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## Arlington's EcoFest to be held May 2

Friday

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By Lauren Byrne

Taking care of the environment can begin in your own backyard, and Arlington's EcoFest, which will take place at Town Hall on Sunday, May 2, promises to provide the help and advice you need.

Organic gardening, native plants and invasives are the themes of the event co-sponsored by the Arlington Garden Club and the Arlington's Department of Public Works.

Don Bishop, noted organic landscape advocate and co-founder of the Organic Land Care Program of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, will address these topics in his talk between noon and 1 p.m.

Providing a venue for anyone interested in ecologically sustainable gardening is the intent behind the event, now in its second year, according to organizer Corinna Vanderspek.

"I have never seen a need to use anything in the soil that is potentially toxic to the soil or my family," said Vanderspek, who has trained with the New England Wild Flower Society. Although she'll always find room in her yard for favorite non-native plants, she points to the value of native plants.

"Many of these plants perform an obvious function," she said. "For instance, the monarch butterfly's caterpillar can only feed on milkweed leaves and will die without them. If we want to make sure these butterflies survive then we must give them what they need."

Have those gardening questions answered by experts during an information session from 1 to 3 p.m. Several gardening vendors, organic landscapers, and environmental organizations will be on hand, eager to discuss the latest "green" products and services. Compost bins and rain barrels will be on sale at a reduced price and free compost will be on offer.

Folk-rock performer Margot Fox will be in the garden singing songs related to the environment --weather permitting.

Arlington's EcoFest will take place at Town Hall, 730 Mass. Ave., on Sunday, May 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.