



Metro

## Sustainable solutions: your guide to healthier homes and communities



Community outreach by Growing Gardens.

### Growing gardens in Portland

The Growing Gardens Home Gardens program is a free three-year program that provides garden installation, seeds, starts, compost, tools and educational workshops to Portland residents with limited resources. Growing Gardens also matches up beginning gardeners with more experienced gardeners, “Garden Advisors,” to provide one-on-one mentoring throughout the seasons.

As Executive Director Jason Skipton shared, “We believe that growing food is a transformative practice that connects us back to the land, our health and community. Through this program, participants are able to grow an abundance of fresh food, save money on groceries, spend more time outside, and experience the therapeutic value of tending to plants.”

Growing Gardens also works in local schools, providing garden-based education programs for early learners through high school-aged youth. Learn more about Growing Gardens Home Gardens program at [growing-gardens.org/home-gardens](https://growing-gardens.org/home-gardens).



Free Geek staff and volunteers show donated school supplies at a community collection event held in the Intel parking lot in Hillsboro.

## **Metro Investment and Innovation grant supported Free Geek's 2021 community collection events**

In 2021, [Free Geek](#) held 17 community technology collection events around the region with support from a [Metro Investment and Innovation grant](#). The \$43,577 grant funded staff time and equipment for the events. Over 3,000 attendees participated and 1,475 individuals donated 36,000 pounds of electronics such as laptops, printers and smartphones.

Free Geek is a Portland-based nonprofit organization that safely and securely repairs locally donated technology and gives it back to the community at no or low cost. What cannot be fixed is recycled in an environmentally responsible manner.



Seven events were hosted in Washington County so people who live more than 10 miles from Free Geek's Southeast Portland location could have a convenient way to get rid of unwanted technology without throwing it in the trash. These events brought donation options to new neighborhoods and increased awareness for Free Geek's services.

Want to learn more about Free Geek? Visit <https://www.freegeek.org/> to learn about technology donations and other ways to get involved.

Want to learn more about Investment and Innovation grants? Visit [Metro's website](#) to learn more about the program and upcoming grant cycles.



**Community Enhancement Grant supports restoration of native habitat at Clackamas Community College's Environmental Learning Center**

### **Engaging community through native plant restoration near Oregon City**

The Greater Oregon City Watershed Council has engaged local volunteers in the restoration of vital habitat along Abernethy and Newell Creeks. The project is a partnership between the council, the Oregon City Parks and Recreation department, Clackamas Community College, Rivers of Life and Confluence Americorps. Volunteers planted native vegetation, removed invasive plants, and created new learning opportunities through trail enhancements at Clackamas Community College's Environmental Learning Center and Abernethy Creek Park.

This work was made possible by a Community Enhancement Grant where a fee of \$1 for every ton of waste disposed at the Metro South transfer station is reinvested into the surrounding community. Tom Gaskill, the Executive Director of the Greater Oregon City Watershed Council said,

“These funds have given us the opportunity to enhance wildlife habitat while engaging the public within the watersheds of Oregon City.”

To learn more, check out Oregon City’s [Community Enhancement Grant Program](#), the [Greater Oregon City Watershed Council](#), [Rivers of Life](#), and Clackamas Community College’s [Environmental Learning Center](#).



### **Tips for overseeding your lawn**

Grass in your lawn will thin out over time, allowing moss and weeds to spread. You can prevent this by overseeding your lawn once a year in the spring or fall. A thick lawn will reduce the need for harmful chemicals, like weed-n-feed.

1. Use a rake to remove moss and hand tools to remove weeds.
2. Sprinkle 1/2 inch or less of compost over lawn and rake in.
3. Add local seed mix using 25% of the recommended rate on label.
4. Cover with a thin layer of compost.
5. Water frequently and stay off lawn until new grass is established.
6. Learn more about overseeding - <https://youtu.be/kylD1EjeN90>.



### **Tips for protecting your skin from harmful UV rays this summer**

1. Look at the active ingredients on the label; choose sunscreens that have titanium dioxide or zinc oxide when possible.
2. Use the [Think Dirty](#) phone app to search for safer products at the store. Just scan or search for products and the app will rate them for potential health impacts.
3. Make your own sunscreen with [these recipes](#).
4. Protect yourself from harmful UV rays by applying a thick coat of a "broad spectrum" sunscreen with at least SPF 30.
5. Avoid sunscreen for children less than 6 months old
6. Shower to remove sunscreen once you are out of the sun.
7. Cover up your skin when sunscreen isn't available. Use hats and long sleeves to protect your skin from burning.





### **Keeping tangles out of your recycle bin**

“Tanglers” is a term used frequently in the recycling industry. It refers to items like clothing, electrical cords, hoses and plastic bags that can get tangled in recycling sorting machines, breaking equipment and endangering lives.

Watch this one-and-a half-minute video to see what happens when tangles go into recycling:



You can help make the system more safe and efficient by disposing of long, stringy items in the trash instead of a recycling bin.

For more information on tangles, go to <https://www.recycleornot.org/>.

## Calendar of Community Events

Learn more about Metro's community events, educational programs, and volunteer opportunities by visiting our [website calendar](#), or connect directly with our Community Partners to find out how you can support their work.

Click on the links below to find upcoming events and volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood.

[Greater Oregon City Watershed Council](#)

[Clackamas County Environmental Learning Center](#)

[Free Geek](#)

[Growing Gardens](#)

### Stay Informed

Subscribe to Metro's quarterly newsletter, Sustainable Solutions, which provides resources for waste prevention from Metro and community partners. Learn helpful tips for recycling, gardening and reducing toxic chemicals in your home and yard.

Subscribe



**Metro**