

# ecology action center news



Volume 12, Issue 2

S u m m e r

## Annual Yard Smart Garden Walk

By **Adrienne Ohler**, EAC Board Member

Join the Ecology Action Center for the twelfth annual Yard Smart Garden Walk on Saturday, June 28, 2014. This free event features beautiful and functional yards in our community that protect the environment, create a healthy and inviting space for animals and people alike, and use little to no synthetic chemicals in the process.

The morning walk takes place from 9:00am – 12:00p.m with this year's walk focused on urban landscaping and gardening. Afterwards, Stacy James from the Prairie River Project will give a presentation titled "Living with Nature: Conserving Water." Lunch is provided.

This year's event features a plant and Freecycle garden tool exchange. Please bring plants or garden tools to give away (for free), and maybe you'll find something you need that someone else donates to the exchange!

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*This free event features beautiful and functional yards in our community that protect the environment, create a healthy and inviting space for animals and people alike, and use little to no synthetic chemicals in the process.*

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The Yard Smart Garden Walk is free and open to the public; however, a \$5 donation to offset the cost of lunch is appreciated. Register by June 26, to receive your details on the event. You can register online at [www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org) or call 309-454-3169.

Participants should bring their own lawn chairs and reusable water bottles for the lunch and presentation; the lunch is a zero waste event. Participants are encouraged to carpool during the tour to reduce pollution and conserve energy. Prior to the event, participants will be emailed pictures pertinent to the presentation; it is suggested that participants bring that document on a smartphone or tablet if possible. Limited printed copies may be available.

This garden walk promotes the Ecology Action Center's Yard Smart program which encourages local gardeners to reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, to conserve natural resources such as water and fossil fuels, and to make room for wildlife in their yards. Yard Smart Certification recognizes the efforts of people in the

Continued on page 2

### Mark Your Calendar

**June 26** Rain Barrel Workshop

**June 28** Yard Smart Garden Walk (register by June 26)

**June 28** Rain Barrel Workshop

**July 1** Green Drinks with Wild Ones

### In This Issue

- EAC Landscaping Project
- Refillable Propane Tanks for Camping
- New! EAC Energy Efficiency Program



# Camping? Opt for a Refillable Camp Stove

By **Emily Cross**, Energy Program Coordinator

It's finally summertime, and the living is easy. At the Ecology Action Center, one of our favorite summer pastimes is camping, and we love it when you get out and enjoy nature too! Although we could go into many ways to minimize your environmental footprint once you set up tent, we want to touch base on one important thing you can do before you even head out to the campsite: opt for a refillable stove tank.

Many campers use the Coleman style single-use gas cylinders in order to fuel a small stove or lantern. While it may seem convenient at the time, once your camping trip is done, you may wonder how exactly to dispose of these canisters. Unfortunately, there's no convenient answer! Because there may be gas left over when you are finished, and these propane canisters are pressurized, businesses and other recycling centers do not want to accept the containers out of safety concerns.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency recommends hooking up your Coleman style canister to your stove or lantern and running the device until there is no more fuel and the flame sputters out. After you are absolutely sure you have burned off the gas, you should dispose of the

tank in your garbage. We hate recommending putting metal in the landfill, but that's the only answer at this moment.

The important takeaway here is to never buy these again! Instead, **invest in a refillable tank that uses liquid fuel.** If you have a propane stove or other device that typically uses the single-use canisters, you can easily use an adapter hose that allows you to use a refillable standard 22-pound propane tank. Also, if you are in the market for a new stove, think about purchasing one that uses refillable liquid fuel instead of the disposable canisters; this will be a more convenient size for camping or backpacking.

Opting for refillable containers will not only eliminate these safety and environmental hazards of the disposable green canisters, but it could save you some serious cash. If a standard green Coleman is around \$3-6 each, that's \$24-48 per gallon, whereas propane will only cost you around \$3-5 a gallon!

Check out [outdoorgearlab.com/Camping-Stove-Reviews/buying-advice](http://outdoorgearlab.com/Camping-Stove-Reviews/buying-advice) for more information on which hose adapters performed best in their tests for camping stoves, and remember to minimize your environmental impact, and your guilt, by opting for a refillable tank.

*Check it out:  
EAC's 2013  
Annual Report*

*Have you ever  
wondered about  
our corporate  
goals or the  
outcomes of some  
of our main  
annual events?*

*Go to [www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)  
and check out our  
newly released  
2013 Annual  
Report which  
highlights our  
activities and  
achievements for  
calendar year  
2013.*



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## Yard Smart, continued from page 1

community who use ecologically sustainable practices to maintain their yards, and who realize their lawn, garden, and landscaping decisions impact and affect the health of the entire community.

More information on the Yard Smart program as well as a set of free resource fact

sheets to help you become more Yard Smart are available at [www.yardsmart.org](http://www.yardsmart.org). Please join us on June 28<sup>th</sup>, to see some of the beautiful results of the time and love our neighbors and friends have put into creating healthy, safe, and functional yards and gardens, and find some inspiration for your own yard in the process!



## New Rainscaping in Progress!

If you've come by the EAC office in the past few weeks probably noticed our front yard is under-going some changes! We are in the process of installing a new rain garden—only a small part of a larger initiative to create a Yard Smart Demonstration Garden. The rain garden (which you see being installed in the photo below) will demonstrate the natural filtration processes that can help remove storm water runoff pollutants from our water supplies. Overall, the new Yard Smart Demonstration Garden will serve as an attractive illustration of the benefits of sustainable gardening and will show homeowners that it is not only possible, but relatively easy, to maintain a beautiful landscape with sustainable practices.

This project is funded in part by a grant from the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, services contributed by Accent Nature Landscaping, and private donations. We are extremely grateful for their support! To donate to this project, please contact Michael Brown at 309-454-3169 x.11 or mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org.



## Radon Reminder

The US Surgeon General and many others have warned that radon is the first leading cause of Lung Cancer, after smoking. Radon is 5 to 6 times more dangerous to your lungs than second hand smoke. If you smoke and your home has elevated radon levels, your risk of lung cancer is especially high. 4 picoCuries per liter of Radon is the action level – so if your radon test is above 4 pCi/L, consider fixing your radon problem.

Radon test kits are available at the EAC for \$10.00 each. These 5 to 7 day tests are simple, reliable, easy to use and you will get test results in 10 days after mailing in. Contact Ruth Ann Lipic, Radon Program Coordinator at 309-454-3169 with your questions and concerns.



## Meet EAC's New Energy Efficiency Program

By **Emily Cross**, Energy Program Coordinator

The Ecology Action Center is excited to announce that we are launching a new Energy Efficiency Program this summer! With support from the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal, we have hired a new Energy Program Coordinator that has started developing the ins and outs of this innovative initiative.

Our program is dedicated to helping residents and businesses in our community achieve energy savings goals. Serving as a central hub for all energy efficiency financial incentives, programs, contractors, and more, we will not only educate about how important it is to reduce energy, but we will provide the tools to do so. Part of the program will include a comprehensive, resource-rich website packed with energy-saving tips, where we will challenge our

community members to make a pledge to save energy (and money!) and set a goal for their personal savings.

At the Ecology Action Center, we know that the greenest energy is the energy we don't have to produce. So beyond educating and helping individuals reduce their energy usage, we'll also be conducting on-site mini energy audits to identify the needs of each building and work with its occupants to achieve meaningful energy reduction. Depending on the home or business, we will point them to financial incentives available so that their energy savings are more within their reach!

Keep an eye out for our program launch, and please e-mail our new Energy Program Coordinator, Emily, at [ecross@ecologyactioncenter.org](mailto:ecross@ecologyactioncenter.org) if you want to find out more information.



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