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biodiversity • conservation • lawn care  
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water quality & recycling • wildlife habitats

## April

It's rewarding to meet the newest ELA members at ELA's Conference. They're a thoughtful group - dedicated to improving their local landscapes from Acton, MA, to Zionsville, PA, and points between and beyond. You'll find our new members in [Find an Eco-Pro](#); check who's there. And, if you aren't yet a member or haven't renewed your membership for the year, you have until April 30 to be listed as a 2013 Eco-Pro. That's just one of the [benefits of ELA membership](#).

With Earth Day just a week away, this issue of the Newsletter offers articles that feature our precious water resources. From a look at maintaining rain gardens and assessing the toxins they collect to the broad view of humans' relationship with water, jump in and enjoy. *MS*



### **Proper Maintenance Keeps Rain Gardens Thriving** **by Kevin Beuttell**

Traditionally, stormwater was viewed as a burden on the landscape. Water was typically taken away through channels and pipes as quickly as possible to avoid flooding on site. Today, we know water and ecological quality can be improved when water is allowed to infiltrate, using it as a resource where it falls. It is now widely understood that rain gardens use the natural capacities of soil and vegetation to retain and cleanse stormwater as it infiltrates. Appropriate maintenance activities that ensure these landscapes retain their ornamental appearance and critical environmental functions are less well known, however. [Read the article.](#)



### **In Poverty and In Wealth....Water Consciousness** **by Heather D Heimarck**

I have always been a map gazer, letting my mind wander along the mountain ridges and rivers of the world. Recently, I have taken up a study on the history of cartography, how each map reflects a worldview, a "cosmology" of the planet. The connection between human habitation, expansion, and commerce to the winds and the global currents is now largely forgotten, our ability to travel is so unfettered, but in essence global currents are how the Europeans navigated past the Cape of Good Hope and the secrets of the Arabian Sea were revealed, leading to commerce and to the next sea, and the next. [Read the article.](#)



### **Make a Splash with Native Wetland Perennials** **by John Mark Courtney**

Plants are a key element to a balanced pond ecosystem. No matter how big or small the body of water may be, plants play an essential role in maintaining good water quality and a healthy balanced habitat. Some of the functions plants perform include bank and soil stabilization, nutrient uptake from the water column, and habitat for everything from beneficial microbes, insects, fish, and amphibians to ducks, small mammals, and song birds. [Read the article.](#)



## Are Rain Gardens Mini Toxic Cleanup Sites?

by Lisa Stiffler

If you're concerned about water pollution, you've likely heard this message: The water that gushes off our roofs, driveways, streets, and landscaped yards is to blame for the bulk of the pollution that dirties Puget Sound and numerous Northwest waterbodies. You probably also know about the most popular stormwater solutions, including rain gardens and other green infrastructure that soak up the filthy water, cleaning it before it reaches sensitive waterways that are home to salmon, frogs, orcas, and other wildlife. [Read the article.](#)

Originally posted on [Sightline Daily](#), January 22, 2013, by Sightline Fellow Lisa Stiffler, this post is part of the research project: [Stormwater Solutions: Curbing Toxic Runoff](#).



## Five Steps to Increase Your Operational Efficiency

by Laurence Coronis

Labor is the largest expense for almost all landscape operations. Your organizational skills and processes are important factors in your company's efficiency in regard to your labor expense. I will outline five areas that you can focus on this year and explain why they are important to pay attention to. [Read the article.](#)



## An Environmental Vision

Native ferns, shrubs, and perennials line a brook gurgling from a shady grotto. Chartreuse containers overflow with leafy lettuce grown from seed. A single sculpture embodies the title "From Maiden to Mother." These were just a few of the features of the exhibit that won ELA's 2013 Environmental Vision Award at the Boston Flower and Garden Show. [Read the article.](#)

## Gleanings

Looking for something different to do on Earth Day? You celebrate the natural world every day, but you can still acknowledge this special day by hosting a [Picnic for Earth](#). Designed to help us all remember where our food comes from and the toll our choices take on Earth, the event asks participants to host picnics and post their picnic photos to the Nature Conservancy's website. The website also offers picnic tips and recipes. So fill a picnic basket, enlist some friends, and picnic for the earth.



The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program recently announced a new grant program for 2013: Communities Caring for the Canopy. Grants of up to \$40,000 will support development of sustainable urban and community forestry programs in the state. Additional information and application are on the [Vermont Division of Forestry website](#).



The Future of Nature, a three-part community conversation, begins on April 22 with [The Future of Food](#). Co-sponsored by WBUR, Boston's NPR station, and The Nature Conservancy, the series continues with The Future of Energy, May 13, and The Future of Water, June 10.



Many states and conservation organizations feature water saving tips on their websites. Challenge yourself to add another water-saving tool to your own toolbox. For some ideas, check out the Nature Conservancy's list of [actions you can take](#) to save water at home, outside, and online.

**Events to Note** (listings indicate local time unless otherwise noted)

[Community Gravel Beds for Bare Root Planting](#) - UVM SOUL Tree Steward Webinar; April 17, 5:00-6:00pm.

[Clean Air, Water & Land Roundtable and Social](#), The Green Alliance; Portsmouth, NH; April 18, 5:30-7:30pm.

[Backyard Apple Orchard Fruiting Wall](#); Leominster, MA; April 20, 10:00am-2:00pm.

[Beautiful No-Mow Yards Featuring Eastern Natives](#); Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster, MA; April 21, 2:00pm.

Marion Institute's [Earth Day](#) event with Michael Phillips; Boston, MA; April 22, 10:30am-3:00pm.

[Sustainability: Practices and Possibilities](#); Worcester DCU Center, MA; April 24.

[2nd Annual MA Trails Conference](#); Devens Common Center, Devens, MA; May 4. Registration deadline: April 26.

[Statewide Volunteer Day](#) with Mass Audubon; locations throughout MA; April 27, all day.

[Insect Pests & Diseases of Apples](#); Leominster, MA; April 27, 10:00am-1:00pm.

[Invasive Species Pull with Garden and Greenhouse Tours](#); Lyman Estate, Waltham, MA; April 27, 9:00am-1:00pm.

[Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast: A Natural History](#); Garden in the Woods, Framingham, MA; April 28, 1:30-3:30pm.

[Friend or Foe - Which Plants Pose a Threat to Your Property?](#) Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster, MA; April 28, 2:00-3:00pm.

[Mycorrhizal Symbioses and the Functioning of Terrestrial Ecosystems](#); Arnold Arboretum, Boston, MA; April 30, 10:00am-noon.

[MA State Regulations Pertaining to Invasive Plant Management](#); DoubleTree Hotel, Milford, MA; May 1, 9:00am-3:30pm.

[Go Botany! Plant ID for the 21st Century](#); Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge, MA; May 1, 7:00pm.

[Practical Composting](#); Reinhard Sidor Residence, RI; May 4, 9:00am-12:30pm.

[Edible Forest Gardens](#); UMass Amherst, MA; May 4, 10:00am-1:00pm.

[Invasive Species Pull with Garden and House Tours](#); Codman Estate and Gropius House, Lincoln, MA; May 4, 9:00-1:00pm.

[Festival Floralia 2013](#); Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, Cambridge, MA; May 5, 2:00-4:30pm.

[Native and Nice! Using Native Plants in Landscape Design](#); Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster, MA; May 5, 2:00-3:00pm.

[Ecological Restoration for Coastal Habitats](#); Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Falmouth, MA; May 7-9.

[Greenhouse Design](#); Yestermorrow, Warren, VT; May 11-12.

[Landscape Design](#); Yestermorrow, Warren, VT; May 12-16.

[The Invasive Plant Issue and Invasive Plant Identification](#); Milford, MA; May 14, 9:00am.

[Destructive Invasive Tree Pest's Are Headed Our Way: Is Your Community Ready?](#) - UVM SOUL Tree Steward Webinar; May 15, 5:00-6:00pm (ET).

[At home with Native Plants, Rain Gardens, and Cape Cod's Natural Landscape](#); Cape Code Museum of Natural History, Brewster, MA; May 19.

[Inland Wetland Plant Identification](#); UMass Amherst, May 22, 9:00am-3:30pm

[Identification of Turf Damaging Insects Workshop](#); UMass Amherst, MA; May 15 or June 26, 8:00am.

[Native Pollinator Conservation](#); Weston, MA; May 25, 10:00am-1:00pm.

[Identifying Inland Wetland Soils](#); UMass Amherst, MA; May 29, 9:00am-3:30pm.

[Green Roofs, Green Walls, Vertical/Rooftop Agriculture Training](#); Hyde Leadership Charter School, Bronx, NY; June 1-2.

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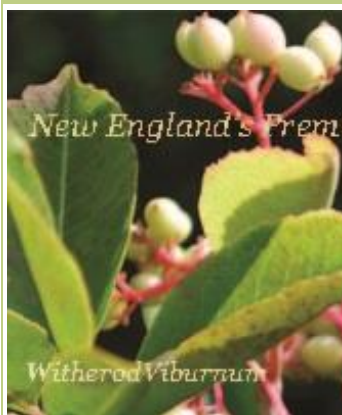


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We welcome your comments at [ela.info@comcast.net](mailto:ela.info@comcast.net).

Maureen Sundberg, ELA Newsletter Editor