



**earth week 2012**  
volume 2 • issue 4



the  
**GREEN  
OBSERVER**

**YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICATION ON CAMPUS**

# **EARTH WEEK 2012!**

**EARTH WEEK EVENTS**

**CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS**

**FUTURE OF THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY**

**CREATE YOUR OWN COMPOST TUMBLER**

**& MUCH MORE!**

**read green • live green**

# THE GREEN OBSERVER

[greenobservermagazine.com](http://greenobservermagazine.com)

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR emily cross

Greetings Green Observer readers, and happy Earth Week! We are so excited to publish our fourth issue of the year. These beauties are a labor of love and we are thrilled to share them with you.

Thank you for taking a few moments with us to celebrate Earth Week! Whether you are new to the gig or live every week as if it were Earth Week, there isn't an end to the impact you can have, especially when coming together for a shared purpose. There are a ton of activities going on this Earth Week, so check it out at [earthweekcu.org](http://earthweekcu.org) and get involved.

If you have any questions or suggestions, or want to become a part of our team, don't hesitate to e-mail us at [go@greenobservermagazine.com](mailto:go@greenobservermagazine.com). The Green Observer is our student voice on environmental issues, so we encourage everyone to speak up!

I hope that after learning about all the amazing ways to make an impact on campus, you are inspired to take action. We will see you next year in our October issue, and please recycle this copy!

Best,  
Emily



## THE GREEN OBSERVER CREW

EMILY CROSS  
editor-in-chief, layout

SUHAIL BAROT  
treasurer, assistant editor

CAIT GALLAGHER  
webmaster

MICHAEL CHEN  
copy editor

MIRIAM ZARATE  
copy editor

ANNIE LOGISZ  
copy editor

JENNIFER BONETTO  
fundraising chair

JONATHAN SCHUTT  
public relations officer

*back cover design by  
Madeline Schuette*

FUNDED BY SORF

THE GREEN OBSERVER  
IS A PROGRAM OF THE  
UNIVERSITY YMCA



PRINTED ON 70% POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED CONTENT. PLEASE RECYCLE!

## Table of Contents

- EARTH WEEK 2012.....4
- CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS .....5
- NEW GREEN REVOLVING LOAN FUND.....6
- CHAMPAIGN CONSIDERS BAG FEE.....7
- NATIONAL ISSUES COLUMN.....8
- STUDENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN NEWSLETTER.....9
- BUILD YOUR OWN COMPOST TUMBLER.....10
- GARDEN-IT-YOURSELF PART TWO.....11
- FEATURED RSO: PLANNER'S NETWORK.....11
- MY BEER'S GOT GAS.....12
- SUSTAINABLE STUDENT FARM UPDATE.....12
- COURSE SNAPSHOT: ESE IN COSTA RICA.....13
- RSO: PLANNER'S NETWORK.....13
- OPINIONS.....14

## On Our Radar...

### BIKE TO WORK (and school) DAY!

May 1st  
Pre-register online by April 27th  
[cubiketowork.com](http://cubiketowork.com)

### ELECTRONICS RECYCLING EVENT

Saturday, May 5 at the News Gazette  
Distribution Center  
8 AM - 12 noon

ARC and CRCE are SUSPENDING WATER  
BOTTLE SALES for Earth Week. Bring a  
reusable bottle!

"Faces on the Trees" talk by Indiana  
University Religious Studies Prof. David  
Haberman: 213 Gregory Hall on April  
26th at noon

END MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL WEEK  
IN WASHINGTON June 2nd-6th, 2012 in  
Washington, DC

EPA issued regulations on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
from new power plants, effectively  
banning all new coal-fired power plants

FOR MORE INFORMATION E-MAIL US AT:  
[GO@GREENOBSERVERMAGAZINE.COM](mailto:GO@GREENOBSERVERMAGAZINE.COM)

# Earth Week 2012

by Annie Logisz

**G**et out your red—or better yet—green pens and mark your calendars, because April 22, 2012 is the 42nd annual Earth Day!

Earth Day was founded in 1970 when Gaylord Nelson, a Wisconsin Senator, recognized the need for a change in the way humans were treating the environment and abusing its resources. It came about at a time when little if anything was being done to negate the effects of industrial wastes spewing into nearby streams, lakes and landscapes and wreaking havoc on mother earth.

On this first Earth Day an estimated 20 million people in the United States attended various rallies and festivities in cities and on college campuses around the country in support of this innovative day. Even the University of Illinois had participants! The immense outpouring of support was a success not only in solidifying Earth Day for the next forty one years, but it was also a great player in the institution of many environmental laws, including the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, the Endangered Species Act, and the Environmental Protection Act, among others.

In keeping with tradition, the U of I will kick off its Earth Day celebration starting April 16th with various activities that will bring out the inner environmentalist in everyone. These activities will continue throughout the week up until the 22nd, and include activities such as a talk by noted environmentalist Majora Carter who works on environmental justice issues in local communities, the screening of environmental movies on the quad, a green organization expo where you can learn about all of the environmental clubs and organizations on campus, and a giant papier-mâché globe made out of - you guessed it - old Green Observer issues!

Whether you head to an event or not, be sure to go outside and get some fresh air on the 22nd and give a great big thank you to Mother Earth!

For more information on the events, visit [earthweekcu.org!](http://earthweekcu.org/)

<u>MONDAY, APRIL 16TH</u>		
11AM-3PM: Bike tune-up on the quad	1:30-3:30PM: iCAP forum at the iHotel	6:30-9:30PM: CyclingSavvy course at the ARC

<u>TUESDAY, APRIL 17TH</u>		
12-2PM: GO globe on the Quad (through Friday)	4-5PM: Environmental ethics discussion at AACC	8-10PM: Wall-E on the quad

<u>WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18TH</u>		
12PM-12PM - Speaker: Mark Shepard – Illini Union	3-5PM: Green Expo at Courtyard Café	8-10PM: Benefit concert at Canopy Club

<u>THURSDAY, APRIL 19TH</u>		
5:30PM: Guest Speaker <b>MAJORA CARTER</b> in NCSA, room 122 <a href="http://majoracartergroup.com">majoracartergroup.com</a>		

<u>FRIDAY 20TH</u>	<u>SATURDAY 21ST</u>	<u>SUNDAY 22ND</u>
12PM: Coal-free summer celebration on the quad	9AM-1PM: Electronics Collection at 1800 S. Oak Street	1PM: Earth Day Prairie Workday at Florida and Orchard

# Update on Campus Progress

## OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY FUTURE IN DOUBT?

by Matt Rundquist

**A**fter receiving a million dollar grant that will create a new Center for Environmental Sustainability (CES) in December, campus leadership has proposed to combine the Office of Sustainability (OS) with the proposed CES into one entity responsible for research, education, and campus sustainability operations. The proposal has stirred controversy amid doubts that such an entity could effectively manage the three charges, especially if there is a significant budgetary reduction.

A committee of faculty, students, and representatives of Facilities and Services will meet on April 16th with the charge to "brainstorm about the priorities and the structure of the new Center". Associate Chancellor and interim OS Director Pradeep Khanna explained that although the OS is not in the committee's charge, "I expect [the future of the Office] and its relationship with the proposed center will be discussed". The group has no formal authority, but "its suggestions will be taken very seriously," assured Khanna.

The Office of Sustainability was founded in 2008 through student efforts, with a significantly expanded mandate over its predecessor, the Environmental Council. However, the OS has been without a permanent director for almost two years and has shrunk in size and budget. "The OS is operational," said Khanna, assuring commitment to the Illinois Climate Action Plan goals.

Starting in October of last year, members of the University administration and students have met to discuss the future of sustainability on our campus. Students have continued to advocate strongly for the existence of the OS, represented by the Sustainability Coalition, composed of representatives from several RSOs.

Eric Green, facilitator of the Coalition, says students want an Office with authority and capacity. "We need the OS to be able to advocate for campus level projects in order to push them along," Green said. "The OS also needs to have the capacity to reach out to activities that are occurring on campus to better strengthen the sustainability community." Green continued to reflect on projects with overlapping goals and little communication, suggesting that a stronger OS can remedy these situations.

Green and Khanna are both looking forward to the discussion. "The committee consists of people with both expertise and passion for sustainability," said Khanna. "I anticipate a good discussion."

## CLIMATE ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

by Emily Cross

Below is a snapshot of the University's progress as we finish off the second year since adopting the Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP). The PDF of iCAP can be found at [sustainability.illinois.edu](http://sustainability.illinois.edu).

- Energy:** We will meet the iCAP target of a 20% reduction in energy use from 2008 this year. Steam use has declined sharply but electricity use is holding steady. An energy master planning study is in progress.
- Coal:** Coal use has remained unchanged from 2010 to this year. No coal was used between mid-April to August of 2011, and campus has adopted a coal-free summer policy. Declines in total coal use following this year are expected.
- Renewable Energy:** Campus generates a negligible amount of renewable energy on campus and is not currently on track for the 2015 goal. The iCAP plan to build wind turbines on the south farms was abandoned., but an RFP has been issued to seek bids for a large solar farm.
- Transportation:** No significant changes in campus transportation patterns have been made, but improvements in bicycle parking and lanes are in planning.
- Waste and Composting:** The campus waste diversion rate has risen to 55%, but a zero-waste policy has not been drafted. Campus has completed a study on the a food-waste composting facility and identified a site. A \$250k DCEO grant has been applied for with matching funds from the Student Sustainability Committee.

# New Revolving Loan Fund on Campus

by Emily Cross

University of Illinois President Hogan recently announced a \$750,000 funding award to grow the campus' new Revolving Loan Fund. The revolving loan fund will serve as a great long-term financing solution to make the University more sustainable. In a revolving loan fund, the money is "lent" to energy efficiency projects, which then repay the fund through the energy savings that they achieve.

The fund was created in October 2011 as a way to put to use the money initially allocated to the canceled wind turbine project. The fund, in addition to the grant from President Hogan, is comprised of a \$1,000,000 contribution from the Chancellor and a \$500,000 contribution from the Student Sustainability Committee (SSC), which allocates student sustainable campus fees. The Office of the Chancellor has also committed to matching all future student contributions to the fund.

The University of Illinois' new contribution by President Hogan brings the loan fund to a whopping size of \$2.25 million, making it the ninth largest campus revolving loan fund in the United States and second largest in the Big Ten. These new funds will support the installation of occupancy sensors and LED exit signs in campus buildings.

Marika Nell, Chair of the SSC, says that she is excited that the Committee is a part of this opportunity to impact campus

sustainability.

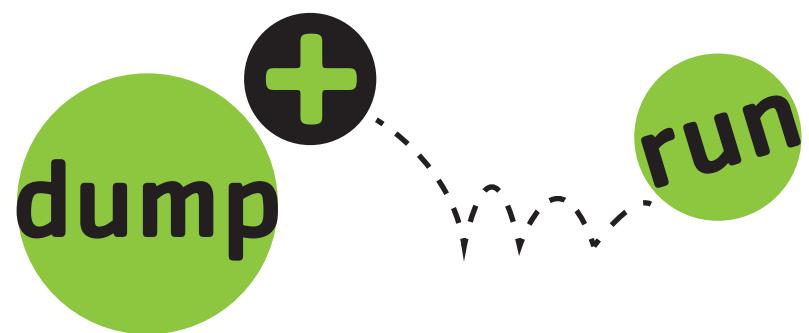
"The Revolving Loan Fund is an innovative and practical approach to improving energy efficiency on campus," Marika said. "This Fund is a superb example of the Chancellor, the President, the SSC and other students working together for a worthy cause."

The fund's first year has brought upgrades in old T-12 fluorescent tube lights to newer and more efficient T-8 bulbs, with an expected return on investment of about 3 years. The project will also leverage close to \$1 million in energy efficiency grant funds from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunities, further growing the fund and new energy reduction opportunities with it.

Heading the Revolving Loan Fund is the AFMFA/Conservation Board that comprises representatives from Facilities and Services, the Office of the Chancellor, Student Affairs and Research as well as the Student Trustee, Student Body President, and the Student Sustainability Committee. Potential projects are ranked based on their payback period, amount of coal reduction, the fund size impact, visibility, and amount of coordination.

Future projects will be solicited from all campus departments and selected on an annual basis by the Board. The next Board meeting will be in the Fall of 2012.

## THE UNIVERSITY YMCA'S



On May Collection Days, bring donations to:

**University YMCA**  
1001 S. Wright St.  
Champaign, IL 61820

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:

[www.universityymca.org/dumpandrun](http://www.universityymca.org/dumpandrun)

**DUMP AND RUN** keeps six semi-trailers worth of unwanted goods out of Champaign-Urbana's dumpsters and landfills each year. On May collection days, the University YMCA collects reusable items from **MOVE OUT** and **SPRING CLEANING**. Bring accepted items to the Y!

From August 15-18th, we collect again and sell the items at the big **SALE** on August 24th and 25th at the U of I Stock Pavilion. **Volunteer 6+ hours for first dibs during the August pre-sale!**

### COLLECTION DAYS:

May 7 – 9 → 9:00am – 4:00pm  
May 10 → 9:00am – **7:00pm**  
May 11 & 12 → 9:00am – 4:00pm  
May 14 – 18 → 9:00am – 4:00pm

Questions?  
Call 217-337-1500

To volunteer:  
[volunteer@universityymca.org](mailto:volunteer@universityymca.org)

For item pick-up:  
Call Michele at 217-337-1500 x11  
to schedule a time.

# Champaign Considers Bag Fee

by Anna Franco

Ever find that you have too many plastic bags that you can actually put to good use? You're not alone – the EPA estimates that 100 billion plastics bags are distributed in the U.S. each year, and the Ocean Conservancy considers plastic bags as the second largest type of marine pollutant.

In an effort to reduce plastic bag litter in the C-U community, the Champaign City Council held a meeting on March 13th to vote to give direction to City staff about developing a plan for a potential plastic bag fee or ban. Six of nine council members voted in favor of action to charge customers for their plastic bag use, but not ban them entirely.

The goal of the fee/ban is to encourage customers to bring reusable bags when shopping in order to reduce litter. The meeting garnered overwhelming support from students groups like Students for Environmental Concerns, community members distressed with the litter around their homes, and local retailers like Champaign Surplus and the Idea Store.

"Plastic bags were made to be disposed and they are very successful at that," stated Olivia Webb, freshman in Agricultural and Biological Engineering at UIUC, during the public comment section of the meeting.

Using plastic bags is "a matter of conditioned behavior," said Councilman Michael La Due, "it's a habit to bag stuff even though we don't need to." Mayor Don Gerard added, "Where does all this garbage stop?"

Council members opposed to the potential legislation expressed concern of the government's involvement in this type of legislation.

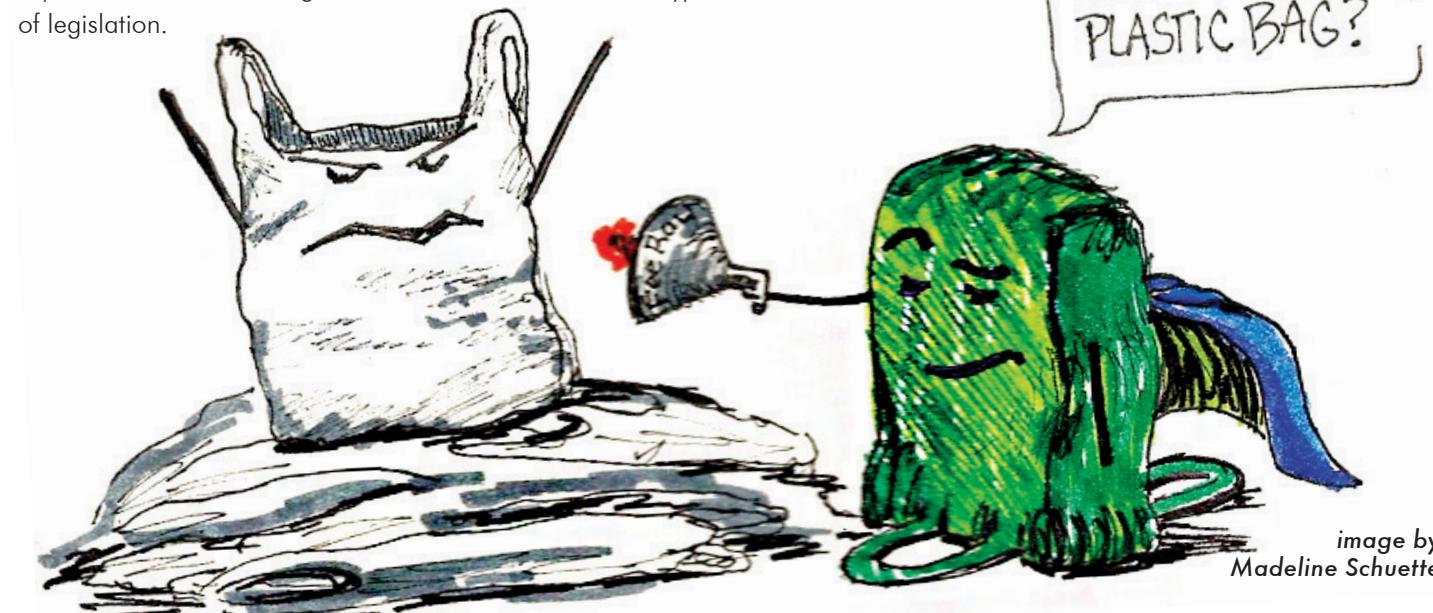


image by  
Madeline Schuette

# National and Global Issues

by Andrew Nowak

## PRISON MISHAP FOR CLIMATE ACTIVIST

**N**ot many people would describe their feelings about returning to prison as "extremely happy", but that is exactly how Tim DeChristopher described it.

Climate activist Tim DeChristopher expressed his happiness on March 29 as he was moved from "isolated confinement" back to the minimum-security camp at Herlong federal prison in California.

DeChristopher's two-year sentence, given July 26, 2011, was for posing as a bidder and purchasing \$1.7 million dollars in land at a public auction in December 2008. This public lands auctions was said to be seen by some as the Bush administration's attempt to sell leases to fossil fuel companies before the Obama administration took office.

Rolling Stone magazine posted an article on March 28

about DeChristopher's March 9 move from minimum-security prison to an eight by ten cell he shared with another man, which DeChristopher's attorney credits with getting his client moved back.

Patrick Shea, one of DeChristopher's attorneys, says that an email DeChristopher wrote to the treasurer of the climate-activism group DeChristopher co-founded, "Peaceful Uprising," was the cause of concern.

In the email, DeChristopher discusses how he wished to return money to a donor that was contributing funds to the activists' defense because the donor was exporting U.S. manufacturing jobs overseas and thereby laying off American workers.

"If they are saving money by screwing their workers, I can't in good conscious accept some of that money," DeChristopher wrote. "The first thing I'm going to do is send a letter to their owner about why this step bothers me. This letter will include a threat to wage a campaign against them if they don't reverse course and keep the plants open."

According to Shea, the word "threat" was scanned by prison software, sent to the Bureau of Prisons in Washington, D.C., and then somehow became the concern of a single congressman.

"There needs to be an investigation into how a call from a congressman got Tim thrown in isolation and what that says about the American justice system," Peaceful Uprising's Dylan Schneider said March 29. "What would have happened to Tim if no one was watching?"



### CERTIFIED GREEN BUSINESS

With over 37,000 DVDs and close to 2,500 BluRay discs, That's Rentertainment has the largest selection of movies in the entire Champaign-Urbana area!

**www.rentertainment.com**

LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF 6TH AND JOHN  
(217) - 384 - 0977

### MOVIE REVIEW: "CHIMPANZEE"

**T**he magic of Disney this year was not captured by the pens of its writers or animators, but rather by cameras in the jungles of Africa.

Disneynature's annual documentary this year is "Chimpanzee," a film that follows the story of young chimpanzee, Oscar, who gets separated from his mother.

Read the full review on the GO blog:  
[GREENOBSERVERMAGAZINE.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://GREENOBSERVERMAGAZINE.BLOGSPOT.COM)

# Students for Environmental Concerns

by Tamara Liu

**S**ECS project groups have continued moving forward quickly as the semester progresses!

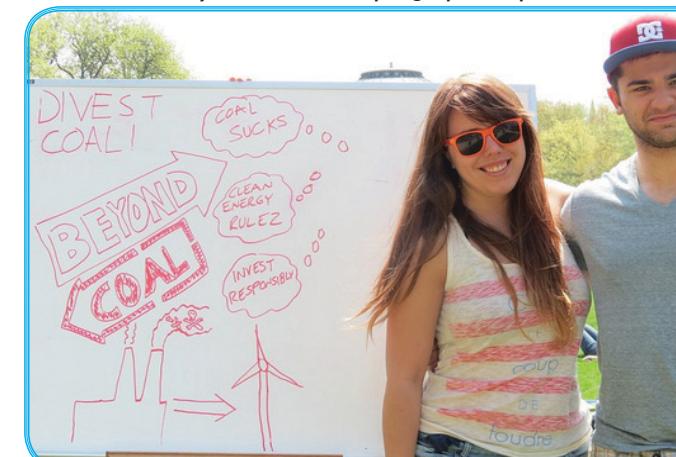
The Beyond Coal Campaign has been especially active, working on an investment policy to present to the University to prevent them from putting money into coal in the future. The project involves communication with the University officials and leaders, including a Board of Trustees meeting that campaign representatives attended on March 15th. They organized a photo petition (pictures below) to pressure the University to move beyond coal, and are getting ready for Earth Week's Coal Free Summer Celebration on April 20th at noon!

The Native Planting group has also been very active, working in the Turner greenhouse to grow plants. Starting with just seeds at the beginning of the semester, the plants grew quickly, and the group has worked on transplanting them. They plan to put them in the ground starting in April.

The Earth Week group has had their work cut out for them as well! They have a ton of great events planned for this important week, including bringing speaker Majora Carter to campus, a benefit concert, a bike tune-up fundraiser, and a screening of Wall-E.

One of the club meetings that stood out this semester was the DIY day on March 7th. Members who attended the meeting worked on three different projects: a giant paper mache globe for Earth Week, re-usable t-shirt bags requiring only scissors, and pinwheels for the Beyond Coal Campaign. These type of meetings are always a great way to have fun after all the hard work on the projects!

*Below: Beyond Coal Campaign photo petitions! More can be found on the SECS Flickr stream. Photos by Amy Allen*



Another notable event was ExplorACES, which took place Friday, March 9th and Saturday, March 10th. SECS maintained a booth at the fair, which was a great way to meet future SECS-ers and demonstrate what the organization is all about. SECS provided free smoothies funded by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES), and the event was a big success!

SECS also continued to be involved over the last few weeks with the changes being made to plastic bag rules in Champaign. On March 13th, SECS members attended the Champaign City Council meeting to show support for the proposed fee or ban. At the meeting, it was decided that a fee should be imposed on plastic bags, rather than a ban, which is what SECS had determined to be the optimal result.

From March 12-14th, SECS participated in the 2nd Annual Eco-feminism summit. On March 12th, SECS's very own Composting group ran a Composting 101 workshop at the YMCA. Attendees to the workshop learned the basics of composting, how to do it at home, and how to use the composting that they create. The Eco-feminism summit also had discussions and lectures on various topics including food deserts, contaminated groundwater, and why this is the "age of consumption." The summit also screened two films, "Waste Land" and "Tar Creek".

In the coming weeks, SECS members can look forward to events such as a trip to St. Louis, a Coal Free Summer celebration, officer elections, and of course, Earth Week! Visit the SECS website for more information on the organization:

# GIY: Green-It-Yourself

## CREATE YOUR OWN COMPOST TUMBLER!

**C**omposting is an excellent way to reduce waste and pollution. Having a compost tumbler also saves money (and reduces pollution) by replacing conventional fertilizer with composted material. If you are interested in composting and environmental action on campus, attend a Students For Environmental Concerns meeting (Wednesdays at the University YMCA, 6:30pm).

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 plastic drum 20-55 gallons depending on desired size
- 48 inches (1.5-2 inches in circumference) of PVC pipe or galvanized steel pipe
- 6 pieces of 2x4 pieces of wood
- Simple hinges and a hasp
- Nails
- Tools such as : drill, something to cut the plastic with, and a hammer

### HOW TO BUILD THE TUMBLER:

1. Obtain a plastic drum between 20-55 gallons.
  - To find a drum, try contacting food processing plants, as they usually store product in large drums, only to recycle or throw them away after they are used.
  - Depending on the tumbler, it is likely that you will need to reinforce the lid with nails to keep the top in place.
2. Drill holes in the center of the top and bottom of the barrel.
3. Cut a square in the side (in the middle) of the tumbler.
  - Make a clean cut, as you will be placing the plastic back on the tumbler with hinges, creating a door.
  - Cut the square big enough to put your hands and compostable material through (this is where you will feed the compostable contents through).
4. Nail in simple hinges and a hasp to create a door with the piece of plastic you cut from the side of the tumbler.
5. Feed the steel or PVC pipe through the holes you drilled on the top and bottom of the tumbler.
6. You will be making an x-frame from the wood to serve as



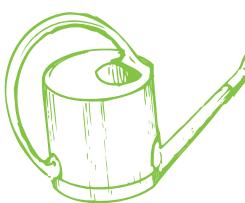
the base for your tumbler.

- Nail 2 "2x4" planks of wood together in the shape of an X that are 1.5' × 3.5' in height and width.
- Repeat, making sure both x-frames are symmetric in shape.
- With the x-frames standing upright, nail the remaining 2 "2x4" wood planks to the feet of the x-frames for additional support.
- 7. Hoist the tumbler onto the x-frame, with the steel pipe resting in the angle of the X.
- 8. Optional: Connect a handle to one end of the pipe to help stir the tumbler.

### HOW TO USE YOUR COMPOST TUMBLER:

- Most food products (excluding meat) may be added to the tumbler. Also, most organic waste. However, there are several exceptions, so consult the internet for a detailed outline of what can and cannot be composted.
- The tumbler must be in direct sunlight.
- Shred compostable material to small pieces in order to help the decomposition process.
- Compostable materials are either carbon or nitrogen based. In order to keep a healthy balance, it is recommended to use 2/3 carbon material and 1/3 nitrogen material.
  - Carbon (brown material) - branches, stems, dried leaves, peels, bits of wood, bark dust or sawdust pellets, shredded brown paper bags, coffee filters, conifer needles, egg shells, hay, peat moss, wood ash, etc.
  - Nitrogen (green material)- manures, food scraps, leafy materials like lawn clippings and green leaves, etc.
- Aerate! Your compost needs oxygen!
- Remember to stir your compost tumbler daily, in order to mix the material and assist in the breaking down of compostable matter

by Jennifer Bonetto



## GARDEN-IT-YOURSELF: Guide to Gardening Part 2: Veggies!

by Matt Rundquist

**T**hinking about starting a garden, but worried about having the time or expertise? Here's a how-to for a few of the easiest vegetables to test the waters of vegetable gardening:

1. **BEETS:** these delicious roots stand up well to our poorly drained soils, and the whole plant is edible. Keep it watered and it will keep you happy.
2. **LETTUCE:** small seeds require a well-prepared bed, so break up any big clods and you're pretty much done! Leaf lettuce will be ready to eat in 40 days, while head varieties take longer.

3. **GARLIC:** Plant it in November; otherwise these are as easy as it gets. Buy garlic cloves from an organic grocery store (others may have a chemical that stops them from sprouting) or from any seed source. Best to plant in pots, pointy end up, as long as they have a period of cold weather.

4. **RADISHES:** doesn't get any easier. Scatter the seeds and water. Harvest when you can see the shoulders of the radishes pushing above the soil line; 20-30 days.

5. **BASIL:** Like many common herbs, basil is perfect for year-round growing in the kitchen window. Harvest a bit at a time and your plant can live for years.

6. **GREEN BUSH BEANS:** these don't require any trellising or fancy techniques. Give them about 18 inches to grow and you'll be enjoying green beans into the fall.

You can find seeds at many local stores. Every Meijer and Schnuck's has a rack. If you're looking for organic (\$0.50-\$1 more expensive, but well worth it!), check out Strawberry Fields or Common Ground Food Coop.



### Top 3 Reasons to U•CYCLE

1) **It's Easy.** Recycling is *easy* and *convenient* in the U-Cycle program! Apartment dwellers can recycle acceptable materials in the green recycling carts located on-site, and homeowners can request a U-Cart to begin recycling. To request a recycling cart or for a list of acceptable items, visit [www.urbanaillinois.us/u-cycle](http://www.urbanaillinois.us/u-cycle).

2) **Recycling Saves Resources.** Why throw away that glass bottle, soda can, term paper or water bottle when you can recycle it? By choosing to recycle you save natural resources, the need to mine raw materials, and reduce reliance on petroleum to produce new products. In 2010, the recycling efforts of U-Cycle participants saved the equivalent of the following resources: 14,000 trees; 14 million gallons of water; 5,700 gallons of oil; and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 120,000 lbs (the equivalent of removing 1,400 cars from the road)!

3) **Recycling Makes a Difference.** U-Cycle is celebrating 25 years! In the past 25 years, Urbana residents have recycled **36,000 tons** of materials. Way to go, Urbana!



# My Beer's Got Gas

by Eric Green

Being an environmentally friendly brewer is a difficult thing. Some things to consider are how ingredients are produced (i.e. organic or not?), where those ingredients are obtained (the distance they have to travel), water use in the production of beer (trying to recapture waste water), chemicals used for cleaning of equipment, and the storage medium of the beer.

The last thing I want to be thinking about is the fact that the yeast, which are a fundamental part of the brewing process, are actively working against my environmental ethic. While these "fun guys" are having the times of their lives, the fermentation process generates alcohol and CO<sub>2</sub>. The CO<sub>2</sub> is released through a gas release valve. I try to justify my greenhouse gas emissions; given that the sugars the yeast are gorging themselves on came from some organic matter that also stored CO<sub>2</sub>.

It gets a little harder, though, when thinking about how to carbonate my beer. There are two primary methods for carbonating beer: priming and forced carbonation. The method of priming entails adding additional sugar to the beer after the desired alcohol content is achieved and then sealing the beer in a container. The yeast then consume

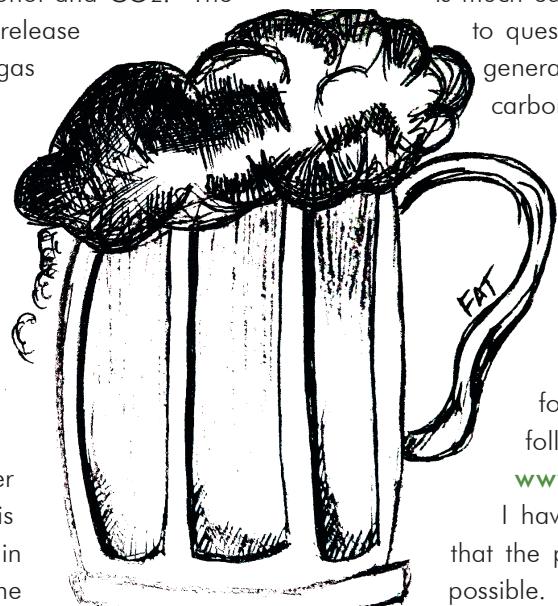


image by Felissa Amanda Tugade

the sugar and generate more CO<sub>2</sub>. Since there is no way for CO<sub>2</sub> to escape, the liquid absorbs the CO<sub>2</sub>. However, I've never had much success with priming as a method. Adding too much or too little priming sugar can drastically alter the carbonation of your beer, thereby giving you flat or explosive results.

Forced carbonation, which is how most commercial beer is prepared, simply attaches pressurized CO<sub>2</sub> to the beer and, over time, the beer is carbonated. After just having finished my first batch of self-kegged beer, I can admit that quality control

is much easier. But with this simplification, I have to question how the CO<sub>2</sub> in that canister was generated? I would assume it's not in some carbon neutral method. While my beer has started tasting better, it's also become worse for the world.

All hope for the inebriated environmentalist is not lost. Remember that CO<sub>2</sub> that was generated in the fermentation process? It is possible to capture that CO<sub>2</sub> and force carbonate the beer with that. The following link explains this process:

[www.angelfire.com/cantina/carbonation](http://www.angelfire.com/cantina/carbonation)

I have yet to do this, but it gives me hope that the perfect, environmentally friendly beer is possible.

# Student Sustainable Farm Update

by Zack Grant

The Sustainable Student Farm is almost operating on all cylinders now! This hasty spring following a mild winter has sped up activity here. We have been planting outdoors almost 3 weeks earlier than normal! The high tunnels are pumping out salad greens faster than usual and the weeds are starting to greet us. Spring has really sprung. We have already had one volunteer weekend

workday on 3/31/12. We will likely have at least one additional weekend workday this semester in addition to our normal weekday volunteer opportunities. This workday may include helping to erect our new washing and packing pavilion designed by Jeff Poss' Small Studio architecture course. Transplants are going into the ground now, cover crops are being established, and the all out

race of the growing season has begun anew for 2012. Remember that we will be here all summer growing veggies for the dining halls and the farm stand. So come get involved with YOUR student farm and get your hands dirty. For more information and volunteer sign-up, visit [thefarm.illinois.edu](http://thefarm.illinois.edu)

Happy Spring!  
~Farmer Zack

# Course Snapshot: ESE 497 FIELD EXPEDITION TO COSTA RICA

by Linda Qiu

For the first time ever, the School of Earth, Society, and Environment sent a group of students to Costa Rica during Spring Break. On March 16th, 21 ESE majors took off from O'Hare for a trip of education and ecotourism in one of the most well-preserved countries in the world. A guide from the Monteverde Institute led the group across the country, visiting cities like Tortuguero, San Jose, La Fortuna, and Monteverde.

While moving across the country, we visited many different national parks with different types of landscapes. Hiking through the rainforest, we saw White Faced Capuchin Monkeys, caimans (similar to crocodiles), and hundreds of tropical birds. Witnessing the different types of plants and animals gave us fresh insight into the different types of ecosystems in the world and their importance. Experiencing the world through one's own sense was a learning experience that you cannot find in any lecture or textbook. With everyone in the group from the flat plains of Illinois, seeing volcanoes and mountains was a breathtaking view into how expansive the world really is—the world that we're trying to save.

Another great experience was visiting Costa Rica's different types of farms. At a banana plantation owned by Dole, we saw workers earning a mere \$25 a day laboring across thousands of acres of land every day. As Americans, we have the luxury of accessing virtually any food we want, without having to think about its origins or production. On the banana plantation, the tour manager told us about the "quality standard" they enforce, meaning that many of their bananas were thrown away because of bruising or size. Most of us agreed that we could never look at a banana the same way back home thanks to this experience.

Most importantly, going to Costa Rica gave us hope. Once a country with high deforestation rates, it now has 25% of its territory under protection, and much of the previously cut down forest has been restored. The accomplishments of Costa Rica should be an inspiration to other countries around the world. Too many governments and corporations believe that it's "too hard" or "too expensive" to change their practices but Costa Rica has proven that it is possible, and can lead to profit as well. The trip to Costa Rica was only 9 short days, but in that time, I've had my hope and determination for mankind's conservation efforts renewed.



ESE 479 class goes to Costa Rica. Photo by: Linda Qiu

the student sustainability committee



This year, the SSC has funded:

Sustainable Student Farm  
Campus Revolving Loan Fund  
ECE Solar Array  
And much, much more!

For more information, visit:  
[sustainability.illinois.edu/ssc](http://sustainability.illinois.edu/ssc)

# Opinions

## WHERE WE ARE ON THIS EARTH WEEK?

As a senior on the verge of graduation, I've had time to reflect on the changes, both internal and external, that have occurred these last four years. Something major that has transformed before my eyes is the environmental shift of the campus itself. When I began school my freshman year, there was no Student Sustainable Farm providing the dining halls with local produce, no recycling program available to students in the Champaign campus, and no University department dedicated entirely to the educating about sustainability.

All of that and more changed in just a couple of years. But why now? A new environmental consciousness has awoken in many of us. Our generation has been the first to grow up learning the threats of climate change, deforestation,

biodiversity loss, etc. At first some called the green movement a trend, but the message stuck hard with a number of young people who became passionate enough about the issues to dedicate their time and effort to the cause.

Since I've attended this school, the University has signed the Illinois Climate Action Plan, which pledges us to end coal use by 2017, requires all newly-constructed buildings to achieve LEED gold certification, among many other goals. Solar panels have been installed at BIF, and new environmentally-focused majors, minors, and environmental RSO's have popped up all around campus.

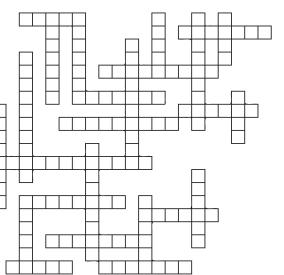
It's no coincidence that all of this has happened in recent years, as the first generation of green movement kids have reached college age. It's their efforts, the students', that have revolutionized this campus into the environmentally-conscious place it is becoming. Within these past few years, our generation has been imperative in seeing to it that we don't just sit around and talk about being sustainable—we put it into action. Seeing these major changes in just a short amount of time gives me confidence that our generation will transform not just this University, but this world into a place that future generations will be able to enjoy. We need to continue to keep young people inspired to protect our planet to make this a reality.

## KICKAPOO LANDING

**IN KICKAPOO STATE PARK**  
**Just off Exit 206 of I-74 near Oakwood, IL**

Paddle on Clear Lake or take a River Trip  
on the Middle Fork!

[www.kickapoolanding.com](http://www.kickapoolanding.com) (217)-446-8399



**ARE YOU A GO PRO?  
TAKE OUR  
CROSSWORD AND  
FIND OUT!**

[GREENOBSEVERMAGAZINE.COM](http://GREENOBSEVERMAGAZINE.COM)

**SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:  
[GO@GREENOBSEVERMAGAZINE.COM](mailto:GO@GREENOBSEVERMAGAZINE.COM)**

by Katie Durkin

# Opinions

## IT'S TIME TO BAN THE BAG

by Nate Greenspan

It is almost a nostalgic moment at the end of checkout after unloading your Capri-sun, favorite flavored Pringles, and preferred 12-pack onto the conveyer-belt when the bagger asks you paper or plastic. But can we be moving past that day and age? Since early February, public announcements have been made to spread the word of Champaign City Council's proposed bag ban or fee.

The reasoning behind the motion is to reduce the abundance of plastic bag litter that can be found throughout our community, with the small side note of less plastic bag manufacturing. One of the first proposals of its kind, if it gains the local support it needs it could cause enough momentum to knock the plastic bag companies to the back seat for the long haul.

As it appears, Champaign citizens have a majority in favor of a plastic bag ban or fee. A survey, which ended February 26th with 863 respondents, was conducted to gauge the opinion of locals and found 65 percent in favor of either a ban or fee, and only 8 percent saying plastic bags are not a problem. University student support is also evident in organizations: Students for Environmental Concerns gave a comment at the City Council meeting, and there was a recent blog post about the fee on the University of Illinois Civil and Environmental Engineering webpage.

Meanwhile, it seems that big industry is once again playing its role as antagonist. Hilex Poly, global leader in plastic bag manufacturing and recycling, has started a website called "Bag the Ban" that, with entry of an e-mail address and basic information, will send an automated message in opposition to the proposed bag provisions to members of Champaign City Council. They make claims that a bag ban would affect the jobs of tens of thousands of Americans and take more money from the pockets of hard working individuals.

Whatever Champaign does would be a drop in the bucket, but the ripple effect could spread outwards if other college campuses and forward-thinking communities take action against litter reduction against manufacturing pollution.

That makes me question, is the bag ban or fee worth it? Wholeheartedly, I say yes. Yes to reducing litter from the source and yes to reducing output pollutions from plastic bag manufacturing. A cleaner community is a happier community

and we all ought to support our own happiness. There are obstacles, but they are simple to overcome. Shoppers can go to Meijer or County Market with a reusable bag. Avoiding a fee would be easy as pie, a cakewalk, or any other baked good idiom you could throw into your reusable bag.

The objective is simple: to reduce plastic bag litter. Banning the use of plastic bags would certainly reach this goal. If you are in support of this motion, take action. Keep yourself informed, reach out to City Council Members, and start reducing your use of plastic bags today.

**EATS GLASS FOR BREAKFAST.  
PAPER FOR LUNCH.  
AND METAL FOR KICKS.**

Meet your newest neighbor — a real tough act with a soft spot for the environment. And an appetite for all things recyclable. Glass. Aluminum. Paper. It doesn't matter. Just toss it in and stand back. Way back. Because this is The Thing. And no matter how much you feed it, it's always hungry for more.

To learn more about Champaign's new multi-family, non-sort recycling program, please call 217-403-4700 or visit [www.feedthething.org](http://www.feedthething.org).

 FEED THE THING  
City of CHAMPAIGN



J. Schulte

the  
**GREEN OBSERVER**  
[greenobservermagazine.com](http://greenobservermagazine.com)