

CACC



NEWS

The Future of the Earth is in our Hands

www.caccmi.org

Volunteers Needed:

Wheatland Music Festival, September 11-13

The CACC Kitchen at Wheatland is one of our biggest annual fundraisers, and helps to support important advocacy work to protect Michigan's environment. We need volunteers to help cook and serve the great meals we make. Email Jennifer Raymond, CACC's volunteer coordinator, at jennifer.raymond42@gmail.com for this and other opportunities.

From the Admin's Desk: Mini Ice-Age? Don't Buy It!

Wes Raymond, CACC Administrator

The spin artists are at it again. There is talk of a potential "mini ice-age" now. As usual, the denial pattern is based on the misrepresentation of a relatively sound scientific study, presented by Professor Valentina Zharkova at the Royal Astronomical Society's national meeting in early July. The sun has its own ebb and flow of energy, and Zharkova thinks we're heading into an ebb period. Theoretically, we'll see a slight reduction in the radiant heat from the sun over the next couple of decades, leading to a peak in "cooling" around 2030.

Every climate denier from here to Albuquerque is foaming at the bit over this, much to the consternation of those whose ethos is grounded in reality. The simple truth is, by the time we hit 2030, greenhouse gas emissions will insulate us from any lack of solar energy suggested by Zharkova's findings. While the conservative press is publicizing this idea of a "mini ice-age" under photos of glacier-capped mountains and frozen seas, I wouldn't buy a dogsled just yet.

Ninety-nine percent of scientists agree we are headed for a warmer world. Even if Zharkova's solar ebb reduces global temperatures, that reduction will take place in a scenario where emissions have already raised global temperatures beyond the potential rate of reduction presented in Zharkova's work. Our emissions equal two steps forward, and a "mini ice-age" would only equal one step back. Reduced solar activity might buy a little time, but that's a big maybe and a moot point. Denial of climate change is plain old silliness, so go forth armed with the truth, and stay the course.

Create a Natural Landscape

As summer draws to a close, it's time to think about potential landscaping improvements for next year. When it comes to improving the health and vitality of a piece of land, nothing gets the job done quite like biodiversity. Homeowners should feel encouraged by a resurgence of natural landscaping styles and techniques, because a little more time in the yard can equal a lot more beauty, cut down on pollution and water use, and it's easier on your wallet as well.



*Monarch butterfly on Echinacea plant in natural landscaped yard.
Credit: Tanya Cabala*

Ditch the turf grass. The creation and maintenance of turf is costly, complicated, and in the end you're left with pollution from fertilizer runoff and property that is much less biodiverse than it was before. When we let turf stand without cutting, the area will eventually return to a more biodiverse state on its own as native plants outcompete non-native grasses. Creating a natural landscape can be as easy as simply parking the lawnmower. A little extra work and care will kick the natural reclamation process into overdrive, or simply help you steer it in a way you like. A complex variety of native plants that thrive in your soil type can be easier to maintain, cheaper to install, and just as enjoyable to the eye.

After a few weeks, as the land outside your home begins to return to a semi-natural state, you'll notice a wider variety of animal life sharing your space and enriching your life. When we do this, our yards can become our own personal wildlife sanctuaries.

CACC's administrator, Wes Raymond, is a Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership Educator, and is facilitating the natural landscaping project at the CACC office. He is happy to answer your questions. See also wildones.org for comprehensive information on natural landscaping.

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CACC GMM Draws Crowd, Inspires Motivation

The 2015 General Membership Meeting was a resounding success! Thanks to our presenters, and thanks to Mystic Lake Camp for hosting us!

Brad Kallio of the Zynoc Foundation (zynoc.com) delivered an exciting presentation of his portable wind generator and prototype solar vehicle. We learned how home-scaled inventors are revolutionizing the way energy can be generated, leading to a new “energy independence” mindset. We can’t afford to wait for the market to provide us with the solutions we need. We have to roll up our sleeves and do the job ourselves.

Kevin Kamps of Beyond Nuclear brought us up to speed on the nuclear power situation in the Great Lakes and throughout the world. Visit beyondnuclear.org for more from Kevin and his colleagues. CACC is a member of this nonprofit organization, which helps to educate on the need to halt the use of nuclear power and weapons.

As usual, the potluck lunch was delicious and nutritious. This year’s “not-so-silent” auction included a solar oven! We thank everyone who helped to make the auction fundraiser such a success. A swell of fresh faces turned into a list of new members and volunteers. It looks like we might need a bigger space next year!

In the News

CT Bans Pesticides on Municipal Playgrounds

Connecticut has outlawed the use of pesticides on all municipal playgrounds in the state, building on existing bans on pesticides on school playgrounds and in K-8 athletic facilities. More info: ow.ly/PwWPz

North America’s Wettest Place Catches Fire

Climate change brings subtle changes in weather patterns that can result in serious impacts. Vancouver Island’s dry season began two months early in 2015, leading to an outbreak of unprecedented wildfire activity in Canada’s only rainforest. More info: ow.ly/PxEWf

Long Term Study: Decomposition Slowed Near Chernobyl

Researchers have noted a reduction in the amount of decomposer species inhabiting forests near the site of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Bugs, microbes, fungi, and slime molds that consume the remains of dead organisms are absent in irradiated areas, slowing decomposition. More info: ow.ly/PxMYF

Pope Settles Debate: Humans Responsible for Earth’s Health

The much anticipated papal encyclical on climate change and other environmental stewardship issues was finally delivered this summer. The Pope says climate change is happening and is being caused by human activity. Read the full 192-page document here: ow.ly/Q09SR

Climate Change Consensus Adjusted Up to 99.99%

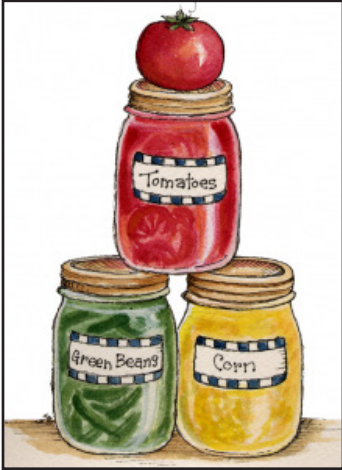
According to James L. Powell, director of the National Physical Sciences Consortium, consensus that climate change is happening and is being caused by human activity is higher than 97%, as previously thought, and is now up to 99.99%. Powell reviewed more than 24,000 peer-reviewed scientific articles on climate change published between 2013 and 2014 and identified 69,406 authors named in the articles. Only four authors rejected climate change as being caused by human emissions. More info: ow.ly/Pygp3

The Sustainable Garden and Kitchen

This column celebrates healthy soil, seeds, and a local harvest. In a world wired for fast food and chemically treated fruits and vegetables brought in from fields afar, we honor the patient work of the gardener, the farmer, and the imaginative cook.

Preserving Your Harvest

Jennifer Raymond, CACC Volunteer Coordinator



You've worked hard all summer long, and have a beautiful garden and delicious food to show for it. You do it because homegrown food tastes better, and its production is more sustainable and reduces our reliance on fossil fuels. But don't let the Great Lakes region's changing seasons stop you from enjoying your garden produce. There are many different methods for preserving your harvest, each creating new options and flavors for meals to be enjoyed until next season.

Canning: Canning is one of the Midwest's most popular methods of food preservation. Just because this tried-and-true method has been around forever doesn't mean it's boring. A new generation of canners are creating exciting new recipes with interesting and unique flavor combos. Try the "Blue Chair Jam Cookbook" by Rachel Saunders (Andrews McKeel Publishing, 2010) for fun, new recipes. Check out the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension website for canning tips and classes. (For all references to the MSU Extension website, google "MSU Extension," along with the topic.)

Dehydrating: If you've ever eaten jerky or fruit leather, you're familiar with the end result of the dehydration process. Dehydrated food keeps well, and can be a great option if you have lots to preserve, but limited space to store food. Not all dehydrators are created equal. Be sure to research different options to ensure you're selecting a model that will meet your needs. Again, MSU Extension is a good source of many valuable tips. "Mary Bell's Complete Dehydrator Cookbook" (William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1994) is also a great comprehensive guide, with many innovative recipes and techniques.

Fermenting: There has been a resurgence in the popularity of fermented foods recently. Fermented foods like sauerkraut and kimchi are not only delicious, but have the added benefit of probiotics due to the fermentation process. Learn from firsthand experiences shared in Facebook groups, such as the "Fermenter's Kitchen" or see the MSU Extension website for tips on fermented foods. Check out also, "The Art of Fermentation" by Sandor Ellix Katz (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2012).

Freezing: Freezing is a quick and convenient option for preserving foods. Most frozen vegetables can be prepared with a simple blanching process. Make sure to research each vegetable you plan to freeze on how to process for best results. Check out the MSU Extension for tips on freezing foods.

Pickling: Like fermentation, pickling is enjoying renewed attention. There are many foods besides cucumbers that can be pickled, including carrots and beets, or even animal proteins, like eggs, fish or meats! The University of Missouri Extension website has great resources for beginning "picklers." (Google "University of Missouri Extension pickling.")

Communications Alert

We've had a little trouble with the @caccmi.org email system, but everything seems to be working now, thanks to CACC's longtime tech-guru, Pam Warren. Use emailcacc@gmail.com, an easy-to-remember alternate all-purpose email relay, if problems occur again.

If you're a Facebook user, you can join one of several CACC groups. Use the Facebook search bar and enter "CACC Communications Platform," a forum for all things CACC. This includes leadership, membership, volunteer corps, and interested parties. If you volunteer in the kitchen at Wheatland, please join "CACC Wheatland Volunteers."

You can also always call the office at 989-544-3318, Wednesday or Thursday afternoons, or you can leave a message.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Sept. 6, 2015. Enbridge Line 5 protest -- kayak flotilla demanding Enbridge Line 5 closure. Experienced open-water kayakers only. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Meet at Mackinac Lighthouse Park at the southern end of the bridge. Music and speakers in the park. Request additional information via pipeout2015@gmail.com.

Sept. 6, 2015. Graymont Mine protest action. 9:00 a.m. St. Ignace, MI.

Sept. 7, 2015. Annual Mackinac Bridge Walk. Food and Water Watch (foodandwaterwatch.org) is participating in the walk wearing T-shirts opposing Enbridge Line 5. *For more information about the Graymont mine protest and bridge walk, see CACC's website, caccmi.org.

Sept. 11-12, 2015. Volunteer in CACC's Kitchen at Wheatland! See article in this newsletter for details.

September 24, 2015. Volunteer Trail Cleanup Day, sponsored by the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy, Bay City, MI. Call 989-891-9986 for more information.

October 11, 2015, 1 – to 4 p.m. Braveheart Raptor Rehabilitation Center Open House. Twin Lake, MI. Call 231-821-9125 for more information.

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