

# Spotlight on Sustainability

Introducing...

Your Green Team



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## Backyard bugs like plants from home

We all know that plants make our environment healthier. They supply clean air, fresh food, and beautiful gardens. But with such a wide variety of plants from which to choose, what plant is the right plant? Does it matter whether it is native to our environment or alien? A plant is a plant, right?

This week I went to Dr. Nina Zitani for the answer. Nina advocates for conservation through education, curating the Zoological Collections, and running several blogs. She also just returned from teaching a field course in Ecuador on biodiversity in the neotropical rainforest. She says that the number one cause of biodiversity decline worldwide is habitat loss, and the best way to combat this is by planting native species. Native insects prefer native plants, and more insects means an abundance of food for birds. Planting native essentially creates a food web in our backyard as opposed to the typical lawn filled with alien plants. By choosing to plant native we can all work to increase biodiversity!



Red milkweed beetle (*Tetraopes tetraphthalmus*) on common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) in Dr. Zitani's native plant garden in London.

Photo courtesy of Nina Zitani

Eliminate up to 0.4 tonnes of carbon from your footprint by purchasing local, unpackaged foods. This is equivalent to driving 2500 km in a compact sedan!



Consider purchasing your goods from a farmers' market, like the one here on campus.

## Bigger hoods, bigger savings

This *Spotlight on Sustainability* is highlighting Chemistry's contribution to the development of an ecofriendly work and learning place.

Efforts began last summer with the "Shut the Sash" campaign, following some needed renovations. Old hoods were replaced by new ones, and in just 8 months the department saved \$50,000 in energy costs or 400,000 kWh which is equivalent to the annual consumption of 14 homes.



Congratulations, Chemistry!

