



Salem Sound Monitor – April 2008

Dear Friends of Salem Sound Coastwatch,

Spring is finally happening! The buds are on the tress, and spring flowers are popping up. Are you ready to start playing in the dirt?

The main article of this newsletter is about Greenscapes™- environmentally-friendly gardening and yard care practices. With Greenscapes you can learn how to have a beautiful lawn without using chemicals, which plants are drought tolerant, and how you can help protect the Sound with your yard and lawn care practices.

Also, we have loads of interesting presentations and activities coming up, so be sure to check the updated calendar at the end of this newsletter.

Why Greenscape?

Did you know that the number one threat to Salem Sound comes from stormwater runoff? When it rains, water runs down our roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and driveways, picking up oils, toxic chemicals, pet poop, sediment, cigarette butts and other pollutants. All of this goes into the storm drains, which empty into the nearest body of water. Ultimately it ends up in our coastal waters.



What does this have to do with my garden or lawn, you ask? Well, a good rain also can wash away the fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides we use in your yards and send them into the storm drains, too.

The good news is that you can make a difference. By following the Greenscapes recommendations you can have thriving plants and grass, in a chemical-free yard that's safe for kids and pets, help prevent water pollution, and save money on water bills.

Where to Begin? Let's Start With Your Lawn.

1. **We recommend that you mow high.** Never cut your grass shorter than 3 inches (the size of a credit card). Why? Because the longer the blade of grass, the longer the roots will be, and that makes for healthier grass. Also, taller grass holds more moisture and creates a nice shady environment that a lot of weeds hate.
2. **Next, believe it or not, you don't need to water your lawn very often.** Usually once a week is enough! If you give your grass an inch of water once a week (preferably at dawn, or at least before 9 am), the plants get slightly stressed and develop deep, strong roots. This will help keep your lawn healthy in the dog days of summer.
3. **Keep the blades sharp on your lawn mower!** Sharp blades make a nice clean cut; dull blades shred the grass which weakens it and makes it more prone to disease. If you have a landscaping service, they should be sharpening their mower blades at least once a week. Ask them.

In the Garden

In your garden, use drought-tolerant plants. Greenscapes recommends 23 plants, including perennials, ground covers, shrubs and trees, that once established, will not need much water. **We even have 8 garden centers on the North Shore who are willing to give a 15% discount on these plants if you mention Greenscapes!**



You'll also want to use good organic compost to enrich your soil. Compost provides essential minerals and nutrients, allows better root growth, and increases moisture and nutrient retention in the soil. **You can make your own, or you can purchase it at a 15% discount at DiLisio Bros. in Salem and Chapman's Greenhouse in Beverly. (Be sure to mention Greenscapes to get your discounts.)**

You can even make compost tea-nature's perfect food. Compost tea activates the organisms that feed the plants. You can use it with abandon--you can never use too much.

Free Workshops! A series of free Greenscapes workshops will be held in May, starting Saturday, May 3. The schedule is enclosed. Topics include:

1. How and Why to Use Native Plants in Your Garden
2. Soaking Up the Rain, With Rain Gardens, Green Roofs, and Permeable Pavers
3. Lawn Care Basics--Including How to Phase Out Chemicals
4. Easy Composting for Healthy Landscapes

If you live in a participating community, you will be receiving a *Greenscapes Guide* in the mail. The *Guide* is a full-color, 20 page publication filled with information about how you can save money, protect the environment, and have a beautiful yard at the same time. The Guide even lists 8 garden centers on the North Shore where you can get discounts on Greenscapes recommended plants. If you have access to a computer, visit www.salemsound.org to see the participating communities and garden centers. If not, give us a call at 978-741-7900.

SSCW Calendar of Upcoming Events: (Also posted at salemsound.org)

- **Saturday, May 3 - Greenscapes Workshop on "How and Why to Use Native Plants in Your Garden** 9:30 - 11:30 am. Free. Registration not required--just show up! Brooksby Farm (in the sales store), 38 Felton Rd., Peabody, MA 01960.
- **Saturday, May 3 – Salem Clean Sweeps Day: Forest River Estuary Salt Marsh Clean-up.** Join SSCW members and local residents. Meet at Pickman Park on Monroe Street, 9 am
- **May 4 - 10 - North River Awareness Week--**
Our annual celebration of the North River. Once it was filled with dyes and other nasty chemicals, now it is a river in recovery. There will be several community events and presentations.
 - **Sunday May 4 - Clean up of Spring Pond in Peabody,** 10 am - noon. Spring Pond is in the headwaters of the North River. Sponsored by Friends of Peabody Lakes and Ponds and SSCW. Meet at the bridge at the Coolidge Ave. Pumping Station. Call 978-741-7900 for directions.
 - **Monday, May 5 - What Does Furlong Park NEED?** 7:00 – 8:00 pm. Meeting to discuss improvements for Furlong Park, Franklin St. in Salem. All ideas are welcome for improving this waterfront park on the North River. SSCW office, 201 Washington St., Second floor, Suite 9, Salem.

- **Thursday, May 8 - Annual fish sampling demonstration and smelt count update on the North River.** 12:30 - 1:00 pm. The Division of Marine Fisheries will display the catch from the morning's sampling and provide an update on the status of spawning smelt in the North River. Meet on the river at Howley Street. Park in Stop & Shop parking lot.
- **Thursday, May 8 - "The Great Rivers of Salem: Past and Present"** 7:00-8:30 pm. Barbara Warren, Executive Director of SSCW, will give an historical overview of the Forest, South and North Rivers, describing how they have changed over the last 350 years and their current conditions. Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, 134 Essex St, Salem, next to Armory Park and the National Visitors Center.
- **Friday, May 9 - North River Awareness WALK and TALK** Noon - 1:00 pm
Join Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch Director, for a lunchtime 'walk and talk' along the banks of the North River Canal. Key environmental issues facing the river will be discussed. Participants will be given an opportunity to share their own concerns and wishes for the river and its drainage basin, as we discuss a vision for the future of this natural resource.

No registration required. Meet at the North River Park (aka Leslie's Retreat Park) parking lot beside O'Rourke Bros Memorials (73 North St) between Route 114, Commercial St, and Bridge St.

- **Saturday, May 10 - Greenscapes Workshop on "Soaking Up the Rain"** 9:30 - 11:30 am, at Brooksby Farm (in the sales store), 38 Felton Rd, Peabody, MA 01960. Topics include green roofs, rain gardens, and permeable paving stones. Free. Registration not required--just show up!
- **Tuesday, May 13 - Greenscapes Workshop on "Lawn Care Basics and How to Phase Out Chemicals"** 7:00 - 9:00 pm Free. Registration not required--just show up! Co-sponsored by Topsfield Fair. Topsfield Fairgrounds, Bee Building Rte 1 (207 Boston St.), Topsfield, MA 01983
- **Friday, May 16 - "Keeping the Earth SAFE and SOUND"** 7:00 pm. **It's party time!** A great time is had by all at our annual benefit gathering for Salem Sound Coastwatch and the Salem Alliance for the Environment. Silent auction and the fantastic band "A Patch of Blue" will once again enliven the evening. Hawthorne Hotel, 18 Washington Square West, Salem, MA 01970. Tickets will be available soon.
- **Tuesday, May 20 - Greenscapes Workshop on "Easy Composting for Healthy Landscapes"** 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Free. Registration not required--just show up! Co-sponsored by Topsfield Fair. Topsfield Fairgrounds, Bee Building, Rte 1 (207 Boston St.), Topsfield, MA 01983.
- **Wednesday, May 21 - "Changes to Our Region's Natural History from Bioinvaders"** 7:30 - 8:30 pm. Presentation by Barbara Warren, Executive Director of SSCW. Ipswich Historical Society, 54 South Main St, Ipswich, 01938
- **Thursday, May 22 - "Taking Nature Photos like a Professional"** 7:00 - 8:30 pm. Professional photographer Gary Stanley of Light-Chasers will share his knowledge, experience, and excitement about nature and outdoor photography. Free. Phillips Library - Peabody Essex Museum, 134 Essex St, Salem, next to Armory Park and the National Visitors Center.



**2008 North Shore Greenscapes Program
Free Workshop Series**

- 1. Saturday, May 3 – “How and Why to Use Native Plants in Your Garden” 9:30 – 11:30 am
In the store at Brooksby Farm, 38 Felton Rd, Peabody, MA 01960**

Join landscape architect Peter Phippen, and designer Mary Ann Malarkey, for a presentation on the “who, what, where and why” of gardening with native plants. Native plants provide beauty, enhance wildlife habitat and are drought tolerant. Mary Ann will discuss native plants in her designs and show how they can be incorporated. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers.

- 2. Saturday, May 10 – “Soaking Up the Rain” 9:30 – 11:30 am
In the store at Brooksby Farm, 38 Felton Rd, Peabody, MA 01960**

When it rains, pavements and rooftops shed water containing sediments and chemicals that eventually pollute our rivers, streams, ponds and coastal waters. These impervious surfaces also increase the likelihood of flooding.

This workshop will present different strategies for homeowners to put rainwater to good use. Curtis Dragon, certified organic landscaper, will discuss how to create a rain garden; Karen Weber of Earth Our Only Home will talk about green roofs (planted roofs) that soak up the rain, and Lou Iuliano of Ideal Pavers will talk about permeable pavers that allow infiltration of rainwater and recharge of groundwater.

- 3. Tuesday, May 13 – “Lawn Care Basics and How to Phase Out Chemicals”- Co-sponsored by the Topsfield Fair - 7:00 – 9:00 pm, Topsfield Fairgrounds, Bee Building, Rte 1 (207 Boston St.), Topsfield, MA 01983**

Did you know you can have a healthy lawn without using potentially toxic chemicals? In this workshop, Curtis Dragon, certified organic landscaper with over 30 years experience, will teach proper mowing techniques, how to select proper seed, how to control pests, when to water, and the basic steps to achieving a beautiful chemical free lawn that also conserves water and saves you money.

- 4. Tuesday, May 20 – “Easy Composting for Healthy Landscapes” – Co-sponsored by the Topsfield Fair - 7:00 – 9:00 pm, Topsfield Fairgrounds, Bee Building, Rte 1, (207 Boston St.) Topsfield, MA 01983**

Home composting with yard waste and kitchen scraps is the least expensive and most environmentally sound method of managing organic waste and fertilizing your yard. Ann McGovern from the MA Department of Environmental Protection will give a lively presentation on the ins and outs of composting, including composting with worms. Curt Dragon, certified organic landscaper will talk about how to make compost tea for an inexpensive fertilizer that is “nature’s perfect food.” Both novice and experienced composters are encouraged to attend.

Directions are posted on www.greenscapes.org
For more information, contact Salem Sound Coastwatch - info@salemsound.org or call 978-741-7900
Special thanks to Brooksby Farm and Topsfield Fair for donating the use of their facilities.