



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

April 2023

Mission: The West Chester Green Team is a civic organization in West Chester, PA, that works to educate the local public and to establish and nourish green initiatives in the community in harmony with nature and each other, promoting the health of all living things and of planet Earth.

Inside:

Earth Day! And compost, native plants, lunch with Dr. Carter, “Climate dads,” who’s playing at Porchfest, and why we’re so proud



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



April 10: Dark Skies meeting. Contact Tim Lawlor for details
tml10@psu.edu.

April 18, 10 am: WCGT Education Committee meeting, 409 W. Union St., West Chester. Help us plan and present this program to the community: Legendary Lenape--Family Education Program. Canoeing and Cooking, Crafts and Storytelling, and Deep Reverence for the Natural World.

April 21, 11 am at West Chester University: Earth Day Eve! See page 3 for planned events.

April 22, Earth Day: See page 3 for details on all we have planned!

April 29, 2 pm, Unitarian Congregation, S. High St. Workshop by Dee Durham, president of Plastic-free Delaware. Topic: HOW to ban PLASTIC. Advance registration required. See page 3 for details:

For details on these and other April (and later) events, please see listings beginning on page 3.

Related groups and committees:

4th Monday of every month: East Bradford Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), 7 – 8:30pm, East Bradford Township Bldg, 676 Copeland School Rd.

4th Monday of every month: East Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee, 7 – 8:30pm, East Goshen Township Bldg, 1580 Paoli Pike

4th Tuesday of every month: West Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee, 6 – 8 pm, West Goshen Township Bldg., 1025 Paoli Pike

4th Tuesday of every month: Westtown Environmental Advisory Council, 7 – 8:30pm, Westtown Township Bldg., 1039 Wilmington Pike (Rt. 202)

4th Thursday of every month: West Chester Sustainability Advisory Committee, 6:30 – 8 pm, Room 240, Borough Hall, E. Gay St.

Be sure to visit our Web site at <https://wcgreenteam.com/> and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WCGTeam/> (all are welcome to post environment- and sustainability-related items there). If you wish to support our work, please donate here: <https://wcgreenteam.com/contact-2/>

NOTE: Deadline for the May issue is April 30! We welcome contributions and suggestions from our readers for possible inclusion in a future issue. E-mail your ideas to Dianne Walsh at LDwalsh318@gmail.com.

This and That

More Coming Attractions:

April 21, 2023, at West Chester University, 11 am: Earth Day Eve! Sign dedication in cooperation with Brad Flamm and the Sustainability Office. The WCGT will also honor three long-time members: Christi Marshall, George Squire and Don Braceland. West Chester Mayor Lillian DeBaptiste and University President Christopher Fiorentino will speak. Meet near the Frederick Douglass statue behind Philips Memorial Hall.

April 22, 2023 (Earth Day), Rally at Historic Courthouse, 1 pm, with State Sen. Carolyn Comitta, County Commissioner Josh Maxwell, State Rep. Chris Pielli, and other speakers. Theme: Climate: What Next? Then, march down High Street to the Unitarian Congregation where there will be a **Green Fair from 2:15 until 4:30.** Includes a Repair café, plantings, snacks and activities for children, including a reading of Dr. Seuss's The Lorax by tree promoter Cathy Spahr. What's a repair café? Essentially, attendees bring items in need of repair which other people fix! This keeps usable items from going to landfill and reduces the volume of raw materials and energy needed to make new products. It also provides those with repair skills the opportunity to put them to good use and share with others in the community! If you can repair clothing, small appliances, electronics, lamps, small pieces of furniture, etc, please contact Ginny Marcille-Kerslake at gmarcillekerslake@fwwatch.org . A great way to celebrate Earth Day! See more below.

April 22, 2023 Marshall Square Park Cleanup, 8:30 am-noon. Please give your park a couple of hours picking up sticks, spreading mulch, keeping it safe, beautiful and healthy. Kids are welcome to come with their parents, too! We have lots of tools but if you have a mulch fork (it has about 6 tines rather than 3 or 4), a tarp and a wheelbarrow they will probably be put to good use. Please mark your tools with contact info. Rain or shine, check in with Eric Miller at the corner of Marshall and Matlack, or Roger Lacy at the gazebo.



Please Register Here or [email](#) us if you are planning to help! Let us know in your registration if or what tool you plan to bring. ericmiller201@gmail.com. Coffee, donuts, and water will be available at the gazebo!

April 29, 2023—2 pm, Unitarian Congregation, S. High St. Workshop by Dee Durham, president of Plastic-free Delaware (see her other credentials at <https://www.friendsfordeedurham.us/about/>). Advance registration required. Topic: HOW to ban PLASTIC. She will be discussing getting rid of plastic--which she did successfully in Delaware--and successfully running a non-profit group--as it grows. Spaces for this event are limited so please rsvp to save a spot. Josh Maxwell from our own Chester County government will be joining us. Contact mhudgings@gmail.com to sign up.

May 13, 2023--9-11:30 am Pollinator Garden planting at the Chestnut Street Garage. Contact courtney.marm@gmail.com for more information or to RSVP.

May 20--PORCHFEST 1-7 pm. Southwest quadrant of West Chester. **May 21**--rain date. See page 11 for some of the acts that will be performing.

As always, see updates and other events in our website calendar at the bottom of our Web site homepage at <https://wcgreenteam.com>

Don't Forget: Earth Day Birthday '23!

EARTH DAY BIRTHDAY 2023

RALLY AT THE CHESTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

10 NORTH HIGH STREET, WEST CHESTER

APRIL 22 @ 1:00 P.M.



INVITED SPEAKERS:

**SENATOR CAROLYN COMITTA
COMMISSIONER JOSH MAXWELL
REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS PIELLI**



**SPEAKING FOR THE CHILDREN:
OLLIE FINNERAN AND KATE LONG**



FEATURING:

**MUSIC BY REVEREND DAN SCHATZ
WC PORCHFEST UPDATE BY RENEE PERNA
FOOD IN OUR TOWN UPDATE BY MEGAN SCHRAEDLEY**

MARCH FROM COURTHOUSE TO UNITARIAN CONGREGATION

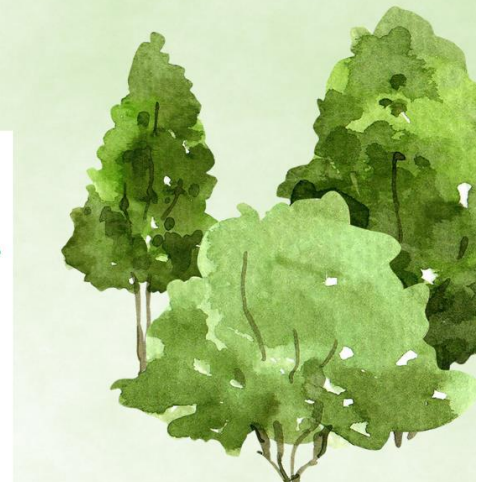
10 N HIGH ST. TO 501 S. HIGH ST. WEST CHESTER



**MARCH LED BY FORMER WEST CHESTER
MAYOR JORDAN NORLEY**



ORGANIZED BY:



Can We Really Compost Those "Compostable Wares?"

by Nathaniel Smith and Tiffany Kennedy

Last month, in "From Campus to Community: My Journey in Compost," Tiffany Kennedy described how she went from volunteering at the WCU campus garden to working for [Mother Compost](#), which picks up kitchen compostables in a number of municipalities including now West Chester and most of West Goshen.

Many of us, in our efforts to reduce plastic waste, have questions about ostensibly compostable containers.

Tiffany's composting organization has a detailed [list of compostable materials](#) and links [here](#) for even more detail including "BPI-certified compostable ware."

I took 2 egg cartons as an example to check at BPI (Biodegradable Products Institute). But I cannot see that either has any identifying info other than the eggs' brand, and one says made out of 100% recycled paper. Both look compostable to me: sort of loose fiber, grayish, no sign of anything plasticky. So, I asked Tiffany:

- Are such containers acceptable in your pickups, even if the brand can't be identified?
- Do some compostable items actually have undesirable chemicals in them?
- Is there any easy rule of thumb for people who are well disposed but can't deal with the BPI site?
- In case of doubt, can compostable items be recycled along with paper and plastics?

I have been thinking: if it looks absorbent and fibrous, with no evident plastic, then it's OK to compost. Is there merit in that or is it much more complicated?

Tiffany's reply is helpful not only for her company's clients but also those of us who compost at home:

Tiffany: Great question, this is something we get asked a lot about.

Cardboard egg cartons are totally fine for our compost bins and compost in general as long as any stickers have been removed. We count those under recyclable materials that can be composted. They wouldn't be labeled compostable *per se* because they are indeed recyclable. We always tell people that if they can recycle to do that, but as I am sure you are aware it is very unclear where our recycling goes these days; so, some of our customers opt to compost recyclable paper products because they can feel confident items are actually being disposed of properly; however, once an item like a pizza box or paper plate or napkin has food grease on them, they are no longer suited for recycling and should be composted.

The BPI certification is strictly for compostable disposable products. While some of those are paper based, we have seen an increase in the corn 'plastic' items. There is lots of greenwashing around items being biodegradable (which [doesn't always mean compostable!](#)). So we look for the certification to make sure it will break down appropriately. For a list of compostable items, see <https://mothercompost.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Compostable-Materials-List.png>

Composting, con't:



The restriction on corn plastic compostable utensils for our bins comes directly from the compost processor at [Linvilla](#), which realized that those items in particular were not breaking down as fast as other items and were getting caught up in the screening equipment. While they may compost over time, they were not working within the yearlong timeframe that the piles operate in at Linvilla. This can sometimes make composting confusing because depending on where materials are being taken, different processors have different materials that they do/don't accept. A few processors in the area don't take compostable ware at all regardless of the certification. So it really just depends on

their rules, which can make it tricky for people who don't have clear guidelines from their processor. *(Image: compostable yogurt containers slowly going back to nature in Nathaniel's back yard--too slowly for all except home composting.)*

I am not aware of undesirable chemicals in certified compostable products at this time. The rule of thumb we tell our customers is that if you don't see a certification or label making it clear that a compostable to go item is in fact compostable, then it is probably not. Companies pay big money to get those certs so when they have them they are normally plastered all over their products. Simple recycled paper products that are not coated with any wax/plastic are fine for compost.

Your rule of thumb does have merit and is what I typically go by. If you have found that that works for your backyard pile, I wouldn't complicate it.

If any of the above answers brings on more questions, Mother Compost is happy to answer any compost questions. E-mail customer service at info@mothercompost.com

We're So Proud!

We're bursting at the seams with pride! The West Chester Green Team has won the **Community Pride Award** from **Keep PA Beautiful**. The award will be presented by State Senator Carolyn Comitta at our Earth Day Rally on April 22, at 1:00 pm at the Historic Courthouse in West Chester. Come help us celebrate this achievement.



The Importance of Native Plants

By Nora Ziegler, WCGT Board member



Wild Bleeding Heart

Two magazines for this month had detailed articles about the importance of native plants. *Sierra* had an article in its Spring 2023 issue named "Make Home a Haven." *The Reader's Digest's* March/April 2023 issue's cover story is titled "Lawn Gone" (and subtitled "Everyone Loves Their Yard ... Except Mother Nature"). Both articles include mention of Doug Tallamy's Homegrown National Parks and the importance of native plants to our plant and animal habitats.

Here are five of the many reasons we should plant native plants:

1. Native plants have deeper root systems that prevent flooding from run-off and erosion. Native landscapes can absorb 90% more run-off than non-native!
2. Native plants sequester more carbon improving air quality. They also produce less allergy-causing pollen than non-native plants. Less sneezing!
3. Native plants are adapted to local conditions therefore requiring less fertilizer and pesticides, so they are low maintenance and require less water. They reduce your gardening water bill by 85%! That will save you money and time.
4. Pollinators and native plants have evolved together and they need each other. Our community gardens have improved yields when the pollinators come to it by our providing some flowers to each bed. Then we can provide more veggies to the Food Bank and our tables.
5. Native plants are healthier and stronger. They are also beautiful and increase the scenic values of homes and properties.

In addition to the two published magazine articles, many more ideas can be found in Doug Tallamy's *Nature's Best Hope, A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*.

For more information on, and a list of, native plants for Pennsylvania gardens see

<https://extension.psu.edu/pennsylvania-native-plants-for-the-perennial-garden>



Turk's Cap Lily



Last-Minute Gardeners Take Note:

We still have **THREE** beds left for gardeners at Barclay. See more details and how to apply [here](#).

Small Flowering Trees: A Dozen Native Species for Limited Spaces

From: *The Wild Seed Project*

A small tree can bring beauty and diversity into your yard while taking up very little space. One could be planted next to your doorway, at the edge of your driveway, in the narrow strip between the sidewalk and the street, in a bed by your patio or even in a large pot on your deck.

Planting a small tree is a pleasurable task. You do not need to have gardening experience to tackle this, and it is a great way for people who do not consider themselves gardeners to support other creatures from our local ecoregion and will help draw them into your home landscape.



Eastern Redbud trees.

[Read the full article](#), which includes a [list of small native trees plus planting instructions](#).

Native Plants and Your Vegetable Garden

Did you know native companion plants help with pollination of fruits and vegetables?

From: *The Buzz*



Non-native honeybees are important pollinators of many of our food crops, but numerous species of native bees and other pollinating insects are significant as well.

In fact, many native bees—of a variety sizes and shapes—are the only insects that pollinate certain species. **For example, bumblebees have the amazing ability to “buzz pollinate” tomatoes - a talent that honeybees lack.**

Studies show that tomatoes pollinated by bumblebees produce bigger and more numerous fruit.

Get started with this [“Native Plants Help Fruits and Vegetables Thrive”](#) fact sheet from the Missouri Prairie Foundation.

Vegan Luncheon with Dr. Christopher Carter

By Amber Nermoe

In March, I went to a luncheon with Dr. Christopher Carter of the Department of Theology & Religious Studies, University of San Diego, catered by the Vegout club of West Chester University. Dr. Carter is a Ph.D. and preacher who supports plant-based eating. He has a strong faith since he is a pastor and incorporates that in his book and speech. This luncheon was wonderful because I am a member of Vegout and am a big advocate of plant-based eating to help save the Earth and especially people. It was enlightening to hear someone talk about the direct effect of animal agriculture to low-income areas.



After I got my delicious tofu feast, the club and Dr. Carter sat around a table and introduced ourselves. It was lovely to have such a personal experience because this allowed us to ask questions about what we really wanted to learn. Dr. Carter speaks like a pastor which makes sense but it's interesting that plant-based eating is the topic. He discussed how food has energy within it which is something I absolutely believe in. Whether religious or not, food contains energy that is then brought into the consumer. Consuming animals makes people take on the energy of the slaughter, antibiotics and living conditions.

Another topic I was fascinated by was when Dr. Carter mentioned the impact of animal agriculture in low-income areas. He explains how low-income African American neighborhoods are where the farming occurs. He gave an example of a place in the south where a whole town smelled because it was turned into grazing land. This sounds disgusting and evil to people. The demand for meat is profoundly higher than the amount of people living. The cows and chickens outnumber the number of people alive. Considering that we control the populations of these animals, this is disgusting.

His delivery was direct and definitely on the preacher side. He would get passionate about the religious things which I found hard to relate to. His archetype revealed that he is the type to preach about either God or his book. This lack of being personable made it difficult to connect. This separation of Christian religion to the audience of Muslim, spiritual, wiccan, atheist and stoic Vegout made this quite an interesting lecture. We were able to relate to his interesting information about food related topics but when religion came into the conversation, I noticed that my fellow club members lost interest.

This was a fantastic experience of getting to see if a spokesperson or pastor can adapt to a smaller luncheon-style conversation. Some people tend to speak large and dramatic but it's easier to connect to someone down to earth who speaks in a conversational manner. This was a great lesson on being able to adapt topics to different-sized rooms and being able to engage people properly.

Did You Know: There are 21,000 pieces of plastic in the ocean for each person on Earth—Washington Post

Read about it at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2023/03/08/ocean-plastics-pollution-study/>

Are You A “Climate Dad?”

By Michael J. Coren as published in *Climate Coach*

Dad stereotypes come in all flavors.

You have the grill master, the football fanatic, the garage mechanic and the Little League coach. My dad spent countless hours tossing a baseball with me, discussing the finer points of Orel Hershisier’s fastballs.

We should now add “climate dad” to the list.

What are climate dads into? “Heat pumps,” [wrote](#) Peter Kalmus, a NASA climate scientist, on Twitter. “E-bikes and bike paths, solar panels, climate income, activism, and other great and useful things.” The nerdiness of climate solutions is catnip for climate dads. They can talk for hours about the nitty-gritty of electrifying their homes. Long-distance transmission lines stir passionate debate.



Worried about the latest IPCC reports? Climate dads like Peter Olivier are too busy reading engineering textbooks to rewire the dimmers for LEDs in the den.

“It is a really wonderful, charming reaction to our moment,” [says Olivier, who connects with other climate dads on Twitter](#). “I see it in myself and my friends.”

Yet few role models exist. Caring about the environment isn’t seen as traditionally masculine. According to a 2016 [study in the Journal of Consumer Research](#), on average men are more averse than women to ostensibly “eco-friendly” lifestyles. “The concepts of greenness and femininity are cognitively linked,” the authors write, a conclusion [reflected in other research](#).

But that’s not inevitable. It’s a product of culture. And one, I suspect, that is changing. As the existential threat of climate change comes into focus, and what’s needed to create a safe climate for their children becomes clear, climate dads are having a moment. Vehicles like the electric Mustang Mach-E probably help, too.



As for me, I’m a proud climate dad. My son was born last June. California had just endured six years of brutal drought, raging wildfires and searing heat domes. Suddenly the climate in 2050 was no longer an abstraction. It was a world [Vaughan would live in](#) and I owed it to him to make it better.

Special Note: You are invited to gather with PA climate advocates this coming Thursday, April 6, at 10 AM in Everhart Park, 100 S. Brandywine St. West Chester. We will plant a flowering dogwood to honor the climate work of Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, the U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania’s 6th congressional district. Chrissy is not only a scientist and engineer who understands the urgency of climate change. As a member of Congress she is committed to working across the aisle to pass climate legislation that will mitigate the threat.

Read about her accomplishments here:

<https://houlahan.house.gov/issues/issue/?IssueID=14814>

Most recently she stepped up to lead the Climate Solutions Caucus, a bipartisan group in the U.S. House of Representatives working on solutions to climate change.

We hope you can join us!

Jane Klein/Matt Zencey, Leaders, Citizens' Climate Lobby of Chester County

Who's Performing at Porchfest?

Lots of acts have already signed on and more are joining every day. Here are just a few samples of what you'll see.

Cornflower Jam

Hailing from Philadelphia, Cornflower Jam combines old-timey folk music with modern, acoustic melodies and resounding, haunting, harmonies. The band released their first album in April of 2022, after forming a few years prior at the "Brandywine Old-Time Revival Festival" (Hosted in Chester County). All three members work in, or come from, Chester County, and Laura Alexander was even raised in West Chester herself!



Tea Head



Joe Bucci, John Fordyce, Gabe Sagherian, and John McDermott make up this indie-rock themed band who hails from Philly! Starting in 2018 as a duo, the band has grown to clear success (and members!) and released their first album in 2021. They can be found playing the "DIY Music" scene in Philadelphia, as well as various other venues in the surrounding area.

Rented Mule

Rented Mule is a Chester County based bluegrass band with a rotating cast of band-members and performers. They play bluegrass music mixed with a dash of country and interweave several different instruments to create their memorable tunes.



Want to host a porch, or perform at Porchfest 2023? Go to westchesterporchfest.com