



## LIFE/TRAVEL

### Home/Gardening

# A fun, and cheap way to celebrate Earth Day

Cavort with butterflies, meet the Worm Lady and rally for Planet Earth

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By CONNIE DUFNER / Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

Be green without having to spend it, at Sunday's Oak Cliff Earth Day community festival.

The six-hour event at Lake Cliff Park is a celebration of the depth and variety of nonprofit organizations, government offices, gardening clubs and earth-conscious businesses all contributing to the evolving green lifestyle.

Earth Day and Oak Cliff just seem to go together, says Van Johnson, organizer of the event.

"We're on the crunchy side anyway here, more environmentally conscious," says Mr. Johnson, a vice president for a mortgage company, who was attracted to Oak Cliff because it reminded him of his native Pennsylvania.

Mr. Johnson, who helped organize a community event four years ago celebrating the centennial of Oak Cliff's annexation to Dallas, reflected on the continually new message of Earth Day, even 37 years after its beginnings as a nationwide environmental teach-in.

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NATALIE CAUDILL/DMN  
**Tony Delia**, known among schoolchildren as the Butterfly Guy, will share the wonder of the insect in all its life stages at Oak Cliff's Earth Day celebration.

Everything that makes us modern people, he says, begins with the Earth. "We are the most advanced, sophisticated economy in the world, and it's based on natural resources. I think that tends to be forgotten, especially if you have a white-collar job," he says.

He's looking forward to the array of green- lifestylers who will participate in the festival, which he hopes will become an annual event.

### Also Online

[Earthfest: Downtown Dallas festival on Friday](#)

[More events](#)

It's a place where the tree huggers will be at home with the hybrid autos, and the Cliffies can show off their pretty corner of the city. Throw in some artists and gardeners, and you've got the beginnings of a fun day, and one with a stronger message than most about taking care of the planet.

*Connie Dufner is a Dallas freelance writer.*

### Flights of fancy

Imagine an eco-friendly version of a bounce house but a whole lot prettier: Tony Delia's portable butterfly gazebo will be available for kids and adults alike at Oak Cliff Earth Day.

Just step into the 10-foot-by-10-foot screened gazebo and experience the wonder of butterflies in flight. Try to catch a photo of a loved one with a butterfly alighting on his shoulder, or on her hand.

Mr. Delia, known as the Butterfly Guy, is a manicurist by trade who raises butterflies and creates butterfly gardens as his avocation. He volunteers at schools throughout the city and never tires of talking about the winged insect's life stages.

In addition to the gazebo, he'll have a table showing caterpillars and pupae. Plus, he'll sell his unusual and clever gifts of live chrysalises in decorative containers.

It's a monarch chrysalis on a stick, wrapped in cellophane and nestled in a flowerpot.

"When they first emerge, they are pretty tame, and because you're the first thing they see, they're not afraid of you," he says. The arrangements are available at four local shops, on Mr. Delia's Web site and at Oak Cliff Earth Day. (Do we see a Mother's Day gift being checked off the list?)

[www.butterflyguy.org](http://www.butterflyguy.org)

### Love those trees

An Earth Day celebration is not complete without the trees. Members of several groups, including the Dallas Historic Tree Coalition, the Dallas Parks Department, the Texas Trees Foundation and the Urban Forest Advisory Committee, will answer questions.

Steve Houser, chair of the Urban Forest Advisory Committee, which advises the city of Dallas on trees and urban forest issues (including diagnosis of disease), says two initiatives are getting under way in conjunction with Earth Day.

The first is a donation program to support planting trees in Dallas.

"Dallas is the seventh-largest city in the country and there has not been a citywide effort to plant trees," says Mr. Houser, owner of Arboriological Services.

In addition, interested people can now receive up to 40 hours of training in a citizen foresters program, in exchange for 80 hours of volunteer time.

[www.dallastrees.org](http://www.dallastrees.org)

### Wiggle room

Vicki Sullivan didn't plan on becoming a worm farmer. She wanted to learn to compost, but after taking a class, she decided that building a compost pile was too much of a hassle.

She had gotten the environmental message that we have to stop filling our landfills with organic matter. And the part of the compost class on worms intrigued her.

Last September, Grand Prairie's Worm Farm was born. Ms. Sullivan has created the "farm" in her garage with an old bathtub and an old freezer.

Even though she has found a composting method that works for her, she says it does take a special knack.

"I had to try two or three times. I kept killing the worms."

Now she's got the hang of it and can help you, too. In fact, she has such rich earth that she's decided to take up gardening.

Ms. Sullivan will be showing how the worm bins work, as well as selling worms, bins, castings and gardening books. She also will demonstrate and sell rain barrels.

[grandprairieswormfarm.googlepages.com](http://grandprairieswormfarm.googlepages.com)

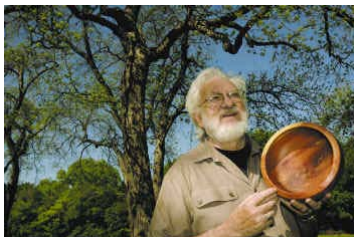
For gardeners only

If you can tear yourselves away from the garden, you'll find other dirty-fingernails compatriots. Several garden clubs are signed up and expected to sell plants. Barry Campbell of the Rainbow Garden Club reports his group, for instance, will have aquatic duckweed, irises, wood ferns, coneflowers, palms and some bulbs for sale. Also participating are the Dallas Council of Garden Clubs, Native Plant Society of Texas and the Texas Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Association.

[rainbowgardenclub.com](http://rainbowgardenclub.com)

Art and soul

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Earth Day was a happy coincidence for the second annual Oak Cliff Artisans Tour and a natural one, too. The beauty of handmade items, each one different, is the highest form of homage to nature.

"The quality of life is not based on how much your house is worth, but being surrounded by things you like and are unique," says Alex Burton, a longtime KRLD radio personality who is now a wood-turner and who will be exhibiting his work. He said four artists will be in his front yard, displaying their works and visiting with tour participants. The tour will have 10 stops in

all.

Mr. Burton says he moved to Oak Cliff in 1967 and bought a home on Kessler Parkway. Friends told him it was a bad idea, but he stuck it out. "Consequently I watched real estate prices go sky high," he says. He wants the tour and Earth Day celebrations to focus some spotlight on the part of town he loves.

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"It's all about Oak Cliff and the art."

The Oak Cliff Artisans group is a cooperative formed to promote members' work. The spring show is a studio tour; a fall show is held the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Artists will man a booth at the Earth Day festival.

[www.oakcliffartisans.com](http://www.oakcliffartisans.com)

Clean and green

So, you recycle, drive a hybrid and have a compost pile. But have you checked your cleaning products lately? For many people, using organic, biodegradable cleaning products is a part of their green-living checklist.

Daleen Maxwell, independent distributor for Shaklee wellness merchandise, will be demonstrating the company's line of nontoxic cleaning products. The concentrated formulas, she says, are more economical and contribute less packaging waste to landfills.

[www.shaklee.net](http://www.shaklee.net)

Motherhood, naturally

Phyllis Glover started her own mothers' group a year ago because she had the feeling she didn't fit into more mainstream groups. Hence the Oak Cliff Granola Moms group was born. Members meet for play groups and moms' nights out.

"In other groups, if a mom is still breastfeeding a 1-year-old, they might look at you funny. Or a mom who eats raw food – that kind of person would feel comfortable with us," she says.

The group is committed to nontraditional child rearing, and she is hoping to find other granola moms at Earth Day.

[groups.yahoo.com/group/oakcliffgranolamoms](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/oakcliffgranolamoms)

IF YOU GO

Oak Cliff Earth Day is 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday at Lake Cliff Park, (Zang and Colorado boulevards). The event and parking are free. Event organizers suggest that you consider the environmental message of the day and carpool or prepare to walk, as close-in parking could be limited.

[OakCliffEarthDay.com](http://OakCliffEarthDay.com)

## **MORE EARTH DAY EVENTS**

Opportunities to find out how to go green in our area.

- Oak Cliff Earth Day – Festival includes a garden expo, environmental awareness groups and renewable energy exhibits. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday. Lake Cliff Park, Colorado and Zang Blvds. Free. 214-941-0485. [www.oakcliffearthday.com](http://www.oakcliffearthday.com).

- Clean up Frisco – Ikea is partnering with the City of Frisco for the “Clean It and Green It” citywide cleanup. Volunteers are needed to pick up roadside trash. Also, residents may bring items to the “Chunk Your Junk” event at Ikea for disposal, recycling or donation, including Freon-free appliances, cellphones, computers and exercise equipment. Commercial paper shredding will be available, too.

Details: 8 a.m. to noon April 21. Call Jennifer Kimble at 972-292-5074 or email [jkimble@friscotexas.gov](mailto:jkimble@friscotexas.gov) to register for the cleanup. Volunteers will receive free lunch donated by Ikea and have a chance to win environmentally friendly raffle prizes. Ikea is at 7171 IKEA Drive, Frisco; 972-712-4532; [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com).

- Green Living Family Festival – More than 20 exhibitors offering information on recycling, reusing and conserving, including Goodwill to accept household donations and Cartridge World to recycle used printer cartridges. For the kids, lots of arts and crafts, an interactive presentation on energy conservations and guided tours of the museum. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary, FM 1378, 1 mile east of Highway 5 South, McKinney. Free with admission. 972-562-5566.

- Dedication at the Celebration Tree Grove – Take part in the dedication of this For the Love of the Lake project. Bring a lunch or take part in goodies provided as you enjoy two new trails with 31 new trees, a monument sign and bronze donor plaques. Also, visit with representatives from the City of Dallas Recycling Department, Electronic Waste Management and the Dallas Urban Forestry Council. 12:22 p.m. Sunday. 972-622-7283.