

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

A P R I L 2022

Inside this issue:

Why Grow Native Plants	2
Pitch In Photo Contest	3
Earth Machine Composters \$50	3
Neighbours Cleaning Up	3
Yes, You Need Another Rain Barrel	4
Garden Fundraiser	5
REAL Deal News	6
In REAL Life	7
Pitch In Smiths Falls 2022	8



Greener Gardening

Yes, your garden may be green but you can make it greener! Here are some gardening practices you can easily work into your gardening plans to minimize your environmental impact. Why not try two or three new strategies this year?



REAL's Monarch Garden emphasizes bee and pollinator friendly plants.

- ☐ **Conserve water.** Choose native and drought tolerant plants, make use of mulch, use a rain barrel (rainbarrel.ca/realdeal/), and water strategically.
- ☐ **Minimize waste when purchasing plants.** Reject styrofoam, look for biodegradable pots. Return plastic pots for recycling, share with people who can use them.
- ☐ **Compost.** Your kitchen and yard scraps make a great soil addition so you can avoid chemical fertilizers. REAL is selling Earth Machine composters this year for \$50.
- ☐ **Grow your own.** Collect your own seeds, divide and share your plants, start seedlings in egg cartons, toilet paper tubes, yogurt containers etc.
- ☐ **Natural insect control.** Soap spray, diatomaceous earth and companion planting are just a few of the ways to eliminate the need for chemical pesticides.
- ☐ **Plant native species.** See story next page.
- ☐ **Plant more perennials.** You will have less to purchase in future years.
- ☐ **Rethink your lawn.** Reduce your lawn size, let it grow longer, love the dandelions, don't water, leave the grass trimmings.
- ☐ **Lawn mowing.** Old gas mowers are very polluting. Upgrade, or try an electric or push mower.
- ☐ **Give wildlife a home.** Bee and insects hotels, toad abodes, bird houses, butterfly perches, a hedge for shelter... there are lots of possibilities.
- ☐ **Avoid peat.** Look for peat-free or peat-reduced potting materials, as peat harvesting is not sustainable.

continued inside...

Greener Gardening (continued)

- ❑ **Refuse neonicotinoids and save the bees!** By 2019 most large Canadian garden centres had removed these insecticides from the flowering plants they sell, but you may want to check.
- ❑ **Avoid hard, impermeable surfaces** such as paths and patios. Let the rainwater soak into the ground.
- ❑ **Be creative.** Repurpose containers into pots, and upcycle garden decorations and garden furniture.
- ❑ **Buy local and recycled materials** if buying new furniture, fencing, stepping stones etc.

There are lots of great resources out there to consult. Here are three particularly good ones:

- <https://www.gardengetc.com/us/advice/create-an-eco-friendly-garden>
- <https://www.homesandgardens.com/gardens/create-an-eco-friendly-garden-220348>
- <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/gardening-for-wildlife/how/earth/>

Why Grow Native Plants by Donna McKenna

Native plants are plants that evolved and occur naturally in your own local area based on the climate and soil conditions that are unique to where you live. There are many benefits to including native plants to your gardens.

- Native plants require less watering once established - they are used to living with the rainfall that is normal to your area.
- Native plants are easier to maintain as they are already adapted to the local environment - they have developed their own defences against disease and pests.

This results in less use of pesticides and less time managing the garden.

- Native plants will attract more native butterflies and beneficial insects that depend on native plants for survival.
- Native plants provide food and shelter for wildlife.
- Native plants are attractive and there are many varieties to choose from.



Swamp milkweed. (*Asclepias incarnata*)

For more information about native plants you can watch this informative video on growing native plants with Sean James <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUAjaOb4nYA>.

To source native plants, check with your local nurseries and garden centres to see what they have to offer. If you cannot find what you are looking for, try out the following resources available in Ontario.

- [Ontario Native Plants](#). Healthy plants and packaged well. No in-person retail location.
- [Grow Wild!](#) Native Plant Nursery, Landscaping and Biological Consulting in Omemee Ontario (NW of Peterborough). Will deliver only very large orders.
- [Natural Themes Native Plant Nursery](#) – Frankfort, Ontario (north of Trenton)

Pitch In Photo Contest

Submit a photo from your Pitch In cleanup for a chance to win a prize from the Real Deal store. Email your photo to pitchinsf@realaction.ca, or message REAL on Facebook with your photo. If you will be posting your photo on social media, please use the hashtag **#PitchInSF**.



Photo Ideas:

- Interesting finds from your cleanup
- The bags you have filled, perhaps with you or your group displaying them (please ensure that you have permission from individuals in the photo)
- Before and after shots of your cleanup site.

With your permission, we would love to share the winning photos on our website, social media and possibly within future REAL publications.

Bingo. There is a bingo card activity sheet on the website that younger people will enjoy, too,

Submission Deadline for Prizes: May 7, 2022

Earth Machine Composters \$50

REAL is encouraging residents to give backyard composting a try by selling Earth Machines composters, starting at our May 14 Garden Fundraiser.

This particular composter is made from recycled content but is BPA free, and has a 300 L capacity. You will need a 33" x 33" spot for it. Leave room to access the compost removal door at the bottom, and to put materials in at the top, using the twist locking lid.

We are selling the Earth Machines for \$50 and as an additional incentive are including a \$10 gift certificate to the REAL Deal Store. No need to preorder. We have ordered 50 and expect that will last us through the summer.



REAL will be improving operations at our Compost Demonstration Site next to our Community Garden this year. Several styles of composter are there, including an Earth Machine if you would like to take a look.

Neighbours Cleaning Up by Cynthia Sirett

Some neighbours are using their walks to create a cleaner, greener, litter-free environment. Tom Kondert and Cynthia Sirett walk many times a week around the area of Chimo School. They enjoy the fresh air, chat, get exercise, meet people, all the while helping with the Pitch In cause.

Tom also collects aluminum cans for his favourite charity, the Parkinson's Society. In doing this, he is helping to support caregivers who have dedicated their time to the care of others with Parkinsons. Smiths Falls Iron and Metal will give cash in exchange for aluminum cans. Tom's goal is to raise \$700 this year.

What dedication, Tom!



Yes, You Need Another Rain Barrel!

Once again REAL is selling rain barrels to support our Monarch Garden. Before you say you already have one, read on!

Did you know that you can connect multiple rain barrels in a sequence to maximize the rainwater captured? If rain is scarce this summer, you won't want to miss collecting the rain that does come. Perhaps you have another downspout on another corner of the house, on your garage or on an outbuilding where you could place another rain barrel.

RainBarrel.ca has a number of YouTube videos to explain rain barrel installation. You may want to watch this one on connectivity <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXqfHAJSA3w>.

Best to give some thought now to where you are going to place your rain barrel in relation to existing downspouts. The REAL Deal had a generous donation of some eavestroughing downspouts and elbows if you need any. Your site should be level, able to withstand the weight of a full barrel of water, and high enough that you can get a bucket or watering can under the spigot. Concrete blocks are a common solution. See this video of tips on placement https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Xvdv_cW_Bs.



The advantages of rain barrels are many. You conserve water, save money by not having to pay for tap water, and get air temperature chemical free water for your garden, which your plants will love. Water needs to be kept away from the foundation of your house, and a barrel and hose will help you address that. You can also use the water for washing your dog or filling a pond or pool. Do not use the water for drinking or cooking!

You may find other uses for a rainbarrel. You could use a rain barrel to store tap water in a location where it is too far or too inconvenient to use a hose on a regular basis. I have a barrel near the farthest limit of my hose, and fill buckets from it to water the plants near the road. I also keep one on my pool deck for watering the garden pots there. That way I don't have to get the hose out, and I am not tempted to use chlorinated pool water when the plants are looking thirsty. REAL's community garden uses several barrels to store water close to the plots, as the tap is on the other side of the building.

Ordering Rain Barrels

Rain barrels must be ordered online. Use rainbarrel.ca/realdeal/ to go directly to REAL's order page. In addition to barrels, there are various replacement parts and accessories available. Pay by debit, Visa or Mastercard to save time on pick-up day. Otherwise, you will need to bring cash on the day of the sale. We have turned off the e-transfer option. If you have no other way of paying, please get in touch, and it can be arranged. If you cannot pick up your prepaid barrel on May 14, just let us know and we can hold it for you.

REAL usually purchases about 60 extra grey and terracotta barrels to sell at the store throughout the summer. Note we do not keep a full inventory of parts, so if you need something, you must order it in advance. We do have to apply HST to rain barrel purchases made through the store after May 14.

Some potential rain barrel setups.





Proceeds to REAL's
Monarch Garden

GARDEN FUNDRAISER SAT. MAY 14 10 AM - 2 PM

REAL Deal Store, 85 William St. W., Smiths Falls

Rain Barrel Pickup

Pre-Order and
pay online at
[rainbarrel.ca/REAL Deal/](http://rainbarrel.ca/REALDeal/)

Earth Machine

Composters
\$50 purchase includes a
\$10 REAL Deal voucher

Butterfly Things

from REAL Deal including a
limited quantity of seeds

Mushroom Compost

Proceeds to Trinity
United Church

Please bring cash!

For more info:
info@REALaction.ca
or call (613) 283-9966



**RIDEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

www.REALaction.ca

REAL Deal News

Donations have begun to pick up at the store as we head into our busy season. Donations from people like you are what keep the store running, and we are happy to see them any time of the year. If you have a particularly large donation (a furniture set, garage sale remainders), or would like to double check if your donation is acceptable, please call in advance: (613) 283-7999 or email Dan, the Store Manager, at dcunningham@REALaction.ca. We are trying something new by giving a printed thank you rack card to donors to express our appreciation for being part of our social enterprise.



Welcome, Aletha!

A new OnTrac trainee, Aletha, has joined the team and will be working with us 15 hours a week, experiencing various aspects of the store. There has been no word on whether our grant application to HRSDC for summer students help was accepted, but we are hoping to be funded for two students for 12 weeks each.

We had two very substantial donations of doors from the Perth Planing Mill, as well as a large quantity of eavestroughing parts, which have been selling well. We really appreciate donations of high quality hardware items such as this. We are also a regular recipient of used windows through Healey's Glass, and they

of course sell very well.

Recent promotions have included trunks and lighting (for the second time this year), and we have put out our Easter and summer donations. We tried reducing our overstock of roasting pans, broiler plans, gravy boats, punch bowls and spiralizers with a \$1 sale. People were most interested in the roasting pans, and some people were hoping to turn them into planters! The wall art seems to be moving better than ever. We are always happy to sell a piece, as it creates a hole for something that hasn't been displayed yet. Artists and crafters have also caught on that the store is a good place to find large frames for their own projects. As for the framed art, many more are tucked away that there is not room for on the floor. Note that oversized art is featured on Facebook Marketplace.

We are hoping to purchase a shipping container for weatherproof storage of large items, mainly furniture. The "garage tent" served us well, especially when we wanted to "quarantine" materials at the start of the pandemic, but it is beginning to leak and has been damaged by vandals. Hopefully, dumpster-like storage will be drier, more secure, and last longer.

Thanks to Don Grant for building us a new ramp for the customer doors. This should help people with mobility issues or people with children in strollers to access the store. We have various other little fixit projects in mind, and will get to them as resources allow.



YOU'VE DONE A GREAT THING!

- FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
you've reduced waste and conserved resources, energy, water and skills
- FOR THE COMMUNITY
you've supported a local business and provided work and volunteer opportunities
- FOR REAL
you've enabled other environmental projects in our community

The REAL Deal Reuse Store
85 William St. W., Smiths Falls, ON
(613) 283-7999
Made with PosterMyWall.com



Thank you for taking the time to bring us your donation. Your gently used items are crucial to our store's operation. We will do our best to ensure they do not go to waste.

The REAL Deal Reuse Store is a project of the Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL).

In 2021 we diverted 34 tonnes of usable materials and 38 tonnes of electronics.

We encourage you to Think Second Hand First and shop at the REAL Deal, too!

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY.



WWW.REALaction.ca

Our new "thank you for your donation" rack card.

In REAL Life

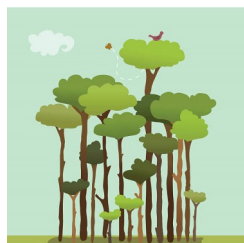
Community Connections. We like to help other community groups if we can. Some recent contributions: jewellery to Valley Prom, a group who helps outfit young people for their school proms; a discounted used window for a repair to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario for their 5802 Project; a vintage white wicker wheelchair which we acquired from someone's collection of movie props, to the Museum of Health Care at Kingston.



Sustainability Fair. REAL will be represented at the Annual North Grenville Sustainability Fair being held Saturday, April 23 in the Kemptville Municipal Complex, sharing a booth with the Rideau Roundtable. Lots to see and do including the largest electric car exhibition in Eastern Ontario, and energy efficient home renovation information. Hours are 10 – 3 p.m. See [Sustainable North Grenville website](#) for more.



Science Fair Award. REAL has set up an award to recognize the best Environmental Project at the Rideau St. Lawrence Science Fair. The junior level award comes with a \$50 prize. This year's winner was Colin Notman for his project *Efficiency & Safety of Ice Melt Products*. Peter Au presented the award virtually April 8. This project also won the Product Analysis & Development Award - Junior. Colin is a student at St. Lawrence Academy in Prescott.



Journey to Sustainability. The next J2S presentation is on the Smiths Falls Tree Canopy Policy with Karl Grenke, Senior Planner on Wednesday, April 27. Members will get an email, others please check Facebook or our website for how to register. You can also ask to be added to the [J2S mailing list](#) so you won't miss any future presentations. The group has a [Facebook page](#) too!



Community Garden. As of today all but two of REAL's Community Garden plots are spoken for. If you are interested in renting one of the plots on the REAL Deal site, please contact Katie Hoffman at (613) 983-3360 or kthoffman@cogeco.ca. The cost is \$25.



Membership Renewal. Membership Chair [Karen Schecter](#) reports that memberships are still coming in, and we have not heard from everyone. It is never too late! We prefer memberships be paid by cheque or e-transfer, but PayPal is also an option if you want to use a credit card. If you are paying by cheque and want to save a stamp, use the black mailbox by our front door. Memberships are \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families. Many members also include a donation with their payment. REAL is a registered Canadian charity and can issue tax receipts.



FoodCycler. REAL was one of the lucky Smiths Falls "residents" to purchase a FoodCycler at a reduced rate. The device is like a countertop electric composter, about the size of a bread machine. Once full of food scraps, it takes about five hours to dry, grind and cool the scraps into a dry soil additive that can be added to your house plants or garden. The town is asking those who purchased the device to report how often they used it over the 12 week trial period and any other comments. Several REAL people will be taking turns to use it at their own homes for three weeks.

RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
info@REALaction.ca

www.REALaction.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

85 William St. W.
Smiths Falls ON
613-283-7999

Open Wednesday
through Saturdays
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Ask about our
new Tool Library**

For Home Energy Audits in the K7A
region, contact John:
jappleby@realaction.ca

**Find us on:
Facebook and
Instagram**

Send contributions to the July
issue by June 15 to
dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment



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Pitch In

April 16-30, 2022

Smiths Falls

Shoreline
Cleanup
Apr. 30th
10am & 1pm

#PitchInSF

Join our annual, community wide litter clean up!

Volunteer as an individual
or as a group to collect
garbage within the two
week cleanup period.

Yellow Pitch In bags will be
available from The REAL
Deal Store from **April 6**
(Wed-Sat, 10-5pm).

For location ideas, visit
[https://www.realaction.ca/
waste/pitch-in-smiths-falls/](https://www.realaction.ca/waste/pitch-in-smiths-falls/)

Prizes will be awarded for
participating! Please see
our Facebook page for
updates.
[https://www.facebook.com/
REALaction.ca](https://www.facebook.com/REALaction.ca)

Contact
PitchInSF@REALAction.ca
The REAL Deal Store
(613) 283-7999
85 William St. W.,
Smiths Falls ON
www.realaction.ca



**Make a
REAL
Difference**

Please return this form to:
REAL
Box 1061
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 5A5

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

Make a Donation

☐ I would like to make
a donation of

\$ _____

A charitable receipt for
income tax purposes will
be issued. To donate by
credit card, go to
www.Canadahelps.org.

Volunteer

☐ I want to help

Become a Member

I would like to become a member

- ☐ Individual membership \$15
☐ Family membership \$20
☐ Student membership \$5
☐ Corporate membership \$50

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