Let's Talk Water
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Ozone disinfection coming soon!
As many of you know, our new water system came online last summer! Our upgraded water treatment plant treats and delivers water for Lake Oswego and Tigard communities using an advanced treatment process and new filters. This spring, a state-of-the-art ozone disinfection process will be introduced into our water treatment system. Ozone, a powerful oxidant, destroys taste and odor causing compounds and removes more impurities found in our water supply. It is one of the best technologies for enhancing taste and odor, and it provides an additional treatment barrier to protect public health.

What is ozone and how does it work?
Ozone is oxygen gas, with an extra oxygen atom. An ozone generator uses electrical energy to produce ozone from oxygen for the water treatment process. Lightning storms naturally produce ozone; that is what creates the clean, “after-rainstorm” smell.

Ozone treatment works through a process called “oxidation.” During oxidation, the extra atom destroys odor-causing material and microorganisms, leaving only pure oxygen in the water.

First used internationally in 1893, ozone has been around for decades. It is a proven technology used widely in Oregon and the United States. Other Pacific Northwest communities using ozone treatment include Wilsonville, Medford, Reedsport, Seattle, Tacoma and Walla Walla.

Why use ozone?
As part of the upgrade and expansion of the system, the new treatment process was recommended by a panel of experts in drinking water treatment and public health. The panel recommended conventional filtration plus ozone treatment, to best protect public health. The recommendation was also supported by an eight-member Citizen Sounding Board with representatives from Lake Oswego and Tigard.

In Praise of Worm Poo
Technically referred to as vermicastings, worm poo is Mother Nature’s black gold. Nutrient rich with exceptional water retention, it also works as a pest repellent, especially on mites and aphids. What is really neat about worm castings is that it can be made at home using plastic totes, some newspaper and scraps from the evening meal. It is a great project to do as a family and the benefits of using the castings are terrific. Those of us who have limited space gardens or do our gardening on our patio or balcony will find that using worm castings is a great way to fertilize and amend the soils in our containers and herb beds. Give it a try!

To Do List
By the time you get this issue of the Conservation newsletter, four of the six weeks of winter predicted by Punxsutawney Phil on groundhog’s day will have passed. This newsletter reminds us that those overcast days that seem to last forever are waning and the transition into the next exceptional summer in Northwestern Oregon is underway - granted there will likely still be a bit of wet weather to come. So to help hold down the grouting at how painfully slow this transition may indeed be, I offer you a few things to do to prepare for the coming season.

March:
• Tune up the power equipment, edger, mower, weed eater etc.
• Prep and sharpen hand tools.
• This is a great month to plant many varieties of strawberries, blueberries raspberries and many other delicious and decorative berry plants. Consult with nurseries and gardeners for specific methods.
• Set up the planting beds (areas) for your veggie garden and start peas, beets, spinach, potatoes, broccoli and onions to name a few.
• It’s a great time to do bulb sets.
• Between now and June is the best time to aerate your lawn and add soil amendments. Rake up and remove the plugs and consider adding compost to enhance drainage and nutrient exchange to the roots. Before applying any fertilizer you should have your soil tested to determine what is actually needed. The City offers testing kits for free – pick yours up at the reception desk on the third floor of City Hall.
• Have your backflow assembly tested. April and May are perfect months to get this done. These tests are required to be done annually by a certified technician who files the results with the City. For more information, call 503-635-0280 or go online to www.lakeoswego.city/publicworks/backflow-and-cross-connection-control-program.
• Time to do clean up on your yard. Remember to clean up and prune around your water meter to provide access for the meter readers.
• Lawn seeding, if desired. Hand water, if needed. Not time to start your sprinklers yet!

April:
• Composting with worms (also called vermicomposting) is usually done with the common red wiggler worm (Eisenia fetida), also known as manure worm, red worm, or Eisenia fetida), also known as manure worm, red worm, or earthworm. This worm’s specialized digestive system converts food waste and other organic materials to a nutrient-rich compost called vermicast or worm castings. Red wigglers are surface dwellers - they do not develop burrows (tunnels) and aren’t found deep in the substrate, as are common garden earthworms.

An ozone generator uses electrical energy to transform oxygen into ozone, a powerful disinfectant used in the water treatment process.
Monarchs and Pollinators

The Shortage Continues

Every year we get news of the loss or decline of another species. Many are failing right here in the Northwest. For some species it may be too late. Drought, pesticides, pollution, invasive competition and loss of habitat has done its damage. Heroic efforts to pull them from the brink are not always successful and we lose creatures that can never be replaced. Currently there are a host of bumble bees, mason bees and other bees native to Oregon that are nearing or in some cases may already be extinct. Monarch populations have fallen as well. Numbers of the iconic butterfly have dropped 78% from the mid 90’s when surveys of their numbers were undertaken annually. We can still do something and that something is easy.

This year I would ask all of you that enjoy gardening in Lake Oswego to set aside some of your planting space specifically for these important creatures. Plant some pollinator encouraging native plants. Build nesting sites. Use pesticides sparingly if at all. We are a “Tree City”, let’s be a “Bee City” as well. Below are some links to help you learn about bees and other beneficial insects and what you can do to make a difference in their lives.

- Xerces Society: www.xerces.org
- Pollinator Society: www.pollinator.org
- Native Bee Conservancy: www.nativebeeconservancy.org
- North American Butterfly Association: www.naba.org
- The Monarch Program: www.monarchprogram.org

To Do List

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May:

- Irrigation system tune up time. Start up your sprinklers and check for winter damage. Check for leaks, broken lines, broken risers and heads. Adjust your sprinklers so that they are not spraying on the sidewalks, driveways or into the street. This is a good time to replace common spray nozzles with the more efficient multi-stream rotators. Make sure the controller is operating correctly (all of the buttons and displays are working). Check that all valves are operating correctly. Make all repairs and turn your controller off. This is still early for regular watering cycles to begin. Typically there is still lots of water in the soil. No established trees or woody shrubs will need any help. Lawn and flowers may require some water, but at this point watering should be very infrequent, except in cases of new plantings and these should be done by hand.

- If you haven’t installed a rain sensor, one can be purchased from the City for $5 at City Hall, third floor reception desk.

- Start the rest of the plantings. Corn, tomatoes (may need to cover at night), cucumbers and any annuals.

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- 1,682 Ultra Low Flow & High Efficiency Toilet & Urinal Rebates
- 1,411 Shower Heads
- 106 High Efficiency Washing Machine Rebates
- 1,922 Households have participated
- 106.1 Million Gallons of Water Saved

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