

[If you are having trouble viewing this email, click here.](#)



Winter 2012 ESP e-newsletter

Environmental Stewardship Pickering has a busy year ahead! We have organized many interesting events and hope to see you at them. To keep up-to-date, please "Like" us on facebook and join the conversation!

[ESP Facebook Page](#)

Changes to our Annual Environmental Leadership Forum

By Margo Sloan

Sometimes, we have the motivation or passion to make things happen, but the barriers we see before us seem insurmountable. The first step to overcoming any barrier is to identify it. Once we know what challenges we face, the solutions may in fact be easier than we originally thought.



On November 5th, 2011, Environmental Stewardship Pickering (ESP) hosted a round table discussion at Petticoat Creek Community Centre to discuss what events and initiatives people would like to see happen within the City of Pickering and to identify any barriers (or perceived barriers) to planning and organizing these environmental events. Representatives from 13 local environmental clubs and organizations participated in the discussion. The discussion sparked many ideas and promoted partnerships and collaborations across the city.

The ideas were many. It was exciting to see so many enthusiastic people come together. Some of the project ideas that were discussed included the following:

- tree planting
- naturalization of privately owned lands
- creating connectivity between habitats across the city
- kayak/canoe tours in local watercourses
- educational events in local watersheds
- climate change education for both school children and adults
- more workshop and education opportunities

The challenges before us range from funding to logistics, but

Pickering Seedy Saturday

Date: Saturday, February 4th
Location: Pickering Recreation Complex
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Hosted by Bloomers & Britches, the heritage gardeners of Pickering Museum Village, Seedy Saturday features garden-related vendors, guest speakers and of course, the chance to swap your seeds! \$3 per person at the door
City Partnership, contact Mandy Smiles at 905.683.8401

For more information, please visit the [City of Pickering](#) events calendar

Altona Forest Hoot and Howl

Date: Saturday, February 11th
Location: Altona Forest P.S.
405 Woodsmere Cres.
Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Join us for a night of fun and adventure! A short slide presentation on owls and coyotes is followed by a trip into the woods. Together we will call out to these wild creatures in the hope that they will hoot or howl back.

To register please go to the [TRCA Stewardship Event website](#)

Canada Water Week Movie Screening

many are easily overcome. In some cases the challenges have already been overcome by others who have addressed similar issues elsewhere. It is ESP's hope that through partnerships and communication we can overcome existing challenges for community members and change the perception that planning events has to be hard. We need to learn from each other.

In response to the discussion that took place at the round table event, and based on your feedback from various events, ESP has decided to change up some of our annual events in the coming year. In order to provide some more hands on teaching opportunities and experiences, we have decided to move the Annual Environmental Leadership Forum to September. For the last 3 years, we have had many speakers teach us 'how'; now it's time to go outside and put these lessons into practice. Holding the forum in September will allow us to facilitate some outdoor workshops. We also hope to highlight some of the ongoing initiatives and opportunities for environmental stewardship across Pickering.

The second big change in ESP's event schedule is moving the annual Environmental Volunteer Expo from the fall to the early spring. With this scheduling change, we hope to get new volunteers involved in spring activities right away, instead of leaving them with the winter to forget about all the wonderful initiatives they have heard about from our partners. The next Expo is tentatively scheduled for March 2013.

Hoot and Howl in Altona Forest

ESP and the Altona Forest Stewardship Committee are hosting a Hoot and Howl to educate local residents about their nocturnal natural neighbours. We will begin at Altona Forest Public School with a presentation to learn about local owls and the native coyotes. After we have filled up our travel mugs with hot chocolate, we will head into Altona Forest at the Strouds Lane entrance and begin to call for the owls. Together we will call out to these wild creatures in the hope that they will hoot or howl back.



For more information please see the event sidebar in this e-newsletter.

Please register for this event at the [TRCA Stewardship Event](#) website.

Date: Wednesday, March 21st

Location: Dunbarton

High School, South
Campus Auditorium
665 Sheppard Ave.

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Celebrate Canada Water Week with an exclusive screening of **Mysteries of the Great Lakes**, A Science North Production. Take a dramatic journey with water through some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. Discover how humanity has brought the Great Lakes to the brink of destruction...and back.

A donation of a non-perishable food item would be appreciated.

For more information please visit the [Sustainable Pickering Website](#).

Lush Lawns Workshop

Date: Tuesday, March 27th

Location: Petticoat Creek

Community Centre
470 Kingston Road

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Do you ever feel like a slave to your lawn? Attend one of these workshops and learn how to keep your lawn looking good, even through the driest days of summer. Experts will explain how to choose the right grass varieties, and how to mow, water and fertilize for optimal health.

Register your space, phone
905.683.7575 TTY
905.420.1739

For more information, please visit the [City of Pickering](#) events calendar

Gorgeous Gardens Workshop

Seedy Saturday

Even though it doesn't feel like winter has even started in Pickering, you can head to Seedy Saturday to begin to think about spring! The 5th annual Seedy Saturday will be held on February 4th at the Pickering Recreation Complex from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This event is hosted by Bloomers and Britches, the heritage gardeners of Pickering Museum Village. The annual gardening event will feature guest speakers, seeds for swap and sale, a vendors' area and refreshments at the Seedy Cafe. This is the perfect place to swap seeds and start getting ready for the spring. Guest speakers include Laurence Packer, professor of biology at York University, on 'The Plight of Bees,' and Wild Ontario, which will be bringing along birds of prey for a demonstration. Admission is \$3 per person at the door.



For more information please contact Mandy Smiles at 905.683.8401 or visit the [City of Pickering](#) event calendar for more details.

Date: Wednesday, April 11th
Location: Recreation Complex
O'Brian Room
1867 Valley Farm

Road

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Do you know when or how to properly prune your outdoor plants? Want to know which plants will thrive naturally in your garden? Join the experts from the Durham Master Gardeners as they walk you through proper pruning techniques through hands on demonstration and share how to create a gorgeous naturalized garden. Bring your pruners if you have them.

Register your space, phone 905.683.7575 TTY 905.420.1739.

For more information, please visit the [City of Pickering](#) events calendar

Northern Ducks Spend the Winter in Pickering

By Bob Hester

Photo Credit: Paul James

Heading south for a portion of the winter is a common practice for many Canadians. Destinations like Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico or Florida are popular winter get-away locations.



The majority of the waterfowl that nest in the Canadian north also go south for the winter, but many of them travel no further than the north shore of Lake Ontario to find the conditions that they are seeking: open water and abundant food. When most of the ducks that nest in our area move further south for the winter, the northern birds move in and provide excellent birdwatching opportunities along the Lake Ontario shore in late fall, winter and early spring. The northern species that spend the winter with us in Pickering include Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Long-tailed Duck and Greater Scaup. All are diving ducks - accomplished swimmers that dive to the lake bottom to feed on aquatic animals and plants. Images of these and other diving ducks found along Toronto's Lake Ontario shoreline can be found

Vertical Vegetables Workshop

Date: Saturday, April 14th
Location: OPG Information
Centre
1675 Montgomery
Park Drive
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Do you love the taste of a freshly picked tomato? Learn how to grow amazing things in small spaces and find inspiration to get outside. Local expert Ken Brown will share innovative, simple and inexpensive ways to use vertical space to increase the amount of foods that you can grow.

Register your space, phone 905.683.7575 TTY 905.420.1739.

For more information, please visit the [City of Pickering](#) events calendar

at:

http://toronto-wildlife.com/Birds/Ducks/ducks_diving.html

Bufflehead are Canada's smallest diving duck. They are usually found close to shore and easily seen. An adult male is black above, white below and has a white crown on the back of his head. An adult female is drab in colour with an oval white cheek patch. Male Bufflehead exhibit courtship displays throughout the winter that can be very entertaining. In breeding season, Bufflehead are found north of Lake Superior as far north as Hudson Bay.

Common Goldeneye are medium-sized diving ducks, also frequently found close to shore. An adult male is white with a black back and head and a circular white spot on his face. An adult female has a chocolate brown head, a slate grey back, wings and tail and white sides, belly and breast. Like the Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye breed north of Lake Superior as far north as Hudson Bay.

Long-tailed Ducks breed on ponds, streams and other wetlands in the Arctic, from the shore of Hudson Bay north throughout Nunavut. An adult male is mainly white with some brownish-black markings. His greatly elongated tail feathers are almost as long as his body. An adult female is browner in colour. Long-tailed Ducks have a musical call that can be heard often while they are visiting us.

Greater Scaup breed on marshy lowland tundra at the northern limits of the boreal forest. An adult male has white sides, black rump and breast, a barred grey back, a green-black head and a light grey-blue bill. An adult female has overall brownish colouration with a white semicircle at the base of her beak. Greater Scaup can form large rafts of many hundreds of individuals along our winter shoreline.

The best places in Pickering to see these birds are the mouth of the Rouge River, Petticoat Creek Conservation Area (particularly the bluff in the southwest corner of the park), the beach below Frenchman's Bay and Hydro Marsh, the south end of Montgomery Park Road, and the mouth of Duffins Creek. Excellent alternate locations just beyond Pickering's borders are Scarborough's Port Union Waterfront to the west and Ajax's Rotary Park to the east.

The weather along the Lake Ontario shoreline can be bitter in winter, particularly when the wind is coming off the lake, so if you venture out to see our winter visitors, remember to dress warmly. Binoculars or a spotting scope would be very useful, but some birds can be seen close enough to shore to be identified.

Take Pride in Pickering Day

Date: Saturday, April 21st

Location: Alex Robertson Park

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Join Environmental Stewardship Pickering and Ontario Power Generation for a fun day of planting native trees and shrubs to extend the natural habitat for birds and mammals. A barbeque lunch will follow at Alex Robertson park. Bring shovels and gloves if you have them. Students...earn community service hours for this activity.

For more information please visit the [TRCA Stewardship Event website](#).

Rouge Days: Habitat Creations

Date: Saturday, June 9th

Location: Western Gateway
Located at Bella

Vista

Drive

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Join Environmental Stewardship Pickering and the City of Pickering for a morning full of activities to help the wildlife around the Rouge River. Come plant a tree, wildflower or create pollinator habitat to take home.

Bring out the family, neighbours and friends, and discover all the local treasures right at your doorstep with Free events during Rouge Days June 8 – 11. Visit rougedays.ca to find out more!

[Click here to unsubscribe.](#)

www.trca.on.ca

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT:
The Environmental Stewardship Pickering
hotline at 905-420-4660, ext. 2212

stewardship@city.pickering.on.ca