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MULCHING ON

Gardening volunteers Andy, Kim and Richard from The Vale Centre, Hebden Bridge collecting leaves at the Methodist Church to add to the new leaf composting bin which the ATC has installed in the church's grounds.

It's still not too late to sweep those autumn leaves off the paths and steps, and rake them from the lawn to make a leaf compost heap. Fallen leaves are part of the natural cycle of returning essential nutrients to the soil. It's recycling at its very best as nothing is wasted. It makes economic and common sense to collect and recycle this valuable, multi-purpose resource.

Dead and decaying leaves form leafmould, which is very rich in minerals, far superior to, and more versatile than peat! Mature leafmould both retains moisture and promotes aeration and is often referred to as the gardener's gold dust.

It is quite a lengthy process but utterly worthwhile. If the collected leaves are dry they should be watered to aid their decomposition,

heaped up and after approximately a year they will have darkened and broken up to some extent. At this stage the leaves could be used as a soil conditioner, dug in or used as a mulch around plants or added to heavy soils to create a workable loam. If left for another year they will have developed into a superb substance ready to use as a seed and potting compost!

GREEN CHRISTMAS

Along with the 11 million turkeys that will never see the light of day again (that's if they were lucky enough to see it in the first place!) the government's "are you doing your bit?" campaign predicts that this Christmas will yet again see the creation of a monstrous mountain of festive "waste". It will consist of at least 1 billion Christmas cards, over 6 million Christmas trees, 4,200 tonnes of aluminium foil, 125,000 tonnes of plastic packaging, and enough wrapping paper to cover Guernsey, with a bit to spare! Fortunately there are several ways to minimise the damage our celebrations might cause the environment.

Along with those lovely people at Hebden Bridge Post Office, Kerbside will be collecting and recycling all Christmas cards that are not being saved for making into next year's gift tags. Buying recycled cards and gift-wrap, or even making your own, will also reduce the environmental impact of our seasonal excesses.

If you can't find a properly rooted Christmas tree locally you should be able to find out where your nearest stockist of replantable trees is by contacting the British Christmas Tree Growers Association (0113 213 0300).

A commitment to local organic produce

would also help soften the blow caused by the mass transportation of 85,000 tonnes of sprouts around the country. Organic sources should also be sought to help offset the effect of our consumption of 60,000 tonnes of chocolate, and 200 million litres of soft drinks, along with the 23 pints of Christmas beer, 7 units of spirit and three bottles of wine that the average adult supposedly enjoys!

When it comes to presents perhaps we could all make an effort to shop locally for gifts that are durable, not over packaged, energy efficient, made from recycled materials, and are recyclable themselves. Toys that wind up or use rechargeable batteries help to reduce our environmental impact. Over 33 million disposable batteries were purchased during the festive season in Britain last year and 98% of them will now be lying in landfill sites polluting our environment! (Battery chargers are now available for even supposedly non-rechargeable batteries...what a great idea for a present!)

Finally, perhaps everyone could consider donating some of the £12 billion that is spent on presents, or the £200 million spent on new tinsel and baubles to a worthy cause...for more details please contact H at the ATC (01422) 842121.



The annual Big Green Weekend in Hebden Bridge, which is organised by the Alternative Technology Centre, has turned into the BIG GREEN WEEK (we ran out of time to do everything in just the weekend!). It will continue to concentrate on all aspects of alternative technologies but will have an added focus on sustainable communities and local economies.

It has also moved to later in the year. We've been lucky with the weather for the last three years holding the event in February, but what with this global warming thingy happening - we decided not to risk it again. The fun will start on Monday March 31st and culminate on Sunday April 6th 2003. If you would like to get involved in helping with the event, or if you or your organisation/group would like to be a part of the Big Green Week please let us know as soon as possible.

For further information please contact Polly on (01422) 842121.

A-Z of Recycling

As Britain continues to produce enough "rubbish" each day to fill Trafalgar Square to the top of Nelson's Column (now there's an idea for a Greenpeace stunt!) the need for reducing the amount of "waste" we produce by re-using and recycling as much as we can becomes ever more urgent.

K is for...

Kettles – apart from recycling all working kettles with Sitting Comfortably (01274 731909) and non-functioning metal kettles with Kerbside Community Recyclers (01422 881110) it is essential to use your kettle efficiently. Heating water is a big energy user so only boil the amount of water you need and keep your kettle fur-free (calcium carbonate

often clogs up kettles in hard water areas and causes less efficient boiling! It can be removed by overnight soaking with white vinegar!).

Keys – all unwanted keys (except those from your piano, organ or computer) can be put with your metals for collection by Kerbside.

Kitchen utensils – Unwanted and damaged metal pots and pans can all be easily recycled. Many kitchen utensils will have their lives prolonged by careful cleaning and polishing and non-serrated knives can always be easily sharpened. The most energy-efficient kitchen utensils are those powered by hand so always choose manual can openers and carving knives. Using glass and ceramic baking dishes also reduces the cooking temperatures (and therefore energy consumption!) for all dishes by up to 25°F.

Kitchen waste – Vegetable peelings, tea bags, and other food scraps are excellent additions to the compost heap and would otherwise take up a huge space in the average dustbin. By

adding ripped up kitchen roll holders and other small scraps of screwed up paper too we can improve the composting process for kitchen waste.

Kitsch – If you've got the space, keep everything you would otherwise consider throwing away due to its pretentious or inferior nature. Chances are that it will form the basis of the next fad or youth craze.

Knitwear – Old woollen clothing can be recycled via second-hand shops if it is still in good condition or through the local Kerbside service. Because processing wool often uses large amounts of water and chemical treatments its re-use substantially reduces the amount of energy used and pollution caused by its original manufacture.

Key Contacts:

- Kerbside Tel. 881110
- Calderdale Council Recycling Officer Tel. 392385

GREEN ROOM 101:TALKING TURKEY

Steve Hutton. puts the case for banishing the "traditional" Christmas meal for ever

What better way to mark the supposed season of peace and goodwill than by taking a bird, cutting off its head and feet, roasting its body in the oven for hours and then sitting down to complain about "bloody turkey again!" At Christmas it would be the ideal opportunity to show some goodwill to other creatures but many of us continue to celebrate whilst contributing to the killing of 11 million turkeys every year!

This so-called British "tradition" only became widespread in the 1950's when factory-farming techniques became more widespread and nowadays almost all turkeys in Britain are intensively reared. Day old chicks are placed in large windowless sheds, or barns, often with up to 25,000 other birds crammed in around them.

As they grow the birds can hardly move and the floor becomes putrid and stinks of excreta, the poor turkeys are often in agony from burns and ulcers on the feet and breasts.

Farmed birds are only ever given pellets of the same unnaturally high protein feed, day in, day out. A boring, never changing diet causes frustration and stress to all farm animals. Turkeys are forced to grow quickly in order to have an unnaturally large breast size, resulting in severe pain for the birds as their heart and legs cannot withstand this abnormally rapid growth. About two million birds a year die from heart attacks before they reach slaughter weight.

Turkeys are not prone to cannibalism in the wild but in overcrowded, filthy and boring con-

ditions they are likely to peck at each other relentlessly. But instead of changing the conditions to stop this, some of the birds are de-beaked with a red-hot blade at 5 days old.

At between 12 to 26 weeks of their pathetic lives the end comes for the turkeys with the vast majority of them destined to become the "traditional" Christmas type of dinner. Those worn out from constant breeding are made into processed meats, such as turkey "ham" or "sausages".

Season of goodwill? Think I'll stick to being vegan.

To comment on this nomination, read previous suggestions or submit your own Green Room 101 nomination visit www.alternativetechnology.org.uk/101/

BEYOND THE VALLEY positive news stories from outside the Calder Valley.

MORE WINDS OF CHANGE

Within the last fortnight the government has earmarked vast areas of shallow sea around the coast of the UK for the expansion of wind power. If every site was used it would provide enough power for the whole country three times over! The devolved Scottish and Welsh assemblies could also designate further areas.

This government action comes before its energy review is complete and shows that ministers seem to have accepted that the case for the wind industry is overwhelming. Big offshore windfarms are able to produce electricity at a price competitive with modern, yet unsustainable, gas turbine stations.

ARE YOU LISTENING CALDERDALE?

Merton Borough Council in south west London has recently adopted a forward-thinking policy to ensure that all would-be property developers include renewable energy generating equipment into the design of all new factories, offices and warehouses larger than 1,000 square metres. Councillors expect "photovoltaic panels, solar water heaters or other renewable energy producing equipment" to be installed and deliver at least 10% of the occupants energy needs, thereby not only cutting fuel bills but also helping to reduce the pace of global warming. London Mayor Ken Livingstone has included a similar proposal in his draft Plan for London.

TOURISTS LOVE WINDMILLS TOO!

A recent survey carried out by MORI Scotland has discovered that the presence of windfarms in areas of outstanding natural beauty makes no difference to the enjoyment of most tourists' holidays, and even encourages some tourists to visit a locality. Twice as many tourists said that they would return to an area because of the presence of a windfarm than those that would stay away. This poll supports the results of another survey carried out by the Scottish Executive of residents who live near to windfarms, whose opinion became more positive after the turbines actually became operational.



John Morrison
A Sideways Look

Rambling on!

The Right to Roam legislation is making some farmers and landowners a bit twitchy. To hear them talk you'd imagine that hordes of rambling ramblers were planning to lay waste to their land in a frenzied re-run of the Harrying of the North. It's mildly intriguing to hear from certain quarters that you (yes, mild-mannered you...) are a member of a group that is doing untold damage to the countryside.

Landowners are trying to update the Country Code. They're taking out the deadwood, all that guff about shutting gates and taking litter home, and thus reducing the code to this simple, easily remembered injunction...

- 1: Is your visit to our land really necessary?
- 2: It's not, is it?
- 3: So bugger off smartish, before I set the dogs on you.

But of all the problems that hill farmers face (and that's a hell of a lot right now), woolly-hatted ramblers would seem to be among the more benign. There are, after all, comparatively few walkers who want to stride out across the moor-tops, where paths are few. The landowners' fears, that those empty upland acres will be over-run with walkers, are largely unfounded.

The Right to Roam is not a pressing issue for the majority of walkers. They are happy to do some undemanding ramble featured in a slim volume entitled 'Twenty Five More South Pennine Walks From Pubs With Warm Beer, Vegetarian Food and a Relaxed Dress Code'. Carrying an open book as they walk, they look like strolling Shakespearean players rehearsing a soliloquy. Attached to their cars by an invisible umbilical cord, and unable to read a map, their greatest fear is getting lost.

It's good to escape the crowds and the

Tarmacadam tourniquets that strangle our cities. Walking in the countryside is good for us in ways we are only beginning to understand. At those times when our little island seems unbearably crowded, a view from the breezy tops can provide some much-needed perspective.

People sometime talk as though our countryside was already beyond redemption. "It's doomed... doomed", as that wild-eyed Scottish loon used to say in Dad's Army. The hedgerows are disappearing, we hear, and greedy developers keep bulldozing ancient woodlands, just so they can build another accursed out-of-town shopping complex. And, God knows, there are a lot of people who seem to dedicate themselves to leaving the countryside more battered and bruised than when they found it. It's easy to get depressed.

So we need to see the bigger picture once in a while. To stand on a hilltop, drink in the view and reassure ourselves that this little island isn't irredeemably knackered after all. I'm not suggesting we should become complacent... but just acknowledge that we have some wonderfully diverse landscapes. They haven't all disappeared. We still have so much to celebrate. And the best protection for our treasured landscapes is for as many people as possible to love them and visit them.

Readers will be saddened to learn that this is John's last piece for the Green Page. Though John is impossible to replace, we are organising a competition to find someone who can write a regular piece to fill this slot - no financial reward but the opportunity to achieve local fame and be recognised in the Co-op.

Please contact the ATC for details.