

**Westhampton Garden Club  
Conservation Bulletin  
Winter 2015**



**From the chairman** -- Winter has barely begun, time for hibernating or migrating! We're not meeting until April, but there's always a lot to talk about, here are a few items worthy of your attention.



**Use local firewood** - Our forests are under attack! A common way destructive insects are moved beyond their origin is by people transporting firewood. Who knew! Often these pests are not detected until a number of trees start to die, by then the infestation has spread beyond the ability to be controlled effectively. To try to stop the influx of pests that are killing our trees, the NYSDEC strongly urges residents to use only local firewood or wood purchased from local vendors, which has been heat-treated or kiln dried to kill pests.

Per the DEC, there is quarantine in effect aimed at restricting firewood transport. We are not to transport firewood that hasn't been heat-treated any further than 50 miles from its original source - including wood we cut on our property.

**Southern Pine Beetle**-As reported at the November meeting, the Southern Pine Beetle is raging an attack on pine trees across Suffolk County. Any pine tree including hemlock and spruce can be infected but pitch pines are favored targets.



Look for clumps of resin on bark, s shaped tunnels into the bark or shotgun pattern holes along trunk. Report signs of infestation to the NYS DEC Forest Health Information Line at 1-866-640-0652. More info may be found at [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

**E-WASTE**



**Recycle electronic waste** - Beginning 1/1/15 we may no longer dispose of electronics in the trash. The goal is to keep lead, mercury, cadmium and other toxins out of the landfill and prevent heavy metals from leaking into the water

supply. E-waste is defined as computers, lap tops, tablets, e-readers, televisions, computer peripherals like keyboards, electronic mice, fax machines, shredders, scanners, VCRs DVRs, electronic video games, and the list goes on.

According to the web site DoSomething.org, E-waste makes up just 2% of waste in landfills but equals a whopping 70% of toxic waste. Every year, Americans toss away \$60 million worth of precious metals like gold, silver and copper in discarded cell phones!

So where do we dispose of e-waste? NYS State has authorized e-waste collection sites such as the Towns of Riverhead, Southampton, East Hampton & Southold recycling centers, Best Buy, Staples, and Office Max in Riverhead also accept some types of e-waste. Of course, call your computer maven for advice and remember to remove personal data before trashing computer equipment!!



**Reuse ribbon** - this falls under the better late than never category. More waste is created between Thanksgiving and New Years -- as if we didn't know. But if everyone reused just 2 feet of ribbon a year, enough ribbon would be saved to tie a bow around the world! This interesting fact is brought to you by the State of California web site CalRecycle.ca.gov



**Doing our part to save the bees** - as we plan our spring gardens, please remember its best to buy plants and shrubs from local providers. Big box store garden centers have been found to often pre-treat plants with neonicotinoids (neo- niko-TEEN-oids) a systemic pesticide that persist in plants as residue in pollen or in the soil for 18 months or longer. Of all pesticides, neonicotinoids are the most harmful to bees, having been linked to death as well as the decline of ability to fly, navigate, forage and reproduce. Ask your garden center if they carry plants pre-treated with neonicotinoids.

Avoid use of garden products containing imidaclopid, dinotefuran, clothianidin and thiamethoxam. A good resource from the Xerces Society lists brand names of garden products containing the above is available at [www.xerces.org/pesticides](http://www.xerces.org/pesticides) or Friends of the Earth at [www.foe.org/beeaction](http://www.foe.org/beeaction)



**Remember the birds** - Don't forget to keep the birds fed in winter. Fill feeders often, tamp down snow around feeders to help the ground feeders access seed, hang suet cakes, suet is an excellent source of fat and high energy so necessary for birds trying to keep warm in winter. If you have deer or raccoon visiting feeders at night, fill feeders with just enough seed to last the day. Talmage Farm Agway in Riverhead carries a good supply of reasonably priced seed and suet. Check out more tips at Audubon Guide to Winter Bird-Feeding at [mag.audubon.org](http://mag.audubon.org)



**Think Globally, Act Locally**- As you may know, the Town of Southampton enacted a ban on single use plastic bags to commence on Earth Day April 22, 2015, an action we wholeheartedly support. Its been estimated that Americans throw 100 billion plastic grocery bags into the landfills every year, bags it took 12 million barrels of oil to produce! It's well past time to put an end to this wasteful practice. More about this at the April meeting.



The January Full Moon is known as the Wolf Moon - so named in American Indian folklore when the wolves could be heard howling in hunger outside the villages.

As always, comments and ideas for future articles are most welcome. Reach me by email at [ruffin.priscilla@gmail.com](mailto:ruffin.priscilla@gmail.com) or phone 631-288-8983

Priscilla Ruffin, Conservation Chair

Sources; NYSDEC, Calrecycle.gov, Xerces Society, Friends of the Earth, Audubon.org, The Farmer's Almanac, Garden Club of America Conservation Watch, Newsday, The Southampton Press, Dosomething.org.