

ENVIRONNEWS

Earth News from the
Will County Land Use Department
Resource Recovery & Energy Division (RRE)

 WILL COUNTY
EXECUTIVE
JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT



Fall/Winter 2023



Summer is over and school is starting. Now is a great time to schedule a presentation from the Will County Land Use Environmental Educator. Environmental education is not just a theme for Earth Day. Learning how to take care of our land and earth should remain a priority throughout the year. What better way to learn than through hands on activities.

Hands-on learning engages both the left and right sides of the brain. Using multiple styles of learning, the brain creates better connections and can store more information. Learn how to reduce food waste with worms, nature's recycler. Keep a vermicomposting bin in your classroom and use the compost to plant in the spring. Learn how to filter water with rocks and sand and discuss the importance of water conservation. Design a working windmill with blocks and generate electricity to power a light. Learn about recycling or moving towards zero waste and have a recycle relay. Discover the amazing Monarch Butterfly and it's migration to Mexico.

Presentations can last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour+. Presentations can be with a large group without a hands-on activity or small group with hands-on activity. Presentations are for age groups from 3 years old through high school.

Fill out and submit the Will County Earth Flag Application to schedule presentations for the 2023-2024 school year!

Contact Erin Noon or fill out the Will County Earth Flag Application to schedule!

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Students at Arbury Hills Elementary School in Mokena are picking out the worms (left) and planting Mother's Day Flowers with compost from their classroom's Vermicomposting bin (right). Not to worry, Mrs. Erin takes the worms back to the Will County Land Use Department Office for the summer and will bring them back to Arbury Hills at the beginning of the next school year!



Students at Central Elementary School in Plainfield are rescuing a Lego person by using hydro power (left) and experimenting with geothermal energy (right).



Model windmill design from a student at Troy Shorewood Elementary School in Shorewood.



Kids over the summer at the Downtown Joliet Public Library experiencing hands-on Monarch butterflies and milkweed.

Migratory Bees

Back in the olden days farmers would have a couple bee hives on the property to pollinate the crops. Between the large size of today's farms and the severe population declines due to shrinking habitats and use of pesticides that our natural pollinators have suffered in recent decades, many farmers today must contract with beekeepers to truck in honeybees to ensure their crops are well pollinated. California is one of the largest contributors to the bee migration by truck due to the large almond fields that need to be pollinated every year in order to produce almonds. Some say that it is unnatural to truck bees to farms, while others say people have been migrating bees on horseback since the 1800's and it is a natural migration for the bees. Some argue there are many potential sources of stress for the bee colonies during transportation and need better regulations. Cold stress, changes in barometric pressure, humidity, turbulent airflow, diesel exhaust, and vibration are all potential sources of stress. Small sources of stress may have large consequences, especially if they are persistent or repeated. Whether trucking bees is good or bad, we know our food supply is dependent on them and other pollinators.

We must make sure our land use and agricultural practices prioritizes the health of such important creatures to our

livelihood. The best thing we can do as an individual is to plant native flowers, cut back on pesticide and herbicide use, buy local honey, buy organic food, set up a bee pond for drinking, set up a pollinator house, and help spread the word.



Transporting honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) to provide pollination for agriculture is big business. Commercial pollination services maintain thousands or even tens of thousands of hives that are available for rent, and they deliver by the truckload all over the country. Hives may be moved multiple times and several thousand miles per year. (Photo credit: Wikimedia/Pollinator, CC-BY-2.5)

Going Green This Fall!

- 1) Rake your leaves - Put away those gas and electricity-guzzling leaf blowers and get out a rake. Rake the leaves into a pile and jump in them for fun! Then rake them into a compost bin or pit and create food for your plants next spring.
- 2) Get use of your warm, snuggly sweaters and turn your thermostat down to 68° F. Warm yourself up with a nice cup of hot chocolate or tea!
- 3) As you pick out your sweater, donate the sweaters you no longer wear so someone can be warm and snuggly too!
- 4) Support your local farmers and buy your produce from a U-pick farm or local farmer's market.

Upcoming Events at www.WillCountyGreen.com

AUG 23 - SEPT 1: World Water Week

SEPT 9: Recyclepalooza and Household Hazardous Waste Collection in New Lenox

SEPT 23: Electronics Collection in Shorewood

SEPT 30: Love Monee Kick-Off

OCT 4: Energy Efficiency Day

NOV 4: Pumpkin Pitch with Document Shredding and Electronics at Lewis University in Romeoville

NOV 15: America Recycles Day

DEC 1 - JAN 31: String Light Recycling Offered at Electronics Event & Select County Buildings
