



E-News – March 2011

In this Issue

Upcoming Events

- Family Friendly Gardening - March 15
- Neotropical Birds Presentation - March 17
- Jefferson Forest Hike - March 19
- Earth Hour - March 26
- Earth Week - April 17 - 23
- Oak Ridges Community Clean Up Day - April 30

Local News

- The Living City Scorecard 2011 is now on line
- Richmond Hill Healthy Yards Program
- LEAF Backyard Tree Planting Program

Nature News - *International Year of Forests - Wildlife*

Green Tip of the Month



Note: If you are planning to change your e-mail address, please do not forget to let us know so that we can continue to keep you up to date! If you would like to print this newsletter it is available on our web site as a PDF <http://www.oakridgesfriendsoftheenvironment.ca/>

Upcoming Events

FAMILY FRIENDLY GARDENING – TUESDAY MARCH 15, 7:00 – 8:30 PM,



RICHMOND HILL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 10268 YONGE ST. Water for Tomorrow presents this free workshop on gardening for the busy family with speaker Lorraine Mennen. She will present ways to get the kids involved and leave time for the family. Also included will be tips to lower costs and keep a low maintenance garden that still rocks. The workshop is free but pre-registration is required. To register and get more information visit:

<http://www.waterfortomorrow.ca/en/inyourcommunity/workshops.asp>

**NEOTROPICAL BIRDS – THE OTHER END OF MIGRATION – THURSDAY MARCH 17,
7:30 PM, RICHMOND HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WALLACE HALL, 10066
YONGE STREET**

Everyone is invited to join the Richmond Hill Naturalists for an informative and entertaining talk on neotropical birds with Lev Frid. Lev is a well-known Ontario birder and naturalist, who has followed his passion from the far north to the Andes and beyond. He will show photographs from his travels in Central America to illustrate the lives of Canadian songbirds on their wintering grounds.

Free admission, all are welcome, donations accepted, parking is free and refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Marianne Yake 905-883-3047

JEFFERSON FOREST HIKE –SATURDAY MARCH 19, 9:30 AM

Join with members of the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA) for a 3.8 k walk at a moderate pace in beautiful Jefferson Forest. This will be a preview of the new ORTA main trail that will be established through these 400 acres of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority property. There are steep hills along the way and you need good footwear. Meet at the Sunset Beach parking lot on Bethesda SdRd just west of Bayview Ave. Opportunity for a group lunch after the hike. Note: You do not have to be an ORTA member to participate - all are welcome. For more information contact the hike leader Rhys Beak at 905-237-1826.



EARTH HOUR – SATURDAY MARCH 26, 8:30 – 9:30 PM

Make plans now to celebrate Earth Hour by turning off your lights for an hour that evening. Have a party, a candle light dinner, a moonlit walk. There are all kinds of ways that you can get together with friends and family in the dark! The World Wildlife Fund, sponsor of the event, has a couple of suggestions for the young people. Teachers and parents can share these activity sheets

http://wwf.ca/earthhour/downloads/schools/?utm_source=Earth%2BHour%2BNewsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=Activity%2Bsheets&utm_campaign=Earth%2BHour%2BNewsletter%2BMarch-8-2011

And the creators of Franklin have also prepared some themed activity sheets at:

http://assets.wwf.ca/downloads/earthhour/franklin_activitypages.pdf?utm_source=Earth%2BHour%2BNewsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=Franklin%2Bactivity%2Bsheets&utm_campaign=Earth%2BHour%2BNewsletter%2BMarch-8-2011

For more information on Earth Hour including events and ideas for the evening visit:

<http://wwf.ca/earthhour/>

EARTH WEEK – APRIL 17 - 23

Plan now to celebrate Earth Week by participating in the interesting events offered by the Town of Richmond Hill. You can plant wildflowers on Sunday the 17th, learn how to make art from recycled treasures on Monday the 18th, plant a tree on Thursday the 21st, and go for a hike and bond fire on Saturday the 23rd. Information on these events and more programs of the Natural Heritage Section are listed on these pages of the Richmond Hill Recreation Guide at:

http://www.richmondhill.ca/documents/leisureguide_natural_heritage.pdf

**OAK RIDGES COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAY – Saturday April 30, 9:30 am - 2:30 pm
Meet at the Parks and Recreation Bldg at 39 King Rd. just west of Yonge St.**



It is time to clean up all the errant recycling and carelessly thrown litter that has accumulated over the winter in our parks and green spaces. Please bring your family, friends and neighbours for a few hours to green up Oak Ridges. Garbage bags and gloves will be provided although it would be great if you brought your own gloves to cut down on disposables. Beverages will also be available but again please “lug-a-mug”. The day will finish with a barbeque with food provided by Nick and Mira’s No Frills and

expertly cooked by the Oak Ridges Lions. There will also be a nature and garden information centre with lots of resources.

If you would like to see your own neighbourhood spotless, why not organize the folks on your block. We will still supply the garbage bags and invite everyone to the barbeque. We can also help with location specific flyers. Some Oak Ridges residents have already signed up for their corner of the community and we are looking for more - particularly in the Humberland, Red Cardinal and Fontainebleu area. If you are willing, please contact us at 905-773-7415 or orfe@oakridgesfriendsoftheenvironment.ca

Local News

THE LIVING CITY SCORECARD 2011 IS NOW ON LINE

Did you ever wonder how our community is doing on environmental issues such as carbon emissions, air, water, waste management, land use and biodiversity? Well the answer is now available in the Living City Scorecard. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Greening Greater Toronto have combined their efforts to produce a snapshot of where we are making progress, assign grades that rate where we are in relation to long-term targets, and present short and long term targets. It also delivers an ongoing call to action. The scorecard is presented in a web format where you can get a quick overview or dive deeper into the report. You can also download the whole document. Visit: <http://www.thelivingcity.org/lcrc4/>

RICHMOND HILL HEALTHY YARDS PROGRAM – SUBSIDIZED PLANTS AND GARDEN INFORMATION

Again this year the Town of Richmond Hill is seeking to encourage and educate



residents about the importance of planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers on their own property, as well as ecologically sound lawn-care practices through its Healthy Yard Program.

This program offers residents the option of purchasing subsidized plant kits and rain barrels. A large kit includes five trees and/or shrubs and 18 wildflowers

for \$35. A small plant kit includes two trees and/or shrubs and 18 wildflowers for \$25. Rain barrels are \$65 (please note that GST is extra on all items).

Native Tree and Plant Kits are available to all residents in the Town of Richmond with the exception of those residents who purchased one in

previous years. The limit is one plant kit per household. There are no limits on the rain barrels.

The kits sell out quickly so be sure to get your application in as soon as the program opens in early April. Kits will be available at the Healthy Yards Event on Friday May 13, 2011. Plan to attend even if you don't get a kit for lots of garden information and free mulch.

For more information visit:

http://www.richmondhill.ca/subpage.asp?pageid=prc_healthy_yards&textonly=

LEAF BACKYARD TREE PLANTING PROGRAM – BIG TREES AT SMALL PRICES PLUS EXPERT ADVICE

LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forest), in partnership with Richmond Hill and York Region, offers large native trees (6-8 feet) along with expert advice and planting services for a great price. They also offer shrubs. Planting a tree, or two, in your yard has many benefits including shade to lower your energy bills. It is also a great way to celebrate the International Year of the Forest! For more information visit:

<http://www.yourleaf.org/southern-and-central-york-region>

Nature News – *International Year of Forests - Wildlife*



At this time of year the forest in this part of the world seems very quiet and peaceful, but soon it will be bustling with activity and song as the hibernating species wake up and the birds return from the south. It is estimated that two thirds of Canadian wildlife find their home in its forests. Thus loss and/or degradation of forest habitat can have serious implications for our wild critters. Some can adapt. Obviously the raccoon and skunk have made themselves quite comfortable in an urban environment. Others are not so flexible. The Woodland Caribou, (<http://www.hww.ca/hww2.asp?id=85>) for instance needs a very large track of undisturbed forest in which they can hide from predators while migrating between summer and winter homes. The Spotted Owl (http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Spotted_Owl/id) also needs a large area of mature forest in which it can find prey for a meal. The pretty little blue Cerulean Warbler, shown below, (http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cerulean_Warbler/id) also needs a large forest area but is even more particular as it chooses a deciduous treed area with an open understory. It is an obvious comment on the state of our forests that all three of these species are considered at risk largely because of the reduction in suitable habitat. Another issue is the fragmentation of forest areas by the installation of infrastructure such as roads and hydro corridors. This can have a huge impact on tiny species such as salamanders like the threatened Jefferson Salamander (<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@species/documents/document/270949.pdf>). These little critters spend most of the year in forests under logs and leaf litter but must go to water to lay their eggs to breed. If their route is bisected by a road, the consequences are serious for a very small pedestrian that travels in the dark!



For birds the international status of forests is also very important as so many species spend their winter south. In particular the destruction of tropical rain forests and forest cover in general in South

and Central America as well as the Caribbean poses a huge risk to our migratory bird populations. They are finding it more and more difficult to find a place with sufficient food supplies to spend the winter and have enough strength to return to their breeding ground. The harvesting of the trees in these countries can be particularly hard to reverse as in many cases the poverty dictates that the people need the wood for basic fuel for cooking and heating.

In our next E-news we shall explore the specific issues and what is being done to address the challenges.



Wildlife Alert!!

They are back!! The raccoons and skunks have roused from their winter sleep and the geese are back in our wetlands looking to protect their nesting area. This means that they will also be into our garbage and on our roads.

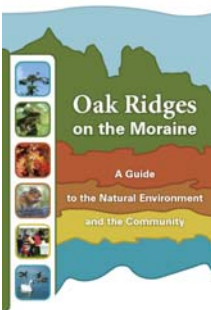
It is time to make sure you secure your trash and **please slow down** and keep a watchful eye out for wildlife on our roads particularly at night!!

Green Tip of the Month



Just in time for March Break and Earth Week here is a resource from Environment Canada that will give your next walk in the park or natural area a real lift - especially for the young ones. These are downloadable Biokits - one for Nature and one for Urban. They provide interactive activities that offer learning opportunities, help observation skills and create some great fun.

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/biotrousses-biokits/default.asp?lang=En&n=C0269262-1>



OAK RIDGES NEIGHBOURHOOD GUIDE NOW ON OUR WEB SITE!

WWW.OAKRIDGESFRIENDSOFTHEENVIRONMENT.CA

Oak Ridges on the Moraine: a guide to the natural environment and the community is your source for environmental and community information in Oak Ridges. The supply of hard copies is pretty well exhausted. The whole guide is available on the ORFE web site.

The Guide has been produced by the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment with the support of the Oak Ridges Lions Club and the financial assistance of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation.



The Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment also appreciates the ongoing support of the Town of Richmond Hill.

The Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment E-News welcomes comments and suggestions. Please send to orfe@oakridgesfriendsoftheenvironment.ca. To unsubscribe to this newsletter please send a message to the same address with "Unsubscribe E-News" in the subject line. We shall be sure to respect your wishes. If you are receiving this "second hand" and would like to subscribe please contact us and we would be happy to add you to the list.

Visit our web site at: <http://www.oakridgesfriendsoftheenvironment.ca/>