



E-News – Nov.-Dec., 2011

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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

JEFFERSON FOREST HIKE, SAT. NOV. 19, 1:30 PM

Join members of the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA) for a 3 hour ramble at a moderate pace along the new ORTA trail route through the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Jefferson Forest Tract. Secondary trail routes will be shown and explained. Meet at the Trailhead parking lot on Old Colony Rd. just west of Bayview Ave. For more information, contact hike leader Rhys Beak at 905-237-1826 or cell phone on day of hike only 289-221-7154.

112TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – SATURDAY DEC. 17



Tens of thousands of volunteers all over the Americas will be counting birds over the Christmas vacation to help scientists spot changes and trends in bird populations. These observations provide important clues to environmental factors and the progress of climate change. You can help! The Richmond Hill Naturalists will be doing the local count on Saturday December 17th. You don't have to leave the warm comfort of your home to be involved. You can count the birds at your feeders for a period of as little as 15 minutes and report the results. If you are not sure of your bird skills, you can still assist by offering your back yard as a spot where the counters can visit for 10-15 minutes. Of course if you would like to get out in the fresh air for half or all of the day, volunteers are welcome to join in. You don't have to be a birder as

beginners will be put with more experienced observers. You will also be welcome to join the chili supper at the end of the day. If you wish to help in any way, please contact Gene Denzel at e-mail lezned@yorku.ca. For more information on the Christmas Bird Count program visit: <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

Local News

NATURE CANADA'S HUG-A-TREE PHOTO CONTEST

In honour of the International Year of Forests Nature Canada invites you to show your love of trees by submitting your tree-hug themed photo to their Hug-a-Tree contest. The contest has four categories and lots of great prizes. The entry deadline is January 8, 2012. To get all the details and submit your photos visit <http://www.natureexplorers.ca/Win>



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HALLOWE'EN HIKE A GREAT TREAT

The wonderful warm fall day drew a record crowd of 62 assorted ghosts, witches, princesses and pirates to Lake St. George Field Centre for the Hallowe'en Hike. After having a look at the lovely calm lake, the crowd took off down the trail around the water with the young ones eagerly searching for scavenger hike items. The biggest hit on the list was seeds as there were lots of stops to grab a milkweed pod and split it open to send the seeds flying in the breeze. The Monarch Butterflies will be happy with the food in future years. Thanks to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for allowing us to visit this great location.



Nature News – *Christmas Naturally*

It is hard to avoid the fact that Christmas is just around the corner as the stores are full of holiday products and Santa comes to town in a couple of weeks.



For those that love nature, this is a great time to express it in many ways. After all, Santa uses green transportation with his fleet of reindeer!

Starting with the decorations of course, a real tree and other holiday greenery brings the outdoors to top of mind. There are arguments for both real and artificial greenery, but eventually the artificial stuff will have to be sent to landfill while the natural products can be recycled into mulch to keep giving back to the earth. Another advantage of the real thing is the family outing to pick and cut your own. This site has directions to a few local spots:

<http://www.childslife.ca/events/christmas-tree-farms-york-region-durham.html>.

Why not also consider adding nature decorations such as birds, snow people, and wildlife features on and around the tree? Of course pine cones make great baubles even if you don't paint them. With a little imagination the young ones could make great snowflakes, and lots of other neat things. Here is one website that has ribbon cardinals and a stick nativity scene: http://daniellesplace.com/html/christmas_page2.html . You can also use things like popcorn and cranberries to string around the tree. These ideas can also be used for your other holiday decorations. Terra Garden Centre on Keele Street south of King City has a wide variety of natural garlands, ropes and other greenery.

One caution in your decorating is to consider safety for your pets and small children. This site has some useful tips: <http://www.petamore.com/Pet-Animal-Fun/Christmas/Christmas-Pet-Safety-Tips.html>

There are lots of ways to include nature in your gift list - something for everyone. Both Bird Studies Canada <http://www.birdscanada.org/shopping/shop.jsp?ts=1320711096596> and the Canadian Wildlife Federation https://secure2.convio.net/cwf/site/Ecommerce/1600762058?store_id=2441&s_locale=en_CA have stores that sell everything from clothing to field guides and other books as well as toys games and puzzles. Another thought is a magazine subscription that gives all year long. Canadian Wildlife has editions geared to the young ones 3-6 and 5-13. You could also give someone the pleasure of participating in Project Feeder Watch, a great winter pastime that goes from November to April - see Bird Studies Canada. Of course purchases through these stores help support the organization.

If you are considering good quality bird watching tools like binoculars or a spotting scope, check out Pelee Wings, <http://www.peleewings.ca/index.php>. Yes they are a ways away but they are very helpful by telephone and offer a wide range of products in all price ranges. Another gift idea for the winter months is a birdfeeder. If this is on your list, make sure that you buy a quality feeder that will last more than one season especially if you have squirrels in your area. It is best to go to a birder store - the Back Yard Birder on Main St. in Newmarket or Wild Birds Unlimited on Yonge St. in Thornhill. The staff is knowledgeable and will help you choose a feeder - and the related feed that best suits your yard situation.



If those on your list are more interested in plants and gardens, why not consider a gift certificate from a nursery like Sheridan or Terra that will help them think sunny thoughts of the spring to come.

If you want to help someone get out and enjoy nature, why not consider an Oak Ridges Trail Guide. Actually you could give them a membership too and get a discount on the Guide. Visit <http://www.oakridgestrail.org/guidebook.htm>. Finally for the person who has everything or as a special sharing gift for the young ones, most organizations would love a donation to be made in the recipient's name. In addition to the above see:

<https://donations.helpforcharities.com/ncc/holidays/index.php>
<https://wwfstore.donorportal.ca/c-11-wildlife-adoptions.aspx>

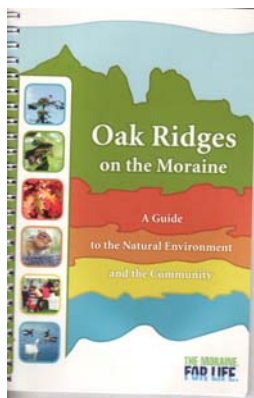
Of course the holidays are all about food and drink with friends and family. We are blessed with lots of local nature's bounty from wine to preserves and baked goods to all of the fixings for the big dinner. While most of the farm markets are finished for the season, Stouffville Country Market is open until Christmas, visit: <http://stouffvillemarket.com/>. Pine Farms Orchard is also open though the holidays with great preserves, baking and of course apples and cider, visit: <http://www.pinefarmsorchard.com/> . Willow Springs Winery is also in the neighbourhood and offers some wonderful products, see: <http://www.willowspringswinery.com/>. Many of these products make great gifts and a visit to these local establishments is a great break from the madness of the malls.

Green Tip of the Month

Christmas is a wonderful time of year but it can be pretty hard on the environment. Beyond including nature in the season there are lots of other ways to make the season green. Right now there are numerous community holiday craft and bake sales where you can get great local gifts and treats while supporting these organizations. Many are listed in the *OnRichmondHill* website and weekly e-mail circulation at: <http://onrichmondhill.com/>.

Other things to think about...

- Send out E-cards
- Use LED lights
- Use reusable bags or make your own wrapping paper from newspapers or your child's finger painted craft paper
- Recycle your ribbon and bows as well as gift bags received
- Give a gift of time or an experience and make your own gift certificate
- Make your own gifts - cookies, crafts etc.



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.

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