

April 2007

This bi-monthly newsletter is for you. Let me know what type of information you would like to see. I invite everyone to submit an environmental related article or blurb that would be of interest to PLT educators and supporters.

Thank you for all your support,
Jennifer Seitz
Florida PLT Coordinator

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1. PLT News

Florida Teacher Named National Outstanding Educator by National PLT

Project Learning Tree is proud to announce that Michelle Hunter of Crawfordville is one of five 2007 National Outstanding Educators of the Year. Michelle is a fourth grade teacher at Shadeville Elementary. She will be honored at PLT's 21st International Coordinators' Conference, May 7-11, in Wichita, KS.

Congratulations Michelle!

Florida PLT Awards- Nominations Open

Here's your chance to recognize an individual or organization for their efforts in promoting and enhancing environmental education. Nominate an educator, PLT facilitator, or business partner of the year for the Annual Florida PLT Awards.

-Nominate an educator that incorporates PLT activities into the classroom or their programs and encourages the use of PLT activities by their colleagues.

-Nominate a facilitator that has energized you to bring the environment into the classroom by using PLT.

-Nominate an organization or business that has supported your efforts of using PLT in your school, center, or programs.

Additional criteria for each award are listed on the nomination forms that can be downloaded from the PLT web site (http://sfrc.ufl.edu/plt/facilitators/awards_and_nominations.html).

Deadline for all nominations: May 5.

2. Upcoming PLT Events and Workshops

*May 5: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at the Orlando Science Center (Orlando). Registration details coming soon. Check the Calendar of Events for further details.

*May 31: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Weedon Island Preserve (St. Petersburg). Contact Grant at gcraig@co.pinellas.fl.us for information.

*June 6: Energy & Society 3-8 Educator in Nassau County (Yulee). Contact Jenny at jacohen@ufl.edu for registration information.

*June 8: PLT and WILD PreK-8 Educator Workshop (Orange Springs). Visit the Calendar of Events on the web site for ways to register.

*June 15: Urban Forest Workshop at Nature's Classroom (Thonotosassa). Registration details coming soon.

*July 27: WET, WILD and Woodsy at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens (Jacksonville). Registration details coming soon. Check the Calendar of Events for further details.

*September 22: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Austin Cary Memorial Forest (Gainesville). Contact Joe at ufplt@ufl.edu to register.

For more information about these and other events, please see the Calendar of Events on our [web site](#).

3. Conferences/Events/Workshops

EE Week 2007 to Focus on Energy Theme ~ April 15–22

Participate in EE Week and enhance the educational impact of Earth Day. Sign-up online and visit the Web site for:

-A full week's worth of online environmental education preparation, curricula, and activities for K-12 classrooms, universities, nature centers, zoos, museums, and aquariums;

-Monthly e-newsletter updates that highlight the latest EE curricula, programs, and funding opportunities;

-The chance to apply for the Richard C. Bartlett Award for Environmental Education, which will recognize outstanding environmental education programs in both formal and non-formal settings with grants awarded to the winning organizations.

<http://www.eeweek.org>

Sixth Annual Butterfly Festival in Duval County ~ April 28

Tree Hill Nature Center will host its sixth annual Butterfly Festival from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 28, 2007. The event will feature a mass butterfly release, live music, environmental booths, vendor booths, craft booths, food, kids' games, activities, and nature.

More than 4,000 butterfly enthusiasts will attend this year's fundraising event from the surrounding area. <http://www.treehill.org/>

4. Grants/Contests/Awards

Greenworks! Grants

This service-learning grant program "GreenWorks!" from Project Learning Tree® (PLT) will help fund neighborhood environmental improvement projects that partner PLT educators and their students with local businesses or community organizations. Grants up to \$5,000 are available. Contact PLT Central for assistance in putting together your grant (jacohen@ufl.edu or 352.846.2329). Application deadline is April 30, 2007.
http://www.plt.org/cms/pages/21_22_18.html

2007 Brower Youth Awards

A program of the Earth Island Institute, the annual Brower Youth Award recognizes six young people (ages 13-22) for their outstanding activism and achievements in the fields of environmental and social justice advocacy. Each of six recipients will be awarded a \$3000 cash prize, a trip to California for the award ceremony and camping trip, and ongoing access to resources and opportunities to further their work at Earth Island. Deadline: May 15, 2007
<http://www.broweryouthawards.org/article.php?list=type&type=12>

Earth Day Photo Contest for Students

During the week of Earth Day (April 22 through April 29), U.S. students in grades 5-8 can participate in this Institute for Global Environmental Studies (IGES) photo contest by taking a photograph of something that is changing in their local environment and submitting the photo and a (400 words or less) scientific explanation. IGES will award the top three winners cash prizes (\$100, \$75, and \$50). The top 10 winners will receive their photograph in a special frame commemorating Earth Day 2007 and the top 50 will be published on the IGES Web site. Deadline: May 9, 2007
<http://www.strategies.org/EarthDayPhoto>

National Weather Association Sol Hirsch Education Fund

The fund provides \$500 grants annually for teachers in grades K-12 to improve the education of their students in Meteorology. Teachers, program directors, school district supervisors and other individuals or groups proposing to improve the education of K-12 students in meteorology may submit an application. Visit <http://www.grantsalert.com/grants.cfm?id=4&gid=4035> for information.

2007 Hooked on Hydroponics Awards

Classroom hydroponics offers eager students loads of opportunities to explore concepts across the curriculum, from biology to economics. Our generous sponsors are giving more schools the opportunity to enjoy these benefits by doubling the number of award packages for 2007 to 24! Winning programs receive a compact hydroponics package that includes everything required to grow plants successfully indoors. Deadline: September 30, 2007
<http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants/2007-hoh-landing.asp>

Healthy Sprouts Awards

NGA, sponsored by Gardener's Supply, offers these awards to encourage the growth of health-focused youth gardens that teach about nutrition and the issue of hunger in the United States. Twenty grants will be awarded: The top 5 programs each receive a certificate valued at \$500; 15 more will each receive a \$200 gift certificate. Winners will also receive curriculum materials, seeds, and membership benefits from NGA. Deadline: October 15

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/healthysprouts.asp>

5. Connecting PLT to the Classroom

New Biodiversity Online Secondary Module

Exploring Environmental Issues: Biodiversity is a new addition to the PLT collection that uses biodiversity as a window through which secondary students investigate the environment. Educators and students get a broader view of concepts and larger connections - not just biological, but political, cultural, ethical, and economic as well. Educators are permitted to use any of the online materials on the PLT Web site.

http://www.plt.org/cms/pages/36_124_120.html

6. Resources

Environmental Website for Kids

This interactive website offers a range of educational activities, including individual and group project ideas; and numerous links to related resources. Children in grades preK-4 may also join the Kids Club for free, which fosters interest in the environment and guides students in doing environmental projects. www.epa.gov/kids

Topographic Map Integration into the Classroom with USGS

The U.S. Geological Survey has published more than 57,000 topographic maps covering different scales, settlements, and types of landscapes. Teachers can use the ideas in the online guide to integrate maps into their science, environmental studies, and mathematics curricula.

http://education.usgs.gov/common/lessons/teaching_with_topographic_maps.html

The Journey of Wayne Drop to the Everglades

One way to teach about the Everglades in the classroom. Materials can be downloaded from the website and are available in English, Spanish and Creole.

http://www.evergladesplan.org/education/educ_resources.aspx

Secrets of the Sequence Videos Series

The Center for Life Sciences Education at Virginia Commonwealth University presents The Secrets of the Sequence Video Series for teachers to incorporate advances in the life sciences into their classrooms. Each of the 50 short (8-10 minute) videos comes with a lesson plan and activities.

<http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/secretsofthesequence>

Federal Organizations Use Web to Attract Girls to Science

That site, www.iwaswondering.org, is sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, a congressionally chartered research organization in Washington, and the people behind it hope to inspire female students to stay interested enough in science to consider choosing it as a career.

Another of the national academies with a similar mission of targeting girls is also using the Internet: The National Academy of Engineering sponsors its own site, www.engineergirl.org.

Reducing the Risk of Introducing or Spreading Nonindigenous Plants, Animals, and Microorganisms Through Science and Engineering Fair Projects

This informational packet describes the risk that scientific study of organisms in biological or ecological sciences may lead to introduction of non-indigenous organisms outside their native or existing ranges, and encourages participants in science and engineering fair projects to explicitly manage this risk.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FA126>

Invasive Species Curriculum

Management agencies agree that success in dealing with invasive species relies on education and outreach. This 156-page Invasive Species Curriculum helps fill this need by providing important information about invasive species through a dozen classroom activities, glossary, list of web sites and supporting materials designed for middle school use. Each activity addresses specific Sunshine State Standards and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) benchmarks for grades 6-8. Individual activities are available as separate documents through the links provided with their descriptions. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FA131>

State of the Ocean's Animals

Premiers March 28th, 2007 at 8pm on PBS

Nearly half the world's marine animals may face extinction over the next twenty-five years. Global warming, over-fishing, and habitat destruction are emptying the world's oceans. Join host Matt Damon as "State of the Ocean's Animals" takes a hard look at the future of our watery natural world: the beauty, the incredible animals, and the dangers that threaten them. For information on this episode and past episodes visit

<http://www.pbs.org/journeytoplanetearth/education/index.html>

Composting as a Topic for High School Science Investigation

This web site includes detailed information on compost science and engineering, as well as articles about weird and unusual composting, frequently asked questions, a composting quiz, and bulletin boards for posting messages to other teachers or students. Chapters from the book can be downloaded. <http://www.cfe.cornell.edu/compost/schools.html>

7. Interesting Tree Fact #17

This edition of interesting tree facts brings o you an assortment of tree trivia.

Willows: There are 80 kinds of American willows. At least one kind grows in each of the 50 states.

Maples: Maple leaves can be up to a foot long and wide.

Oaks: Oak trees are divided into two groups, white and black. Native Americans ground white oak nut into flour but not black oaks nuts because they were too bitter.

Based on your outreach programs or classroom curricula, think about how you may incorporate interesting tree facts into them. Would students expand upon the fact and do research followed by a writing assignment? Would you sprinkle tidbits in during a nature hike?

Information taken from: Burns, L. 1999. *Trees, Leaves and Bark*. Minnetonka, MN: NorthWord Press.

Items are from the Kids Gardening web site, SIFT listserv, NAAEE listserv, NSTA Reports, National PLT notices, and a variety of education focused newsletters.