

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

COMMUNITY LAWN CARE AND GARDENING WORKSHOPS

Recommendation

The City Manager and Director of Economic Development, in consultation with the Director of Parks Operations and Forestry recommend that:

1. This report be received for information purposes.

Contribution to Sustainability

The purpose of this series of community workshops is to provide information and resources on natural gardening and lawn care practices and specifically supports Objective 5.1 of Green Directions Vaughan: To share sustainable best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact from the receipt of this report as budget has been allotted to support pesticide education programs in conjunction with the City By-law and the provincial legislation.

Communications Plan

A communications strategy for this project will be developed in conjunction with the Economic Development Department, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Information on the program and workshops will be made available through the City's website, online calendars, City Page online, displays at the library and through local media sources.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and background information on the City of Vaughan's partnership with the Vaughan Public Libraries and the TRCA to host a series of community workshops.

Background - Analysis and Options

In Spring 2008, the City of Vaughan implemented a by-law to regulate the use of pesticides for cosmetic application. The by-law prohibited the use of in-organic, often dangerous chemicals. The City's website and promotional materials promoted safe alternatives and natural solutions to maintaining a healthy lawn and garden to support the by-law and educate the public.

In April 2009, however, the provincial *Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act* (Bill 64) received royal assent and rendered all municipal by-laws "inoperative". In response to this change, the City, in partnership with Communities in Bloom, delivered seminar on healthy lawns and gardens on June 1st, 2009. While the City of Vaughan's pesticide by-law no longer applies, the City continues to receive requests from the public, and businesses, on what is permissible under the new regulations indicating an ongoing need and appetite for additional events like this.

In order to meet this need, City staff have partnered with the TRCA and the VPL, to deliver a series of workshops. The workshops will address not only what is permitted under the new regulations, but also present information about native species, water efficient gardening and caring for urban trees.

The first in this series of workshops was held at Maple Public Library on August 26th. 32 people attended the presentation titled "Creating a Luscious Lawn the Natural Way". The response was favourable and attendees received a free bag of grass seed, handouts and information on City initiatives and the provincial pesticide ban. A representative from the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) also attended, provided a brief overview of the provincial regulations and acceptable products. Staff from Parks Operations provided a presentation on how the City maintains healthy lawns and gardens.

Additional workshops for the general public will follow in the late fall and early spring and may include topics such as: composting, creating a rain garden, garden design, growing your own vegetables and putting your garden to bed. Future workshop topics will be decided, in part, based on feedback from the public.

A special workshop is being developed for property management and lawn care companies in Vaughan to provide them with information about what is permitted under the new regulations and provide education about alternatives, such as native and water-efficient species.

The TRCA has implemented similar workshops successfully in neighboring municipalities in partnership with the Town of Markham and the Region of Peel. Given their expertise in natural gardening techniques, native species and public engagement, the TRCA is an invaluable partner in this endeavour. It is anticipated that future workshops will continue to include participation from relevant City departments as well as representation from the MOE.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This initiative supports the City's Vision 20/20 objective to "Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability".

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

During the implementation of the City's by-law regulating the use of pesticides for cosmetic reasons, public education was identified as a priority. While the current provincial regulations render municipal by-laws inoperative, there remains much confusion from the public regarding, not only what is permissible, but also what alternatives are available. Partnering with the TRCA and VPL, the City of Vaughan has initiated a series of community workshops to address these concerns from the public.

Attachments

1. Workshop poster
2. Newspaper advertisements

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

Clayton D. Harris
City Manager

Tim Simmonds
Director of Economic Development

Creating a Luscious Lawn the Natural Way

FREE WORKSHOP

Wednesday, August 26, 2009 Time: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

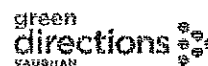
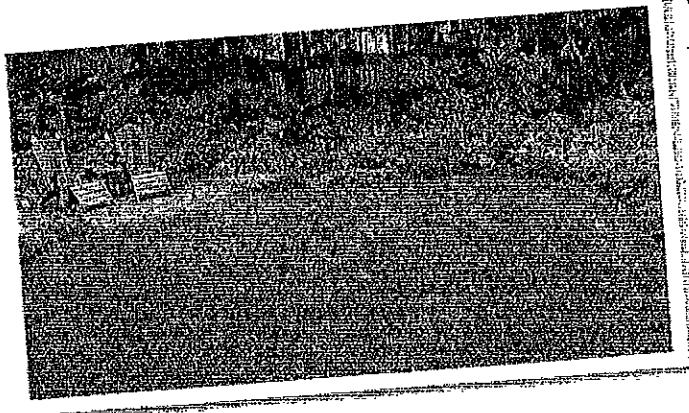
Cooler temperatures and bountiful harvests make the fall a lovely time to work in the yard. This is also the ideal time to enrich your soil, repair your lawn and plan your garden's future.



Join the City of Vaughan and Toronto and Region Conservation at this FREE organic lawn care workshop and enjoy presentations, displays, refreshments and giveaways.

Register on-line at www.trcastewardshipevents.ca or by calling 416-661-6600, ext. 5741
Space is limited.

Maple Library, Vaughan
10190 Keele St.
(In the Maple Community Centre on the south-west corner of Keele St. and McNaughton Rd.)



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green directions

Conservation for The Living City
Member of Conservation Ontario

Vaughan Citizen, Thursday, Aug. 20, 2009, 14



Build Character, Eliminate Women Abuse

This message brought to you as a community service of The Vaughan Citizen.

905-727-0930 • YELLOWBRICKHOUSE.ORG • 1-800-263-2231

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