

Earth Carer Kids

As waste increasingly becomes recognised as a major environmental, social and economic challenge for Perth, raising the profile of waste and increasing support for children to understand waste issues and to apply waste-minimisation knowledge and skills in enjoyable ways is timely.

Spurred on by the suggestion from our Earth Carers to look at how to get kids involved, the MRC developed some program guidelines and looked for a pilot project. A group of Yr 5/6 kids from Poynter Primary School identified a project they wanted to run — a waste minimisation camp.

The camp was held during Term 1 and was very successful. Their savings of food, materials, energy and water included:

- Preventing 13kgs of food waste and composting food scraps.
- Compostable lunch wrap was used instead of 50 metres of cling wrap.
- Chips, lollies and cool drink were bought in bulk for less packaging.
- Parents supplied morning and afternoon teas in re-usable containers.
- Four minute shower timers kept water use low.
- And reducing, re-using and recycling lots more!



The class were presented with certificates as Resource Rescuers and a reward for their efforts and achievements.

Classes at Goollelal and Ashdale primary schools are beginning to plan their projects and we are also keen to assist non-school groups and other children who want to be Resource Rescuers and make a difference to waste!

If you know some kids who would like to become Resource Rescuers please contact our EC Kids Coordinator Anne Pettit on 0430 122 931 or email at apettit@inet.net.au.



New EC Blog

The “Talking Rubbish” blog and discussion forum is now up and running. Our aim is to get people talking about rubbish -- the problems, the issues and the good ideas -- to help us all take an interest in and connect to

the world of waste. The rich discussions many people share in the Earth Carers training course can now go on-line. We invite you to click on the buttons and have a look at what people are talking about. Add your own voice to the discussion. Join in today!

Peg will be adding new articles regularly. Some of her blogs to date include: What is ‘closing the Loop’? Plastic bags: to ban or not to ban?

The link is on the MRC website home page www.mrc.wa.gov.au



Volume 9
June 2011

Welcome to the Winter edition of our Earth Carers newsletter.

Since our last edition we've welcomed another 19 Earth Carer volunteers to our group.

If you have any suggestions for future editions, contact Peg Davies (contact details below).

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Reduce
Reuse
Recycle



Make waste work

For further information please contact
Peg Davies on 0422 941 492
Email: pdavies@mrc.wa.gov.au

Woodworking with Greg



Greg Miller is the grand master of wood-working. He has held previous workshops for Earth Carers helping them to make objects from wood that have been rescued from verge throw outs, such as fence posts, floor boards and church pews.



We had another wonderful few days of trying out woodworking skills with Greg Miller at Earthwise in April. There were chopping boards, saw stools and wooden spoons flying around in quantity. The hard core group completed a garden bench on Sunday. Priscilla has demonstrated amazing capabilities with beautiful techniques.



Greg has a blog site you may want to investigate: gregdmiller.blogspot.com/

Improve recycling at home for the tardy recyclers?

Matching a recycling family with a non-recycling family can have positive changes according to Oprah! Made me wonder if this wasn't a good idea; maybe a get-together day for people keen to share recycling ideas with people who'd like to know more in a short amount of time. Mentors could bring along a bag of recyclable goodies to talk about, be paired up with a novice recycler and follow-up later. Even educating people as to what goes into their recycling bin could start a bigger recycling revolution.



From Barbara (EC)

Sophia the re-use trooper

Often on my doorstep is a neat pile of 'treasures' frequently coming from Sophia (EC). She finds clean clothes, trinkets and useful items and distributes them to people who can use them. She gives to op shops, refugees with limited resources, family, friends and many others. The goods are always tailored to the recipient. Sophia can be seen at the half price bin at the op-shop picking up a bargain for someone. Given always with the message to 'pass it on to someone else if you don't need or want it'.

Snippets

- If you don't use your yellow / white pages anymore you can cancel your subscription at the link below. Just a little something we can do for our environment. (Andrew Mills, EC)
www.directoryselect.com.au
- If you have things you don't need put them on your facebook page as a freebie for someone to collect.

Paint Swap - want to be involved?

House paint is by far our biggest volume of household hazardous waste. One way to keep it out of bins and off verges is to have a paint swap day where people can bring paint and/or take paint away. This can also be a fundraiser for a school or community group by charging a gold coin donation for their efforts. The day would need to be traffic and people managed and we are wondering if EC are interested in helping to organise a local swap day. If you have a school or community group that may be interested or you would just like to help, let Peg know.

Hospitals - difficult places for waste, unless you are a Robyn...

Recently Robyn instigated the inaugural Sustainability Expo at the Mount Hospital in Perth. There were a number of displays showing how different 'waste' items could be given a second chance plus lots of queries about waste in staff households. Robyn spoke at our last EC training and shocked us all by the volume of 'sterile' and clean material discarded continuously by hospitals. Each EC course has at least one hospital employee in despair. If you want to find out more about the ideas of Robyn and her colleagues contact me and I will pass on your details.

On Friday April 1st, the Health E Tree Huggers held their inaugural Sustainability Expo at the Mount Hospital. It consisted of five different stations entitled Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Re-educate and Responsible Disposal. On display were definitions of and examples of each with miniature wheelie bins to match where appropriate.

The expo was held between the hours of 12 midday and 4pm so people could drop in for five minutes or so during their lunch break, tea break or when they'd finished work. We gave out free ice cream cones with green ice cream and had a competition to name our recycling area in the back car park which we've called the Eco Depot. We also gave out free box cutters bearing our email address so people could stay in touch.



A sign in sheet netted about 52 people with 50 of these indicating they would like to be kept up to date with any recycling developments.

As a result of the expo we got a few new "reuse" ideas, organised a tour of our Sharps disposal provider Sterihealth for our next meeting as well as 14 new comingled recycling bins to put around the hospital including two for our Hudson's Cafe.



Earth Carer taking his knowledge to work

James (EC) works in an adult day-centre and has introduced some amazing additions to the centre. Fridge worm farm, battery and printer cartridge collection, garden and seed raising and making a chopping board with participants. We also visited the Centre recently to reinforce the message with 'rubbish' talks and games.



Sue's Painting Tips

Sue, Records Officer for MRC, has the task of writing up the staff newsletter. She is always on the scrounge for useful and interesting ways we can reduce our own waste. Even though we are a 'waste management' authority we are not always diligent about our own habits at home. Sue helps to correct this. Maybe a staff newsletter is somewhere you can make a point. Sue is also building a house

I have been researching options for non-toxic paints to paint the interior walls of our new house. The ones I have found are solvent free which means they are good for the environment and provide healthier indoor air quality with low or zero levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's), which can be potentially carcinogenic, to paint the walls of our new house. They also have the added benefit of covering more sqm of area than normal store bought paint which means costs are similar. One very interesting thing I found out about Perth is that usually the sealer undercoats for walls that are used are all toxic oil based products.

Therefore people are immediately stopping the building breathing and making their new walls and home a toxic environment. Another interesting thing is that one paint called Multifund (a high quality 100% acrylic paint with an even velvet like finish gives an incredible 30sqm per litre compared to regular water based paint. The answer is simple, the Europeans keep their paint clean and toxic free and only need to add water to get good coverage. I have actually purchased some water based ones including the plaster sealer (a consolidated acrylic vapour permeable primer) and will be able to provide a story about how it goes on including photos of my painter doing the work.

Vertical gardening



Check out the Life on a Balcony website to find out how you can make your own vertical garden from a pallet:

<http://lifeonthebalcony.com/how-to-turn-a-pallet-into-a-garden/>

FUTURE EVENTS

The next Earth Carers course will be on the following dates:

Wednesday 14 September

Saturday 17 September

Wednesday 21 September

Saturday 24 September

Wednesday 28 September

Further details can be found on the MRC website (see below).

For further information please contact:

Peg 9306 6303/0422 941492

Karen 9306 6348

We're on the Web!

www.mrc.wa.gov.au

EC Survey

We are aiming to have a conversation with everyone who has been through an Earth Carers training course to find out about your experiences in the world of waste following the course, and to get your ideas for future activities. Thanks to those of you who have already participated in our survey and for those still to get a call, Nic or Anne will be in contact soon.

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