tires Stores, June 16th

### TOU Prices - Summer - May 1 - October 31, 2012

	Times	TOU Period	TOU Price
Weekends & holidays	All day	Off-peak	\$0.065 per kWh
	Weekdays	7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m	Mid-peak
	11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	On-peak	\$0.117 per kWh
	5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m	Mid-peak	\$0.100 per kWh
	7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	Off-peak	\$0.065 per kWh

<http://www.powerstream.ca/conservation>



## GARLIC MUSTARD (*Allaria petiolata*) STARVES ONTARIO MAPLE FORESTS - Study



Maple, Ash and other hardwood trees are being harmed by an invasive weed that indirectly slows their growth to about one-tenth the normal speed, scientists say. Researchers studied how garlic mustard, a tree-stifling weed, impacts native hardwoods in Ontario. The lead scientist warned that the weed's ultimate effect could be to suppress dominant trees in the forest and even change the type of trees that grow in a habitat. Until now, few studies have looked at how invading plants change the delicate ecological balance of native species. Research focused on garlic mustard, thought to have been used as a culinary herb in Europe and introduced to North America by settlers in the 1860s.

The weed affects hardwood trees such as Sugar Maples by releasing chemicals that harm a soil fungus which the trees need to grow and survive, said the study by Canadian, American and German researchers. The fungi

have long filaments that penetrate the roots of plants, forming a network to extend the reach of a tree's roots. In exchange for providing trees with nutrients, the fungi receive energy from the plants.

Plant population biologist Kristina Stinson of Harvard University and her colleagues tested how well native hardwoods in Ontario were able to form the fungal relationships after garlic mustard invaded. Sugar Maple, Red Maple and White Ash showed less fungal colonization and grew only about one-tenth as quickly in soil infested with the weeds, they say in their study. Seedlings grown in sterile soil also showed similar reductions, which supports the theory that tree growth suffers without the fungi.

Adding extracts of garlic mustard to soil also impaired fungal colonization and seedling growth. Studies on 16 other species of seedlings showed only hardwoods were harmed by garlic mustards. 'This suggests garlic mustard invades the understory of mature forests by poisoning the allies of its main competitors,' Stinson said in a release.

Garlic mustard has invaded many natural areas and home gardens in the GTA. Judicious weeding starting in May is the best way to control the spread of this alien to our forests. See images to help with identification, and visit the following website for more information: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2005/10hrt05a4.htm>.

We do not advocate the use of herbicides, which are illegal in many parts of Canada, for the ridding of garlic mustard. Hand pulling after a rain is the most effective, and you can eat your aliens! Try our recipe for a tasty pesto.

### Garlic Mustard Pesto

- 2 cups packed, washed garlic mustard leaves
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp hemp seeds, walnuts or pine nuts
- 1 cup grated Romano cheese
- 1/2 (about) olive oil
- Buzz first 4 ingredients in food processor until well chopped. Drizzle in olive oil.
- Toss with 1 lb of cooked pasta. Can also be dabbed on sliced tomatoes or pizza.



# GREENWORKS



Our smart looking, brand new canopy has been sponsored by long time YREA donor **Marilyn Isaac Stewart** (pictured in photo at left). Marilyn has risen to our support on numerous occasions since 2007. Her assistance has helped us meet financial shortfalls in the delivery of our programs and campaigns. A heartfelt thank you Marilyn from all of us at YREA. Our staff, board and volunteers will remain dry under our snazzy solid shelter while we get our message out, engaging the public at community events.

This year, as we work on the most ambitious undertaking in YREA history - the establishment of a closed loop, local hemp industry, funding is still needed to maintain our community presence.

**PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING US YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT WITH A GENEROUS DONATION**

## YREA THANKS THESE KIND DONORS

**Protector** – Marilyn Isaac Stewart

**Custodian** – Markham Environmental Alliance

**Steward** – Gloria Marsh

**Keeper** - Karen Armstrong, Laura Bowman, Martin Chen, Terry Knight, Debbie Schafer, Deb Schulte, Woodbridge College

**Friend** – Kathleen Bernardi, Sara Bonaguro, Sylvia Bowman, Patty Ella, Sean Kiely, Todd Kyle, Jeff Laidlaw, Katia Picada, Pat Prevost, Peter Secord, John Sguigna, Lynda Sutherland, Priya Unnikrishnan, Patricia Watson

**WE ARE ALSO EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM:**



## BECOME A YREA MEMBER/SUPPORTER

An annual membership to the York Region Environmental Alliance is \$20. By contributing to YREA with a membership or a larger donation, your vital support will help us achieve our goals.



If you prefer, enclose this form with your donation and mail to: YREA, 225 Lakeland Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON L4E 3A5

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Please note the amount of your donation enclosed:

- |                       |                          |                         |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Guardian \$2000 & up  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Protector \$1000-\$1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Custodian \$500-\$999 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Steward \$200-\$499     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Keeper \$100-\$199    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Friend \$ _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note: YREA does not exchange the personal information of our members/supporters with other organizations or groups.  
Registered charity - #84559 0553 RR0001



## ONTARIO NATURE REPORT

By Sylvia Bowman, YREA Director and our Ontario Nature (ON) representative

### AGGREGATE INDUSTRY INITIATIVE

The goal of the project is to identify and promote opportunities to integrate aggregate use with natural heritage systems planning to maintain the hydrology and natural systems of the Oak Ridges Moraine. This initial work with the town of Uxbridge and the Ontario Sand and Gravel Association (OSSGA) will be to develop a set of best practice standards for this industry. Several issues have been identified:

- Lack of use of more recycled aggregates. Some towns actually prohibit use of recycled aggregates thereby increasing the need for new aggregate extraction.
- Importation of fill, both for pit rehabilitation purposes, and use of pits as commercial fill sites. Municipalities are left to deal with the problem when contaminated fill enters their towns.
- The OSSGA has offered to do a pilot project, multiple site coordinated rehabilitation plan to integrate the closing of pits with the natural heritage in the Uxbridge area.
- The Ontario Government has just announced that it will be reviewing the aggregate resources act. This is an opportunity to get positive changes included. Ontario Nature will be providing a submission.

### ONTARIO BUDGET BILL 55

The Ontario budget had hidden within it a number of changes to the Endangered Species Act and the Parks and Reserve act that would normally need to be posted on the

EBR and bypassing the public consultation process such radical changes would require. YREA has already signed onto a letter sent by Ontario Nature deploring these measures. They are also urging everyone to contact their local MPP to ask them to urge the Premier to remove measures affecting environmental legislation from the budget bill.

### SNAPPING TURTLE HUNT

The disappointing response by the Government to the Snapping turtle petition, and the report The Road to Extinction on the state of the snapping turtle, recently put out by Ontario Nature, the David Suzuki foundation, and the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre, asking for the hunt to be stopped, was to now ask hunters to report how many turtles they are killing. How this can possibly help turtles I do not know. There is no way of enforcing the reporting and a hunter who knows that a large kill being found would likely result in a hunting ban has a disincentive to report. The report can be found on Ontario Nature's web site.

### ONTARIO NATURE AGM

It is being held on June 8 to 10 at the Opinicon Resort at Chaffey's locks near Kingston. There are many interesting workshops and field trip options such as a canoe trip to Ontario Nature's Lost Bay Reserve. For more information and to register for AGM please visit Ontario Nature website: <http://www.ontarionature.org>.

## 2012 MORAINÉ HEROES

Monitoring the Moraine (MTM) partners have been celebrating Moraine Heroes since 2006. "The Moraine has always benefitted from strong community support", says Debbe Crandall, Executive Director of STORM. "Twenty years ago with citizens protecting the Ganaraska River, ten years ago with the grassroots upwelling to bring about the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and more recently with the Moraine for 2015 campaign.

"The timing of this announcement is especially significant given the recent lack of provincial funding for the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, and the tenth anniversary of the ORMCP on Earth Day", says Meredith Cochrane, Executive Director of EcoSpark. "Now more than ever, the Moraine needs its heroes to ensure that this important landscape is protected."

The 2012 awards, sponsored by the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation will take place in June. The winners are :  
**COMMUNITY CHAMPION: GLORIA MARSH** for being a dedicated Moraine steward, advocate and activist in York Region through her work with the Richmond Hill Naturalists, the Kettle Lakes Coalition, the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and the York Region Environmental Alliance.  
**LANDOWNER CHAMPION: JOHN OYSTON** for actively stewarding his 49-hectare (101-acre) Bewdley property overlooking Rice Lake by transforming a hayfield into a tall grass prairie encircled by an arboretum with 120 native trees and shrubs.  
**MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP: JANE UNDERHILL**, concerned citizen turned councillor, for tirelessly and passionately advocating for the Oak Ridges Moraine in King Township and inspiring countless others.



## THE CUTTING VEG CSA 2012

During the 2011 farming season, The Cutting Veg Organic Farm moved into York Region, setting root just south of Sutton. The Cutting Veg (TCV) is an eco-social enterprise rooted in organic farming. TCV runs 3 programs aimed at cultivating personal, social, environmental, and economic health.

TCV grows a variety of vegetables, fruit, and herbs, which are sold at farmers markets, and through Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSA). A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program is a mutually beneficial partnership in

which individuals or families receive fresh, local, organically grown produce weekly, while supporting our local farmers and sustainable growing practices. The Cutting Veg CSA had 300 members in 2011, and is thrilled by the support for local, organic agriculture in York Region and throughout the GTA.

In addition to cultivating mixed produce, TCV runs the Global Garlic Project. Specifically, TCV grows approximately 20 varieties of garlic from around the world, including Tibetan, Persian, Italian, Russian, Korean, and Israeli. So, what's the difference between all the varieties? Some are hot and spicy, some are milder, some are sweet. Some bulbs have 3 huge cloves per bulb, while some have 12+. All of them are extremely tasty, and highly medicinal. (<http://www.thecuttingveg.com/global-garlic>)

TCV also provides Food Coaching Services, which offers garden and composting project support, educational workshops, farming internships, and agri-biz training. Through Food Coaching, The Cutting Veg supports people to deepen their relationship with food so as to improve their quality of life, while making a difference. A healthy world starts with healthy lifestyles.

Collectively, these programs are helping TCV towards the achievement of its quadruple bottom line: Personal Health, Social Health, Environmental Health, and Economic Health. TCV is owned and managed by Daniel Hoffmann. Daniel is a Social Worker (BSW), Counsellor, and has been farming in B.C. and Ontario since 2000.

The Cutting Veg welcomes you to get involved for the 2012 harvest season. Become a member in their CSA, and receive a weekly share of the harvest for 22 weeks, from June to October. Volunteer on the farm. Bring your kids! Keep Livin' on the Veg! For more info visit [www.thecuttingveg.com/CSA](http://www.thecuttingveg.com/CSA) or contact [daniel@thecuttingveg.com](mailto:daniel@thecuttingveg.com).





## WHAT IS METROLINX EXACTLY?

By Stephen Cockle, YREA Director

Metrolinx itself is becoming concerned that too few people can answer that question. In fact this provincial agency has a huge mandate - to establish an integrated 1,200-km transportation network across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area over the next 25 years, the so-called Big Move. Top visions for this plan are that 80% of the population will live and work within 2 km of frequent rapid transit, and experience a seamless fare system across the whole region.

GO Transit became a division of Metrolinx in 2009. Otherwise the agency has to work with nine existing municipal transit authorities, among which it already coordinates procurement plans to achieve the best deals on vehicles. With such a patchwork of current systems, the Big Move involves rail, light rail, subway and bus components. Fifteen major projects and over 250 smaller projects are on the drawing board or already under way. Initiatives affecting York Region include:

- the extension of the Spadina and Yonge subway lines to Vaughan and Richmond Hill
- the expansion of Viva bus transit along Yonge Street and Highway 7
- all-day GO train service on the north-south routes
- regional transit hubs in Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham
- integrated route networks for cyclists and pedestrians in urban areas

All this comes with a hefty price tag -- \$40 billion. With only some \$12 billion so far committed by the provincial government, Metrolinx has one year left to come up with a viable plan to finance the rest. Mayor Ford notwithstanding, expect taxes, fees and levies to be part of the mix. Experience elsewhere shows that citizens are prepared to cough up for improved transit if they can see a clear bold plan and experience tangible benefits. Small wonder that Metrolinx is anxious to improve its public profile. For more on this visit <http://www.metrolinx.com>

## PRESSURE TREATED WOOD - NAME YOUR POISON

By Carolyn Brown, YREA Volunteer



The chemicals used for pressure treated wood (PTW) are a health concern. Wood is treated with chromated copper arsenate (CCA), and current alternatives such as alkaline copper azole, and borates. These chemicals increase the life of the wood by killing fungus and insects such as termites that come in contact with it as well as beneficial insects in the surrounding soil.

Arsenic is the main reason for health concerns related to PTW and is why the use of CCA treated wood has been restricted since 2002. Health effects include blood and heart damage and cancer. Chromium and copper are important micronutrients, but with higher doses can cause diarrhea, vomiting and liver and kidney damage.

The chemicals are pressurized into the wood so precautions need to be taken when building with PTW. Wearing a dust mask and gloves, washing your hands after working with the material and cleaning up sawdust and shavings can reduce the intake of chemical particles. Never use this wood for food storage or other places food comes directly in contact with wood.

If you don't want to take the risk of contaminating your garden soil, and potentially yourself, you can reduce the chances of leaching by applying a penetrating oil finish every year or two to the wood to help seal in the preservative.

As for PTW and playgrounds, most municipalities and school boards have removed wooden structures and replaced them with metal and/or plastic. Outdoor play equipment for home use is often wood, but should be CCA free due to the 2002 restrictions. Check before you buy. Wood Preservation Canada argues that pressure treating wood saves forests, but if you can't burn it, eat the vegetables grown near it or allow children under the age of 6 to play on it, we will be better served in saving our forests by using alternative building materials such as metal or recycled plastic. Canada is currently reviewing the use of CCA products, but will likely follow the US EPA's July 2011 decision to allow use. [http://www.toronto.ca/health/factsheet\\_ptw.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/health/factsheet_ptw.htm)