



ECO-NEWS

The newsletter of the
**Environmental Coalition
of Prince Edward Island**
Fall/Winter 2010

Articles in this Edition

Case Study Shows Massive Savings with Efficient Showerhead

Rod Dempsey has done the research so you don't have to. And you'll be glad he did. *Page 1*

Cloth diapers or Disposables—Which is Really Better?

Improvements in the manufacturing of disposable diapers have reduced the amount of garbage going to landfills and cloth diaper re-use requires a lot of water and energy... how do you decide which way to go? *Online*

Case Study Shows Massive Savings with Efficient Showerhead

by Rod Dempsey

Using an efficient showerhead is an easy and effective way to reduce water consumption and carbon dioxide emissions and save money.

There are three reasons why it is important to use an efficient showerhead.

1. According to Environment Canada, more water is used in households for showers and baths than for any other use. Our growing demand for water is placing increasing stress on the environment and our water supply and sewage treatment infrastructure.

The Importance of Being "Scent-Free"

Find out what chemicals in your daily hygiene routine may be making others sick. *Page 2*

Province Pursues Forest Certification

Forest Stewardship Council certification is to be sought for 75,000 acres of forest across Prince Edward Island. *Online—www.ecopei.ca*

School Plantings Continuing in 2010

Get the latest news on the efforts of Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project to restore natural spaces around Island schools. *Page 3*

What's Left

A poem by Dianne Hicks Morrow. *Page 3*

Other recommended reading:

Greening the Tar Sands?

In an insightful blog called 'Show Me the Money', Robb Barnes distills the arguments on both sides of the tar sands and concludes that the balanced approach to avoid economic collapse is a moratorium on tar sands expansion. <http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/blog/robb-barnes/show-me-money>

2. Hot water is expensive water in that energy is required to increase its temperature from approximately 10° C (50° F) when it enters your house to 37° C (99° F) when it leaves your showerhead.

3. If the water is heated using any method other than a solar domestic hot water system, then fossil fuels or biomass are being consumed and carbon dioxide and pollutants are being released into the atmosphere for every litre of water used.

The term "low-flow" defines a showerhead that delivers no more than

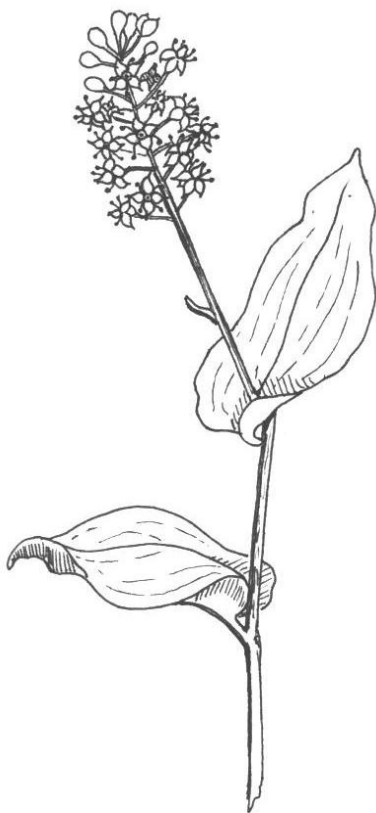
9.46 litres (2.5 U.S. gallons) of water per minute at 80 p.s.i. of water pressure. While this is an improvement over showerheads with higher flow rates, it still leaves considerable room to reduce flow rates while maintaining an acceptable level of showerhead performance. The purpose of this case study is to provide data and savings relating to the use of an
(Continued on page 3)

**View our online content at
www.ecopei.ca.**

The Importance of Being "Scent-Free"

by Rebecca Ford, intern for the PEI Environmental Health Co-op

Often times people do not take scent-free spaces very seriously. Many people think it just refers to sneezing fits caused by an obvious overabundance of cologne or perfume. Their response is, "I don't even wear enough for anyone to notice". However, what people rarely realize is that the concern does not lie in the fact that a product has a scent, but rather that the largely petroleum-based chemicals used to make the scent can cause serious health effects. Even if you do not wear cologne or perfume it is quite likely that one of the many products you use regularly has fragrance in it. Everything from soap to baby bum-rash cream has fragrance in it these days. In order to keep yourself and those around you healthy, it is important to become educated about what to watch out for when purchasing products.



To make the job a little easier the Wilena MacDougall Environmental Health Resource Centre (WMEHRC) has recently created brochures on cleaning products, fragrance, personal care products, healthy homes, and baby products. I will outline some of the helpful hints here. However, if you would like a copy of each of the brochures mentioned, or would like to learn more about issues surrounding environmental health, drop by our Resource Centre at 81 Prince Street, Charlottetown.

Since World War II and the ensuing development of the petroleum and synthetic chemicals industry, most fragranced products are made with synthetically derived chemicals. The health effects from these chemicals range from irritant to immune system toxicant. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been quoted as saying, "the fragrance and cosmetic industry is the least-regulated industry". So, it is up to us to ensure we keep ourselves safe from harmful products. With so many ingredients contained in current products, it can sometimes be overwhelming to understand which is truly better for you. The following is a list of ingredients which should be avoided when purchasing personal care and cleaning products: Fragrance; Phthalates; ingredients containing Paraben, ingredients ending in "eth"; Xynol, Cereath, and Oleth; Toluene; PEGs; DMDM hydantoin; Cocamide MEA; Lead; Ammonium/ Sodium Lauryl Sulfate and Laureth Sulfate; Colour/ dyes. "Ingredients to avoid" wallet cards are available at the Resource Centre.

With growing concerns surrounding health issues related to the ingredients in products, many people have turned to "natural" options. With regard to fragrance, this usually means products made with essential oils. The first thing you should ensure when buying such products is that the oils are not synthetically derived. The ingredient list should have the name of the plant

that the oil comes from and not just simply read "essential oil". Also, just because the product is "natural" does not mean it is necessarily safer for you. Such products often include tea tree oil, citrus oil, and pine-derived terpenes. These are all known to trigger asthma and cause negative symptoms to the central nervous system. Essential oils can also trigger allergic reactions, so if you are going to be in scent-free areas naturally derived scents cannot be considered an alternative to human-made scents. The best solution is to look for fragrance-free products. If your favourite shampoo, lotion, deodorant, laundry detergent, etc does not have a scent-free version, consider contacting the company to ask them to make one.

At first, it can seem overwhelming to have to sift through each product to pick out which one is right for you. Don't fret. As you start to make yourself more aware of what you are purchasing you will gain a better understanding of how to purchase for your health. Like anything, less is more. There is no need to feel you have to use hundreds of products in order to be ready for your day. It is important that people begin to realize that scent-free spaces are important for everyone's health and not just for those with chemical sensitivities. For more information contact us at peiehc@gmail.com.

Further Reading:

Toxic Nation

<http://www.toxicnation.ca/toxicnation-studies>

David Suzuki Foundation

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/health/take-action/participate-in-our-survey-of-toxic-ingredients-in-cosmetics>

PEI Environmental Health Co-op

<http://www.peienvironmentalhealth.org>

Environmental Health

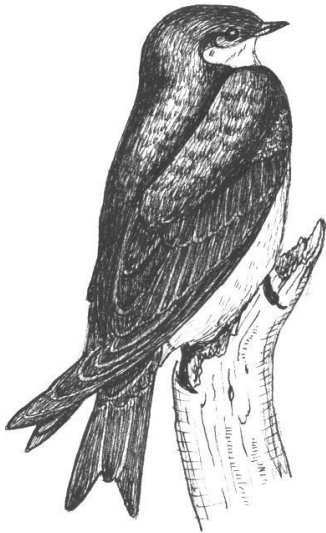
Association of Nova Scotia

<http://www.environmentalhealth.ca>

School Plantings Continuing in 2010

By Gary Schneider

This year, ECO-PEI's award-winning Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project is continuing its work restoring native forests in a variety of habitats. With financial support from Environment Canada's ECO-Action program, we will be carrying out plantings at West Royalty Elementary



School and Queen Charlotte Intermediate School. Additionally, the Robert L. Cotton and Pondsides parks in Stratford, as well as the Fox Meadows Golf Course will have areas planted with native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. The work includes creating future forests and widening and enriching riparian buffer zones.

Though we got off to a late start due to delays in announcing the federal funding, there has been great support from both schools, the Town of Stratford, the Stratford Area Watershed Improvement Group, the golf course, and the Toronto Dominion Bank. We carried out five days of plantings at West Royalty this spring

and have been working at Cotton Park during the summer. This fall, we will finish the rest of the plantings.

We've had great support from the students and teachers at West Royalty, and have been working on a new area near the arterial highway. The overall site we've been working on is just over four hectares. It is growing up quite nicely, thanks to the hard work of the students and in another 10-15 years, it will be an even more wonderful addition to the school. One exciting development is that over the past two years, tree swallows have been nesting in nest boxes that we set up on cedar poles donated and erected by Maritime Electric. It was also great to see a large variety of birds and insects already making use of the plantings. It gives students and everyone else involved a chance to see how their actions can have very positive environmental impacts.

The plantings at Cotton Park are taking place in several areas that had previously been mown but were rarely if ever used, and also in some of the park's woodland. We've been adding red oak, sugar maple, eastern hemlock, witch hazel, highbush cranberry, and yellow violets, to name just

a few. The increase in biodiversity should significantly increase the number of birds and the overall health of the forested areas of the park.

If you'd like to help with these or any of our other plantings, please contact email macphailwoods@gmail.com or call 651-2575. Helping with the planting is a great way to contribute to our work, and always is an enjoyable experience.

What's Left

They paved Paradise and put up a parking lot. —Joni Mitchell

November wind forces yellow leaves to let go.

November rain plasters slimy leaves to sidewalks as slippery as the first snow that won't let go.

A paved parking lot nearly obliterates Government Pond where frogs once sang and children skated.

Only a few muskrats and cat-tails remain, circled by asphalt. A tiny bridge allows outlet to the salty harbour.

The spring that feeds what's left of the pond pours through pipes under pavement

November trees stand nearby newly naked shameless

interloping cars sit silent from nine to five shameless

Dianne Hicks Morrow, author of poetry collection Long Reach Home and non-fiction book Kindred Spirits: Relationships that Spark the Soul.



Illustration by Erin Arsenault

Showerhead Case Study (Cont'd)

efficient showerhead as compared to a hypothetical 9.46 litre per minute showerhead.

The featured showerhead is available from the Home Depot ("The Incredible Head Power Showerhead," Product No. 157624, Alsons ES141 showerhead), Home Hardware (SKU No. 3266913) and from Canadian Tire ("Plumb Shop Fixed Chrome Showerhead" No. 63-0157-8).

A series of ten measurements determined that the average flow rate of the showerhead was 3.76 litres per minute. The two adults and two children in the household cumulatively take about three showers each day for a total of 21



showers per week and 1,092 showers per year. With an average duration of 7 minutes per shower, the showerhead is in use for 127 hours and 24 minutes per year.

Compared to a showerhead with a flow rate of 9.46 litres per minute, the efficient showerhead will save the following amounts annually: 43,571 litres of hot water, 161 litres of oil, \$129, and 435 kilograms of carbon dioxide per year (which is equivalent to taking a 2010 Honda Civic Hybrid off the road for two and a half months). As such, the showerhead has a simple payback of less than 0.1 years and has provided a tax-free return on investment of 860 percent since its installation in the household in 2007.

So, should you rush out to buy your own efficient showerhead? Not without first determining the flow rate of your existing shower-head. This is easily accomplished by holding a bucket under the showerhead for one minute and then using a kitchen measuring cup or container to measure the volume of water in the bucket in litres. If the flow rate is greater than 5 litres per minute, then consider making that trip to the hardware store. (Based on taking showers of 7 minutes duration, even a 1 litre per minute reduction in flow rate will save 2,555 litres of hot water per person per year.)

Thanks to everyone who helped with this edition of the ECO-News: Erin Arsenault, Marion Copleston, Rod Dempsey, Rebecca Ford, Shannon Hartigan, Kate Poole, Tony Reddin, Gary Schneider, Audrey Wilkinson.

Note: This article is summarized from a showerhead case study available from the ECO-PEI website, www.ecopei.ca.

Are you ready to help us all move forward?

At ECO-PEI, we work on a variety of issues, including environmental education. Whether it is talking to students about the values of biodiversity in forests, promoting pesticide reduction, or working with other community groups, we continue the hands-on work that has been the basis of our organization.

What kind of an organization are we? Most simply put, our coalition is a community environmental action group dedicated to understanding and improving the environment. Our work centers on education, advocacy, and action. Members have a concern for their own health, the health of their families and the health of the ecosystem.

To all those who have supported us in the past, you have helped make a difference in the environmental quality of this Island. That is something to be proud of. To those interested in joining, we need as much help as we can get. This could mean buying a membership, making a donation, writing for the newsletter, planting trees, or sending a letter to a politician.

Memberships are for the calendar year. Your money helps pay for our biannual newsletter and office expenses. Except for specific projects, all of our activities are based on the support of volunteers.

Take a step in turning things around - join the Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island and help us move forward.



Membership is \$10. Donations over \$15 are eligible for a tax receipt.

Please mail memberships to:
ECO-PEI,
126 Richmond St., Charlottetown C1A 1H9