

Organic Land Care *with*

There are no passengers on spaceship earth. We are all crew.

-Marshall McLuhan-

One of the worst mistakes you can make as a gardener is to think you're in charge.

- Janet Gillespie-



Organic Land Care with SOUL is published ten times per year by the Society for Organic Urban Land Care.

Our Mission:

"To support our communities in their transition to organic practices"

This newsletter is distributed free of charge to all SOUL members. Please feel free to share this publication.

SOUL

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www.organiclandcare.org.

April 2008

Happy Earthday! May your feet always touch the earth.

Welcome to spring or at least the return of the light depending upon where you may live. On the west coast of Canada we are seeing the emergence of spring flowering bulbs, and the songs of birds as they announce their preparations for the coming breeding season.

Many things are happening these days, not the least is movement towards regional, national and global awareness of what we have done, are doing and need to do for our habitats. At SOUL, we continue to draw awareness of how we have to conduct our work and lives in a time where the concept of "organic" is not just a label used to sell a product as "green.". Instead, it is practice, understanding and commitment to how we want and need to live our lives. In future issues of the newsletter more discussion about what this means will take place as we try to define organic.

This newsletter it is a way to communicate briefly what is occurring within our habitats. The articles presented are meant to inform which enables us to further entrench our commitment to sustainable practices. As well, the newsletter is to celebrate our achievements and to highlight different professional and sustaining members.

This month acknowledgement is given to recent graduates who received certificates in Master Organic Gardening and Sustainable Ecological Design. Congratulations! As well, the member highlighted is Dayle Cosway, President of SOUL, who recently published a new book. More on this in a moment... And finally, a new branch of SOUL has been created in Victoria, BC. Fantastic and good luck. SOUL is truly blossoming.

The summary of the article, Did Your Shopping List Kill a Songbird, presented is apropos for the spring season. As we listen to birds singing, this piece of writing reminds us that our grocery selections have consequences beyond our local produce department. Food for thought because all life is connected in the web of existence.

Thank you,
David Greig

I would like to introduce Dayle Cosway, tireless worker and promoter as President of SOUL and author of a new and practical gardening resource entitled "Sunscaping." So, here in her own words is a synopsis of her very useful book.

Sunscaping is a process I developed to help gardeners make better plant location decisions. My book, Sunscaping - A new tool for every gardener, details the creation of a sun exposure map which once completed, serves as a color coded guide for perfect plant placement.

Lately, many of our best-regarded garden advisors have been advocating "right plant, right place" and wise council it is. Identifying the right place just isn't as easy as it seems. With this newly defined process of Sunscaping; areas of sun and shade, part sun and part shade, are quickly, clearly and accurately identified.

Environment stress is the number one reason for plant failure. When a plant is put in the right place it not only has a much better chance of thriving but also requires less input of a gardeners time and resources. Fewer nutrient supplements are required to make up for the loss of effective photosynthesis and no pesticides are required when a plant is able to use the resources of its adapted ecosystem. Right plant, right place is environmentally and economically responsible.

As the author of Sunscaping- A new tool for every gardener I am available for short workshops and 'talks' on this new and exciting technique. I can present examples of actual Sunscapes from my garden and discuss how Sunscapes help not only in plant placement but also in hardscape, furniture, and equipment placement and how the basic Sunscaping grid can be used for planning garden redesigns, garden inventories, and seasonal color changes.

I am excited about getting this knowledge out into the gardening community and would very much appreciate the opportunity to highlight my book. For further information please contact me using any of the numbers below at your convenience.

Thank you so much,
Dayle Cosway

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Did Your Shopping List Kill a Songbird?

By BRIDGET STUTCHBURY

Published: March 30, 2008, Woodbridge, Ontario

During the winter and early spring our cravings for "fresh" fruit and vegetables turn to imported foods. To grow these foods, as well as coffee, pesticides that would be illegal in the United States are being used. It is becoming clear that the hazardous levels from the use of these pesticides is affecting the North American songbird populations. One example is the Bobolink whose numbers have declined 50 percent over the past 40 years. In recent research conducted by the Vermont Centre for Ecostudies in the Bolivian wintering grounds of the Bobolinks, it was discovered in blood samples of these birds, half of them showed exposure to toxic chemicals.

Since 1980, the use of dangerous pesticides has increased five-fold in Latin American countries such as Guatemala, Honduras and Ecuador. To supply fresh winter food for North America and Europe, these countries are growing non-traditional food items and are repeatedly and heavily spraying their crops with deadly chemical cocktails to supply this demand. Many of these chemicals are either restricted or banned in the United States and are highly toxic to birds.

In studies of Swainson hawks, bobolinks, barn swallows and Eastern kingbirds, deaths are occurring at alarming rates. In the mid 1990's, the use of satellites to track Swainson's hawks to their wintering grounds in Argentina found that thousands of these birds had died in their winter habitat because of pesticide poisoning.

These findings are "modern-day canaries in the coal mine" as these bird deaths are indicative of the hidden problems to consumers. The United States Food and Drug Administration found that the "fruits and vegetables imported from Latin America are three times" more likely to contain pesticide residues than in the United States. As well, most of these pesticide residues cannot be washed or peeled off. Instead, traces of these residues are now being found in the blood of Americans.

Bridget Stutchbury, a professor of biology at York University in Toronto, is the author of "Silence of the Songbirds."

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/30/opinion/30stutchbury.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&oref=slogin for full article



**Congratulations to the new graduates of the
Ecological Landscape Design Certificate and
Organic Master Gardener Courses in
Burnaby and Victoria.**

Well done!