

ENVIRO TALK

TIDY-UP Tacoma

**HOW IT STARTED
AND WHERE IT'S GOING**

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Spring/Summer 2024

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Grants Support Sustainability Programs



Photo by Salishan Association

nationally award-winning Community Ambassador Program. The EPA's REO Grant Program is designed to inform the public about residential or community recycling or composting programs, provide information about the materials that are accepted as part of these programs, and increase collection rates and decrease contamination across the nation. Out of more than 300 applicants, the City was selected as one of 25 recipients, representing 8.3% of successful applications.

"This grant will allow us to continue our work partnering with community-based organizations to increase language access and provide equitable education and outreach across Tacoma's diverse community," said Preston Peck, Senior Sustainability Analyst with Environmental Services. "Additionally, we look forward to expanding our programming to include waste reduction and a youth ambassador track that will focus on youth involvement in the recycling system."

Next is a grant of over \$560,000, awarded by the Washington State Department of Ecology, that will facilitate the replacement of an aging Solid Waste Management diesel truck with a state-of-the-art electric garbage truck and the necessary charging infrastructure. Due for replacement, the City's current 2009 diesel truck will be phased out by a zero-pollution electric vehicle quietly working in Tacoma's neighborhoods.

"Receiving this grant from the Washington Department of Ecology will help to further reduce our dependency on traditional fossil fuels. It will allow us to power our garbage trucks using electricity, which is abundantly available in the Pacific Northwest through Tacoma Power's clean, renewable hydroelectric energy," said Joel Sipes, Fleet and Facilities Analyst with Solid Waste Management. "We are continuing to evaluate our long-term goals for alternative fuel collection vehicles and will begin to map out how to integrate them into our current routes."

Environmental Services will begin implementing the EPA grant in the spring of 2024 and is anticipated to acquire the electric collection truck in early 2025. For more information about either award, contact Preston Peck, Senior Sustainability Analyst, at ppeck@cityoftacoma.org, or call (253) 344-6390.

More information on the City's Environmental Services Department is available at cityoftacoma.org/ES.



Focus on the Updated Urban Forestry Code

The City has an ongoing commitment to protect and enhance Tacoma's urban forest. City of Tacoma Urban Forester Mike Carey talks more about modernizing Tacoma's code regarding street trees after nearly 100 years.

What is the Urban Forestry Chapter of the Municipal Code, and How Has It Been Updated?

The Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title 9 covers regulating the care and preservation of street trees and trees on public property within the City limits. It ensures the sustainability of urban forests, which play a crucial role in improving air quality, moderating temperatures, and reducing stormwater runoff. In December 2023, Tacoma City Council reaffirmed their commitment to protecting and enhancing Tacoma's urban forest by updating the relevant chapters and consolidating them into a single title, TMC 9.20 Urban Forestry.

The code includes updated permit requirements for pruning, removal, and planting of street trees; the establishment of a heritage tree program; updated policies and procedures for flexible review of requests to prune trees on public property; updated provisions for enforcement of violations; and an updated appeals process to ensure consistency with other areas of TMC.

How Does the Updated Urban Forestry Code Impact the Community?

Healthy and sustainable urban forests impact our community's quality of life by reducing extremes in urban heat, enhancing property values, fostering wildlife habitats, filtering pollutants from the air we breathe, and offering recreational spaces. The urban forest also contributes to community health and well-being, creating a more attractive and sustainable environment for current and future generations in Tacoma.

Some changes that go into effect on June 1, 2024, are that tree pruning must meet standards to not negatively impact the health of the tree; tree removal must meet one of the approved reasons for removal; and tree planting must meet City standards to reduce potential future conflicts with infrastructure.

How Can Residents Get Involved?

Over the next few months, staff will be updating the permit system and creating outreach materials to communicate these changes to the community.

To learn more, visit cityoftacoma.org/urbanforestry or call (253) 404-6989.

How-To Get Started with Container Planting



Tips to Get Started:

- Choose a clean pot with a drainage hole sized to hold plants at mature growth.
- Place near a water source with easy access and sun, shade, or a mix, according to planting needs.
- Fill the pot about 3/4 full with 100% organic potting soil.
- Mix organic all-purpose fertilizer (liquid or dry granular) in the soil when planting for strong root development. Avoid synthetic or crystalline fertilizers that can reduce water retention, cause nutrient imbalances, and harm soil microorganisms.

Planting Container Pots: Thrillers, Fillers, and Spillers

- Choose an odd number of plants and a variety of sizes, shapes, and colors.
- Select plants with similar growth habits, water and nutritional needs, and sun or shade requirements.
- To attract pollinators, consider bright colors, flower shapes, odor, and pollen production.
- Start with the tallest, most striking plants (thrillers) in the center.
- Add an odd number of medium-height, colorful fillers around the thriller center.
- Fill in the open spaces around the edge with plants that spill over the sides.
- Add soil if needed; leave a 2" gap at the top to water without overflowing the pot.
- After planting, water it enough to see water coming out of the drainage hole at the bottom.

Note: This concept works for in-ground plant groups as well. For plant examples, search online for Thrillers, Fillers, and Spillers, visit a reliable local nursery, or visit the EnviroHouse for landscape resources.

To watch the EnviroHouse How-To video on creating attractive container plantings, visit <http://y2u.be/gGdqsyKJozs>. Community members can also register for upcoming EnviroHouse workshops at cityoftacoma.org/workshops or call (253) 573-2426.



Green Recipe Revisited: Free Up Your Time Frittata

This spring and summer, why not free up some time with a tasty and easy-to-make frittata? Elizabeth Ashbrook, Certified Nutritional Therapist and Education Coordinator with Marlene's Market & Deli, was on Urban Green to demonstrate this recipe made from fresh and frozen ingredients. To cook along with this Urban Tabletop segment from episode 22, visit cityoftacoma.org/UrbanGreen.

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups zucchini (thinly sliced half-moons)
- ½ cup bell pepper (diced)
- ½ cup yellow onion (diced)
- 1 cup corn (frozen)
- 1 cup cheddar cheese (grated)
- 9 eggs
- ¾ cup milk
- ½ tsp. oregano
- Salt and pepper (to taste)

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Sauté vegetables together on medium heat until tender. Set aside.
3. Lightly grease a glass pie dish and place cheddar cheese on the bottom.
4. In a separate large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, and spices.
5. Add the sautéed vegetables to the eggs, stir, and then pour the mixture into the pie dish.
6. Bake for 60 minutes, or until the frittata is golden brown and firm in the middle.

New TAGRO Website

TAGRO still offers environmentally friendly products designed to give better results for lawns and gardens, but their website has a new look. Customers can review in-depth product descriptions and pricing and use the Cubic Yard Calculator to figure out how much product they need. TAGRO can also be delivered almost anywhere in Washington State, and customers can calculate the delivery price by zip code. This spring and summer, check out TAGRO.com or call (253) 502-2150, and get your garden growing while reusing community resources and protecting our environment.

Get Ready to Pedal for Bike Month

May 2024 holds a month-long celebration that offers a variety of fun bicycle-related activities and events for all ages across Tacoma. Enjoy the 13th annual Pierce County Bike Swap, Bike & Roll to School Day, Kidical Mass family rides, and more! Check out all the free, bike-focused fun happening in Tacoma at bike253.com and [@TacomaMobility](https://twitter.com/TacomaMobility) on social media, or call (253) 591-5000.

New Glass Recycling Drop-Off Location

In 2021, the City moved from residential curbside glass recycling collection for customers in single-family homes and duplexes to drop-off collection stations throughout Tacoma. The City's Solid Waste Management recently added another glass recycling collection location in South Tacoma. Located just off I-5 near 5728 Tacoma Mall Boulevard, this glass recycling location accepts empty, clean, and dry glass bottles and jars, as well as household batteries, for free and responsible recycling. To learn more about all six glass recycling locations, visit tacomarecycles.org/glass or call (253) 502-2100.



Award-Winning Campaign to Prevent Stormwater Pollution

The “If it Hits the Ground, It Hits the Sound” educational campaign has received a 2024 National Environmental Achievement Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. In 2017, a utility customer study indicated that half of Tacoma residents believe that stormwater is cleaned at the City’s wastewater treatment plants before entering local waterways. In fact, in 90% of Tacoma, rainwater hits the ground and washes pollutants like litter, pet waste, and car oil directly into local waterways. To get the word out, a multi-disciplinary team came together in 2018 and launched the “If It Hits the Ground...” campaign. This effort partnered with local artists to create murals, t-shirts, painted storm drain stencils, concrete sidewalk stamps, vehicle wraps, videos, and more on the theme of stormwater pollution.



Photo by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies

February 2024: The City of Tacoma’s Environmental Services staff is pictured with the 2023-2024 National Association of Clean Water Agencies president, from left to right: Josh Knouff, Strategic Planning Manager; Mike Slevin, Environmental Services Director; Denisse Linares, Solid Waste Assistant Division Manager; Oluwole “OJ” McFoy, NACWA’s President and General Manager of Buffalo Sewer Authority; Kurt Fremont, Business Operations Division Manager; Sean Olson, Construction Manager.

The award recognized this campaign for its novel integration of art into public stormwater education. The campaign started by creating murals in areas of Tacoma that have not historically had public art. One mural is located on the Eastside of Tacoma and includes messages in various languages spoken within the neighborhood. In total, seven murals have been created, and another two are in development. All the art pieces in the campaign were created by local artists for Tacoma residents. The campaign has continued with a film festival and an upcoming collaboration with the Tacoma School District.

For those who would like to join the campaign to keep our waterways clean, they can adopt a local storm drain at wa.adopt-a-drain.org.

Visit cityoftacoma.org/preventstormwaterpollution or call (253) 591-5588 to find ways to help prevent stormwater pollution in your neighborhood.

Calendar of Events

APRIL

- 13 South Sound Sustainability Expo**, FREE, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., UW Tacoma Campus, 1900 Commerce St., for more information, visit southsoundsustainabilityexpo.org or call (253) 591-5172
- 22 Earth Day**, celebrate the successes of past environmental action and commit to a future dedicated to environmental justice and stewardship, visit earthdaysouthsound.org
- 26 National Arbor Day**, to find out more about the City's Urban Forestry and to see a list of tree programming, visit cityoftacoma.org/trees or call (253) 502-2138

MAY

- 01-31 Bike Month**, for bicycling-related resources, activities, and events throughout May, visit bike253.com or call (253) 591-5000
- 04 Landscape Irrigation to Water Wisely**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 08 National Bike & Roll to School Day**, schools across the country celebrate biking, walking, and actively rolling to school. Visit cityoftacoma.org/walkandroll to download ready-to-go promotions and request incentives for your school event
- 11 Bike Story Time with Arts & Crafts**, enjoy this family-friendly drop-in story-time hour at the Swasey Tacoma Public Library branch, 7001 Sixth Avenue, from 11 a.m. to noon, visit bike253.com or call (253) 591-5000
- 11 A Beginner's Guide to Smart Homes**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 18 Garden Herbs: Plant, Use, Preserve**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 27 Memorial Day**, the Tacoma Recovery & Transfer Center is open during normal business hours from 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., and Curbside Collection is NORMAL. Administration offices are closed

Tidy-Up Tacoma:

How It Started and Where It's Going

Last spring, the City Council responded to the call from residents for enhanced cleanup services by approving a 6% tax on residential and commercial solid waste bills to fund the Tidy-Up Tacoma program. This program provides cleanup services in our shared public spaces and helps support cleaner, healthier neighborhoods for those who live, work, and play here.

Currently, the program funds a trail maintenance and graffiti mitigation team, as well as a full-time litter cleanup team focused on cleaning up various parts of Tacoma. Additionally, funds were used to staff two trucks that clean up illegally dumped materials and service the public litter cans in our business districts. Tidy-Up Tacoma also funds a contractor to cleanup in and around homeless encampments, which helps to further reduce litter and debris in our neighborhoods.

Although only partially staffed in 2023, the program was still able to remove more than 1 million pounds of litter and illegally dumped material from our public spaces. Crews removed more than 3.5 million pounds of garbage from homeless encampments and responded to over 4,000 illegal dumping, garbage, and debris requests through 311. In addition, the City's Public Works Department removed over 10,000 graffiti tags in 2023 as part of the overall Tidy-Up Tacoma efforts.

TIDY-UP
TaComa



Throughout the spring and summer of 2023, staff engaged with community members at seven community events, contacted 15 local organizations for their input, and conducted listening sessions with three community-based organizations. The Tidy-Up team also engaged the community through an online survey, print, radio, television, and social media. Through all of these avenues, feedback was received from more than 2,000 community members. The majority of feedback was positive, with residents expressing excitement about this work. The survey identified two top priority areas of focus for the program, which were garbage and litter cleanup, as well as maintenance and expansion of public litter cans. Three neighborhoods, Downtown, South End, and Hilltop, were identified as having the most immediate need for cleanup efforts.



In 2024, the program plans to expand and improve the efficiency of the litter team by purchasing litter vacuums that will make them five times more efficient at litter cleanup. Tidy-Up staff are working to create more routine litter and illegal dumping cleanup routes throughout neighborhoods to proactively address cleanup in the city. Efforts are also being made to put an asset management program in place that will ensure routine maintenance of public litter cans and work with business districts and other partners to identify additional locations for expansion of the litter can program to better serve our community.

To learn more about Tidy-Up Tacoma, visit cityoftacoma.org/tidyup or call (253) 502-2100.



To report litter and illegal dumping in your neighborhood, contact the TacomaFIRST 311 Customer Support Center by dialing 311 within Tacoma city limits or (253) 591-5000 from anywhere else, or visit cityoftacoma.org/TacomaFIRST311.

EnviroKids

what's that word?

Complete the sentences below (you'll find the answers in this issue of EnviroTalk), and then find the word or phrase in the word search below. If you get stumped, the answers are at the bottom.

1. Tidy-Up Tacoma is working to create routine **LITTER** and illegal dumping _____ routes throughout neighborhoods.
2. Instead of throwing food _____ in your garbage, you can take it out to your _____ food and yard waste container.
3. This spring and summer, check out TAGRO to get your _____ growing while _____ community resources.
4. To help prevent environmental _____, dispose of items like batteries, electronics, and chemicals at designated _____ points.
5. When _____ hits the ground, it can wash pollutants like litter, pet waste, and car oil directly into local _____.



(1.) LITTER, CLEANUP, (2.) WASTE, BROWN, (3.) GARDEN, REUSING, (4.) CONTAMINATION, COLLECTION, (5.) RAINWATER, WATERWAYS

SOLID WASTE ROUTE SUPERVISOR

Angilia Smith

Angilia is a member of the Tidy-Up Tacoma team, where she plans and organizes solid waste routes and transfer activities for the program. There are many challenges Angilia faces daily that require her to think outside the box to find a resolution.

"I enjoy resolving concerns that come directly from the community and getting to collaborate with different departments within the City. The best part of my job is getting to lead a driven team that shares my passion for a clean community and a safe environment for all of Tacoma's residents to enjoy," Angilia said about her job.

A high school diploma and experience leading a team are needed to qualify for this position. It's also important to have strong customer service skills and a desire to help others.



MEET



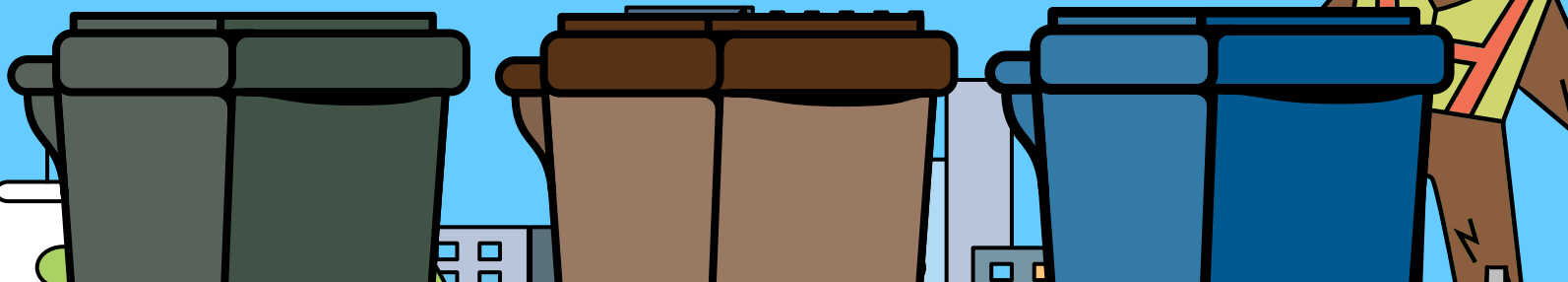
Sort the Sound

City of Tacoma's Recycle Sorting Game!

Play Now!



SortSquatch awaits at TacomaRecycles.org



Spring Workshops

Register for in-person workshops at
cityoftacoma.org/workshops
(253) 573-2426

Using Your Brown Bin, It's Only Natural

Growing a beautiful garden or great lawn begins in the kitchen. To start the process, instead of throwing food waste in your garbage, you can take it out to your brown food and yard waste container. This can include eggshells, banana peels, radish tops, chicken bones, and moldy leftovers from the refrigerator. It can all go in! The City's Solid Waste Management team will handle it from there by picking up your food waste from your brown container and taking it to a compost facility.

Using beneficial microbes, the facility transforms your food and yard waste into a dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling soil additive ready for your garden. Making compost is a natural cycle, like what happens to fallen leaves on a forest floor, but the process is faster.

Adding compost to your garden conserves water and grows healthy plants. Compost acts like a sponge, which increases the soil's water-holding capacity and reduces erosion. This means less watering on summer days. Compost feeds soil microbes that make nutrients available to plants without synthetic fertilizers.

Putting food waste in your brown bin has value, even if you don't garden. When food and yard waste go in the garbage instead of the brown bin, they end up in the landfill, are buried, and produce methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. Over 20% of Tacoma's landfilled garbage is composed of food waste. Landfills are the third-largest source of methane emissions nationally. Making the trip from your kitchen to the brown bin is a hero's journey to fight climate change and grow healthy gardens.

To find out what does and doesn't go in your brown bin, visit cityoftacoma.org/foodwaste or call (253) 502-2100.

Or check out the Compost Users Guide at ecology.wa.gov/compostusersguide.

Earth Month

Earth Month is a celebration of environmental awareness and sustainability, observed throughout April. How can you show the earth some love? Organize a local clean-up event or volunteer to tidy up parks, streets, or beaches; explore local trails and parks to foster a connection with nature. For more ways to participate in Earth Month, visit earthdaysouthsound.org. Join us in fostering a greener future as we help inspire residents to make impactful, positive changes for the benefit of our shared home, Earth.

Yard Waste Reminders

Maintaining effective waste management is key to preserving our environment. It's crucial to remember not to put plastic or produce stickers in yard waste bins. These items can contaminate the composting process, making it harder to recycle organic waste efficiently. By ensuring only organic materials (like food scraps and grass clippings) go into yard waste bins, we contribute to a cleaner, greener city and promote more sustainable waste management practices for a healthier environment. Visit cityoftacoma.org/yardwaste or call (253) 502-2100 for more information.

Summer Projects: Hazardous Waste Disposal

Residents play a vital role in maintaining a clean and healthy environment by ensuring the proper disposal of hazardous waste items. Items like batteries, electronics, and chemicals can be disposed of responsibly at designated collection points. This prevents environmental contamination and protects the well-being of our community. Remember, small actions at home can have a significant impact on the overall health of our environment. For item-specific disposal information, visit cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste or call (253) 502-2100.

Did you know? Call 311 to Report Illegal Dumping of Trash and Litter

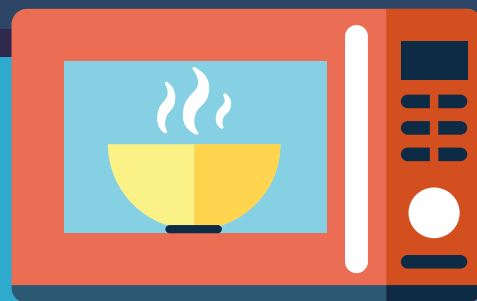
Reporting illegal dumping is key to preserving our city's beauty and environment. Your attentiveness helps us maintain cleanliness, prevent hazards, and protect wildlife. By reporting promptly, you contribute to a safer and healthier Tacoma for all. Let's unite against illegal dumping; report any sightings by calling 311 within Tacoma city limits or (253) 591-5000 from anywhere else. Residents can also visit cityoftacoma.org/TacomaFIRST311 to report and help ensure our city remains a clean and vibrant place to live. Together, we make a difference!

TIP OF THE DAY

Microwave Cleaner

Items Needed:

- 1 cup of water
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 microwave-safe glass bowl or large glass measuring cup



1. Pour the water and lemon juice into a microwave-safe glass bowl or measuring cup.
2. Place the bowl or cup in the microwave and set on high for 3–4 minutes (until the water is bubbling and steam is rolling off).
3. Carefully remove the glass bowl or cup using potholders and place it in the sink.
4. Moisten a washrag or sponge and wipe out the inside of the microwave.

16th Annual

SOUTH SOUND SUSTAINABILITY EXPO

FREE ADMISSION



SATURDAY, APRIL 13 - 10 AM - 3 PM

UW TACOMA CAMPUS - PRAIRIE LINE TRAIL

[SOUTHSOUNDSUSTAINABILITYEXPO.ORG](https://southsoundsustainabilityexpo.org)



SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION OR CALL (253) 591-5172
HOSTED BY THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Events

Calendar of

JUNE

- 01 Solar Power Benefits and What's New**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 08 Be Cool, with Efficient Heat Pump Systems**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 15 Groundcover Plants and Ornamental Grasses**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 19 Juneteenth**, the Tacoma Recovery & Transfer Center is open during normal business hours from 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., and Curbside Collection is NORMAL. Administration offices are closed
- 22 Healthy Houseplants: Choices and Care**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 29 Basics of Botanical Illustration**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426

JULY

- 01 TAGRO Summer Hours Begin**: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon, 2301 Cleveland Way, Central Treatment Plant, Gate 6, facility closed on weekdays from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., visit TAGRO.com or call (253) 502-2150
- 04 Independence Day**, Tacoma Recovery & Transfer Center is CLOSED. Curbside pickups scheduled on or after the holiday during this week will be one day later than normally scheduled
- 13 Pollinator Gardens for a Native Habitat**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 13 Weeds, Pests & Non-Toxic Solutions**, FREE, 12 p.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 20 Garden Design for Drought-Tolerant Plants**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 27 Printmaking with Plants & Paint**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426

AUGUST

- 04 Pickling Cucumbers & Other Veggies**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426



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