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Spring Guide 2015

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

The Sibley Shopper

March 29, 2015

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PaintCare, Inc.

PaintCare, Inc., is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established to represent paint manufacturers (paint producers) to plan and operate paint stewardship programs in the United States in those states that pass paint stewardship laws.

PaintCare was created by the American Coatings Association (ACA), a membership-based trade association of the paint manufacturing industry. Working with state and local government stakeholders, ACA passed the first paint stewardship law in the United States in Oregon in 2009. This legislation resulted in a pilot program for an industry-led program to manage postconsumer (leftover) paint.

Since then, seven more states have passed paint stewardship laws similar to the one in Oregon, and the program in Oregon is no longer a pilot program; legislation passed in 2013 made the Oregon pilot program a permanent one.

PaintCare has programs in California, Connecticut, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Vermont, and is planning programs for Colorado and Maine. We expect similar legislation to be introduced in several other states in the next few years.

Prior to PaintCare, the best options for residents to recycle or dispose of unwanted paint were government-run

household hazardous waste (HHW) facilities and special one-day "round-up" events with limited days, hours and locations. In states with PaintCare, many new paint drop-off locations are established. Most PaintCare locations are at paint retailers who volunteer to take back paint. These retailers take back paint during regular business hours making paint recycling and disposal much more convenient for the public.

In parts of the United States where PaintCare has programs and where people were previously instructed to dry out old latex paint and put it in the trash, we now encourage people to take it to a PaintCare drop-off site so we can sort it and recycle it. Post-consumer paint can be collected for reuse, recycling, energy recovery, or safe disposal, but doing so requires public awareness and a convenient

and effective infrastructure that exceeds local government budgets and capacity in many parts of the country.

The paint manufacturing industry supported the laws passed in these eight states and will support additional legislation because these laws enable the paint industry to implement a collection program by providing a level playing field among manufacturers and retailers. These laws also provide a sustainable financing

system and an anti-trust exemption for activities required to run a successful program.

The program is funded through fees on each container of

architectural paint sold in states with paint stewardship programs. Budgets and fees are set on a state-by-state basis. So far, these fees have been the same in each state with a program: 35 cents, 75 cents or \$1.60 per container, depending on the container size.

American Coatings Association

The American Coatings Association (ACA) is a non-profit industry trade association advancing the needs of the paint and coatings industry through advocacy and programs that support environmental protection, product stewardship, health, safety, and the advancement of science and technology.

Product Stewardship Institute

The Product Stewardship Institute, Inc. (PSI) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the health and environmental impacts of consumer products. Founded in 2000, PSI brings together key stakeholders with varying interests to develop product end-of-life solutions in a collaborative manner, with a focus on having manufacturers assume primary financial and managerial responsibility. With a robust membership base of 47 state governments and 250 local governments, as well as partnerships with over 90 companies, organizations, and non-U.S. governments, PSI advances both voluntary programs and legislation to promote industry-led product stewardship initiatives.



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The many ways buying locally grown foods pays dividends

Metro Creative Connection

The popularity of organic foods and stores that cater to customers who prefer such foods continues to grow, and that growth has contributed to a growing awareness among shoppers of where the food they eat comes from. Many consumers now recognize the impact that food production has on the environment, and that recognition has spurred interest in locally grown foods.

Locally grown foods are those that are grown within your community or a community nearby. Such foods do not need to be shipped hundreds of miles before they ultimately find their way onto your plate, and many people find that contributes to meals that are more fresh than meals made up of foods shipped from afar. But freshness is not the only benefit to purchasing locally grown foods, which pay various dividends for people and the planet.



• **Locally grown foods benefit the environment.** The phrase "field to plate" is significant to consumers who prefer locally grown foods. That phrase refers to the distance food travels from the grower to the plate on your dinner table. Estimates vary depending on the source, but advocates of locally grown food suggest that it reduces the field-to-plate distance by an average of 1,300 miles. That's a significant feather in locally grown foods' cap, as the Council on the Environment of New York City notes that it takes 435 fossil-fuel calories to fly a single five-calorie strawberry from California to New York. Buying locally preserves that energy that is used to transport foods from afar.

• **Locally grown foods fuel your local economy.** In addition to benefitting the environment, locally grown foods stimulate your local economy. Local, independent farmers have largely fallen by the wayside in the 21st century, as industrial agribusinesses have taken over the produce sections in grocery stores across the country. But local, independent farmers are making a comeback, thanks in large part to consumer demand for organic foods. Supporting such farmers who grow their foods locally means you're putting money back into your own community, a worthwhile effort at a time when so many small communities are struggling economically.

• **Buying locally grown foods contributes to biodiversity.** According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, more than 75 percent of agricultural genetic diversity was lost in the 20th century. That's thanks in large part to industrial agribusinesses that cultivate fruits and vegetables that are bred for fast maturation. But small, local farms typically grow a wider variety of fruits and vegetables in an effort to extend their growing seasons. That means consumers of locally grown foods have access to more fruits and vegetables, and therefore more flavor.

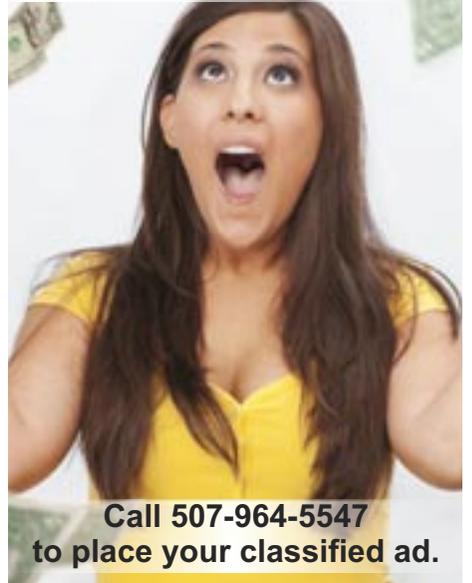
• **Buying locally maintains beautiful landscapes.** Farmland has been on the decline for decades, as cement and asphalt have made millions of acres of once beautiful farmland disappear. Buying locally helps to maintain the green space your community and surrounding communities have left. That makes for

great road trips and even helps to sustain local wildlife populations.

• **Locally grown foods can be more nutritious.** Fruits and vegetables can rapidly lose nutrients once they are harvested. That's problematic when buying such foods from industrial agribusinesses that need substantial time to get their products from the farm to the shelves at your local grocery chain. But buying from local farmers increases the likelihood that the fruits and vegetables you purchase were just picked and therefore have yet to lose a significant amount of nutrients.

Locally grown foods are growing in popularity, and that popularity can be traced to the freshness of such foods as well as the numerous additional benefits that locally grown foods provide.

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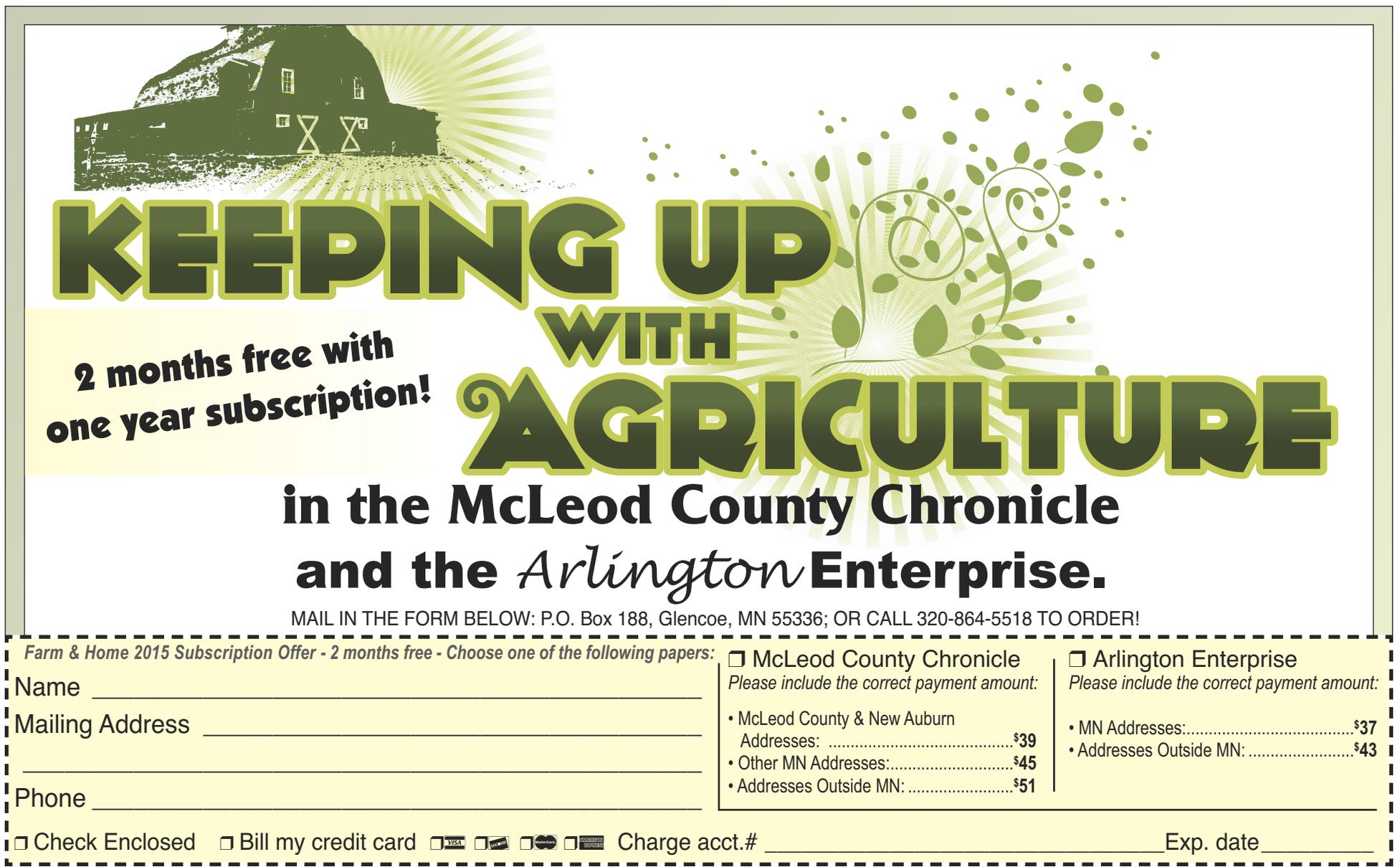
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Sibley County Extension

Who are Master Gardeners?

Master Gardeners are from all walks of life and volunteer on behalf of their university. They are eager to share best practices in gardening with people in their community that promote healthy landscapes, healthy foods, and healthy lives. They have completed a university-taught core course and contributed a certain number of hours to teaching research-based horticulture practices in their communities.

Important dates and deadlines

- Jan. 1 - Dec. 31: Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program year
- Oct. 1: Deadline for application to local/county program
- Tuesday before Thanksgiving: Deadline for submission of background check data
- Dec. 1: Deadline for EMG Core Course registration

Steps to becoming an Extension Master Gardener

1. Be selected by your local county program for a Master Gardener internship

- Contact your local county program and request an internship application packet.
- Complete and submit the application. Applications are due by Oct. 1.
- Be selected for an interview.
- Submit and pass a background check

(online).

- Receive notification that background check has cleared, then register for core course and pay the class fee of \$275 (includes materials). Registration is due by Dec. 1.

2. Complete the Extension Master Gardener core course

- 48 hours home horticulture education, offered annually, January – April.
 - Face-to-face and online options for general content delivery. All students must complete online quizzes for each topic module.
 - REQUIRED: Active email address and reliable Internet access.
 - Taught by Extension educators and faculty on the St. Paul campus (even years) or U of M Landscape Arboretum (odd years).
 - Topics: Extension & the Master Gardener program, critical thinking and navigating culture, soils, entomology, botany, diagnostics, trees & shrubs, herbaceous plants, lawn care, plant pathology, weeds, wildlife, integrated pest management, vegetables, fruits.
- #### 3. Share your knowledge: volunteer 50 hours
- Volunteer on projects and events that deliver horticulture education and information to the public.
 - Volunteer – and learn! - alongside experienced EMG volunteers.



- Report your volunteer hours online by Dec. 31.
 - Individuals who drop out of the internship before fulfilling the educational and volunteering requirements will be required to pay an additional \$300.
- #### 4. Celebrate!
- When your internship is completed, you'll start the next calendar year as an active University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener in your community.
- #### 5. Stay involved
- To maintain your active Extension Master Gardener volunteer status, you will complete at least 25 hours of volunteer time and the required continuing education hours per year. Continuing education hours vary from 5 – 12 hours depending on county.
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Amendments can help produce healthy soil

Metro Creative Connection

Mother Nature provides plenty to grow healthy lawns, gardens and landscapes. But as many homeowners know, some lawns sometimes need a little extra boost to complement nature. Soil sometimes must be amended so plants can thrive. Only after the right composition is created can plants take root and perform to the best of their abilities.

The Colorado State University Extension defines a soil amendment as any material added to soil to improve its physical properties. The goal is to provide a better environment for roots. Depending on what you are starting with, any number of ingredients must be added to the soil recipe. Water retention, permeability, drainage, aeration, nutrients, and water infiltration are some of the things amendments can improve when added to soil.

Before homeowners add anything to the soil in their yards, it is first important to determine what that soil needs. Homeowners may notice if soil is overly sandy or full of clay, but further testing can confirm what the soil is lacking. Soil tests are often available through local cooperative extension offices or private laboratories. Speak with a nursery or garden center about where you can get your soil tested. A comprehensive test may cost between \$5 and \$10 and can provide invaluable information that saves you hundreds of dollars in wasted plants and materials, not to mention effort. Some labs also can tailor their recommendations based on the type

of planting you will be doing. For example, a vegetable garden may need different amendments than a row of azalea bushes.

Organic matter is a preferred soil amendment used by professional and novice gardeners alike. The decaying remains of plants release nutrients that are absorbed into the soil and used by microorganisms and bacteria, creating a healthy environment for plants. Organic material may break up compacted soil to increase drainage. In sandy soil, organic material serves as a sponge to keep water from washing away. Compost and manure are two examples of frequently used organic materials. Both of these materials are readily available at little cost.

Compost can be produced at

home from food and plant scraps. Raked leaves and small amounts of grass clippings can be added to compost. Over time, the decomposition process will turn scraps into a nutrient-rich, dark brown substance that provides many plants with all they need to thrive. Compost is particularly useful in vegetable gardens.

Manure should come from herbivores, or those animals that sustain themselves on grass and other plants. Carnivores can produce harmful bacteria in their waste, which is not safe to use in gardens, particularly food-bearing gardens. Manure can be commercially purchased, or avid gardeners can work out arrangements with nearby livestock owners and farms. These people may be more than willing to give you manure for little to no cost if you cart it away. Dried manure is preferred because it will

have minimal odor.

Additional forms of organic amendments include wood ash, sphagnum peat, wood chips, sawdust, and worm droppings.

Inorganic amendments also may be used, and are usually relied on to improve water retention and drainage. Vermiculite, perlite, pea gravel, and sand are examples of inorganic amendments. A combination of organic and inorganic amendments can create the perfect mix for your needs.

Soil amendments typically are added to new and unplanted beds. Peat moss and shredded bark take years to decompose and will serve as long-term amendments in the soil. Compost breaks down quickly and may need to be worked in more frequently.

Experts recommend spreading amendments on the planting bed and then using a rake or tiller to work it in to a depth of about nine inches. Particularly sandy soil or soil with a lot of clay may need more amendments.

Permanent plants, such as trees or shrubs, also can benefit from the extra nutrient boost amendments provide. Sometimes it is sufficient to spread the material over the soil surface and let rainwater and wildlife help distribute it to the plant roots. Otherwise, work it into the top inch or two of the dirt with a hand cultivator.

Soil amendments can be the difference between a thriving garden and healthy landscape and one that has seen better days.



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