

# PLYMOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL EXTRA

## Plymouth recognized for chloride reduction in winter operations

When the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency identified Elm Creek, Bass Creek, Plymouth Creek, Bassett Creek and Parkers Lake as having a chloride impairment, the City of Plymouth set out to make some changes to help improve its water resources. For these efforts – and for reducing its chloride use by more than 50 percent – the city recently received an Environmental Leadership Award from the Freshwater Society and Fortin Consulting.

A main cause of chloride impairment in Minnesota water bodies is winter runoff, which typically contains large amounts of salt. According to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, the chloride in one teaspoon of road salt can pollute five gallons of water. While salt usage may be necessary for safety during the winter, too much chloride can disrupt aquatic environments and kill birds and plants.

In 2010, the City of Plymouth began implementing best management practices for its winter operations to reduce the amount of chloride entering its water resources.

While implementing change takes time, the city has significantly reduced its salt usage. During the 2009-2010 winter season, city staff averaged 188 tons of salt per snow event. During the 2016-2017 winter season, city staff averaged 81.25 tons of salt per snow event.

With four years of chloride monitoring data for Parkers Lake and Plymouth Creek, city staff has found that the practices implemented have had a positive impact on the water quality leading into these two bodies of water.

The city recently began using anti-icing units to pretreat all roads with speeds over 35 miles per hour. These units have allowed city staff to use half the amount of salt per lane mile.

To increase efficiency, the city purchased an automated brine maker. City staff was previously able to make about 4,000 gallons of brine per day, but the new system is able to produce approximately 5,000 gallons per hour.

Plymouth has also equipped all city plows with prewetting systems, which has led to a 30 percent decrease in salt use. The process is more efficient because the solution clings to the surface of the road, whereas dry salt granules may bounce off or be swept away by traffic.

Other ways the city has improved its winter maintenance operations include calibrating truck spreaders and anti-ice



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Interim Streets Manager Torrey Keith accepts the award on behalf of the City of Plymouth.

units twice annually, promptly sweeping spills, storing road salt in a covered building to prevent runoff, sending staff to chloride trainings and GPS tracking salt application rates.

### Help Put Plymouth on a Low-Salt Diet

While the city continues to improve its practices, residents can also help by using salt more efficiently.

MCWD recommends using no more than one pound of salt per 250 square feet (a typical parking space is about 150 square feet). One pound of salt fills a 12-ounce coffee mug. Using more salt does not melt ice faster – instead, excess salt washes away and becomes a pollutant. Other best practices tips include:

- Shovel regularly to minimize ice buildup.
- Sweep up salt that's visible on dry pavement for reuse.
- Break up ice with a scraper before deciding if salt or sand is necessary for traction.
- Keep in mind that salt won't work if the temperature is below 15 degrees – use a small amount of sand for traction instead.

## Residents asked to pull invasive garlic mustard

Plymouth city staff is asking residents to keep an eye out for the invasive garlic mustard plant – and help remove it.

The plant monopolizes light, moisture, nutrients, soil and space – and outcompetes many native plants that provide food and habitat for pollinators like butterflies and bees.

### Plant and Pull Day Set for May 19

Residents are asked to volunteer to help remove the invasive species during a citywide Plant and Pull Day set for Saturday, May 19. Participants may plant flowering annuals near city parks and facilities, as well as pull garlic mustard in woodland areas.

To volunteer for the event, call 763-509-5230 or email [volunteer@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:volunteer@plymouthmn.gov).

Garlic mustard is a biennial herb with stalked, triangular to heart-shaped, coarsely toothed leaves that give off an odor of garlic when crushed. Flowering plants are 2 to 3 1/2 feet tall and produce clusters of small white flowers, each with four petals.



Garlic mustard

The plant's entire root system must be removed to prevent new plants from sprouting.



Residents are encouraged to sign up for curbside organics recycling and use available tools to help reduce food waste.

## Some haulers offer organics recycling

In Hennepin County, more than 25 percent of trash by weight is comprised of organics – including food scraps and food-soiled paper products. Some waste haulers now offer curbside organics recycling in Plymouth, and, to help reduce waste, residents are encouraged to sign up.

Organics recycling is a great way to reduce trash, manage waste responsibly and conserve resources. It involves separately collecting food scraps, nonrecyclable paper and other compostable products to turn into compost.

### Help Reduce Food Waste

The best option is food waste reduction. It's more beneficial to the environment than recycling because it conserves resources such as the water, labor and fuel needed to grow, produce and distribute food.

According to Save the Food, a partnership between Ad Council and Natural Resources Defense Council, an average American family of four spends more than \$1,500 per year on food it doesn't eat. Across the food production and consumption chain, up to 40 percent of food in the United States never gets eaten.

For resources to help prevent waste – such as meal planners, storage tips and recipes – as well as haulers that offer organics recycling, visit [plymouthmn.gov/organics](http://plymouthmn.gov/organics).

### Defining Organics

#### All food

- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, fish and bones
- Dairy products
- Eggs and egg shells
- Pasta, beans and rice
- Bread and cereal
- Nuts and shells



#### Certified compostable products

- Compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils and containers (must be labeled BPI or Cedar Grove Compostable)



#### Food-soiled paper

- Pizza boxes from delivery
- Napkins and paper towels
- Paper egg cartons



#### Other compostable household items

- Coffee grounds and filters
- Hair and nail clippings
- Cotton balls, swabs with paper stems
- Houseplants and flowers
- Wooden items, such as chopsticks, popsicle sticks and toothpicks



The list may vary depending upon the hauler. Residents should contact their waste hauler for a list of accepted items.







Get rid of appliances, electronics, tires, bicycles and more at Drop-Off Day, set for Saturday, April 21.

## Drop-Off Day is April 21

Drop-Off Day is set for 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 21 at the Plymouth Maintenance Facility, 14900 23rd Ave. N. Plymouth residents only; bring identification. Drop-Off Day features two lines – one for recycling and donation items, and one for disposal items. Cost for the disposal line is \$20 per vehicle, per trip, while the recycle and donate line is free. Some vehicles may need to move through both lines. For details and a list of accepted items for each line, visit [plymouthmn.gov/dropoff](http://plymouthmn.gov/dropoff).

## Plymouth Recycling Guide

Residents are encouraged to recycle the following:

### Paper

- Mail, office and school papers
- Magazines and catalogs
- Newspapers and inserts
- Phone books
- Envelopes with window



### Boxes

- Cardboard (inside cart only)
- Cereal and cracker boxes
- Shoe boxes, gift boxes and electronic boxes
- Toothpaste, medication and other toiletry boxes

### Cartons

- Milk cartons
- Juice boxes
- Soup, broth and wine cartons



### Metal

Food and beverage cans



### Plastic

Please leave plastic lids on containers

### Bottles and Jugs

- Water, soda and juice bottles
- Milk and juice jugs
- Ketchup and salad dressing bottles
- Dishwashing liquid bottles and detergent jugs
- Shampoo, soap and lotion bottles



### Cups and Containers

- Up to 9 inches in diameter
- Yogurt, pudding and fruit cups
- Disposable cups and bowls
- Margarine, cottage cheese and other containers
- Produce, deli, take out and baby wipe containers

### Packaging

- Clear packaging from toys and electronics



### Glass

Food and beverage bottles and jars

### Do Not Recycle

Plastic bags or wrap, polystyrene, cords or holiday lights, garden hoses or edging, batteries, scrap metal, toys, frozen food containers, tissue paper, dry cleaner bags, light bulbs, electronics, hazardous waste, aerosol cans, microwavable food trays, paper soiled with food, paper cups and plates, paper towels, hardcover books, drinking glasses, window glass, dishes, hangers, mirrors and containers that held hazardous products. For more information, visit [plymouthmn.gov/recycling](http://plymouthmn.gov/recycling), call 763-509-5906 or email [recycling@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:recycling@plymouthmn.gov).

# City sells low-cost trees, shrubs

Plymouth's annual low-cost Tree and Shrub Sale runs Thursday, March 1 through Tuesday, May 1 at [plymouthmn.gov/treesale](http://plymouthmn.gov/treesale).

City staff selects trees, shrubs and fruit-bearing plants each year that are well adapted to local growing conditions and resistant to pests and diseases.

Most trees are bare root and 5-6 feet tall at time of purchase. Orders are available for pickup May 11-12 at the Plymouth Maintenance Facility, 14900 23rd Ave. N.

### Get Help Choosing Plants

Before placing an order online, residents may ask questions and gather advice in selecting plants at the Plymouth City Sampler 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 28 at the Plymouth Maintenance Facility.



The northern red oak is one of the 20 varieties of plants featured in this year's Tree and Shrub Sale. Orders are accepted March 1 through May 1.

## Storm Drain Marking Continues in Plymouth



Volunteers from Peace Lutheran Church in Plymouth set out on a mission last spring to mark 47 storm drains in one day. The message – "no dumping, drains to lake" – is meant to remind residents about storm drains and their relationship to water quality. To borrow a storm drain marking kit, call 763-509-5527 or email [bscharenbroich@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:bscharenbroich@plymouthmn.gov).

## Low-cost rain barrels, compost bins available

The City of Plymouth has partnered with the Recycling Association of Minnesota to offer low-cost rain barrels and compost bins to residents.

Orders must be placed online at [recycleminnesota.org](http://recycleminnesota.org) by Thursday, May 10. Orders must be picked up between 8 a.m. and noon Saturday, May 12 at the Plymouth Maintenance Facility, 14900 23rd Ave. N.

Cost to purchase a compost bin through this sale is \$64. Cost to purchase a 45-gallon rain barrel is \$79.

Rain barrels can help conserve water and save money by capturing and reusing rain water for landscaping and other purposes. They also help reduce storm water runoff, which

can add pollutants to lakes and streams.

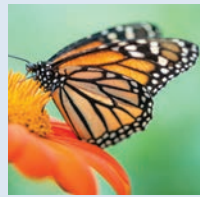
Using a compost bin can help reduce household waste by more than 25 percent and prevent it from being dumped into a landfill. Using the material generated by composting is also a natural way to fertilize and add nutrients to gardens and landscaping. For more information, visit [plymouthmn.gov](http://plymouthmn.gov).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Free Shredding** – 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 21, Plymouth Maintenance Facility, 14900 23rd Ave. N. Free paper shredding at Drop-Off Day. Plymouth residents only. For details, visit [plymouthmn.gov/dropoff](http://plymouthmn.gov/dropoff).

**Plant Swap** – 4:30-6:30 p.m. Monday, June 4, Plymouth Maintenance Facility, 14900 23rd Ave. N. Free. Bring perennials or gardening wares, such as seeds, pots, tools and books, and swap them for new plants.



**Creating Resilient Yards Workshop** – 6-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 17, St. Barnabas Church, 15600 Old Rockford Road. Free for residents. Learn to create a resilient yard at this

Metro Blooms workshop. Receive recommendations for establishing mowable, native alternatives to turf from landscape designers and Master Gardeners. Register: 651-699-2426 or [metroblooms.org/workshops](http://metroblooms.org/workshops).

