

SOMETHING NEW AND REMINDERS TOO ...

Wilton residents can now include Styrofoam protective packaging, typically used with electronics, with their bottles and cans. Please note: Styrofoam peanuts are excluded and should be recycled at UPS Stores or Mailboxes Etc. Please remember that your recyclables (glass, plastics, and cans) should be placed in blue bins CLEAN of food residue. If they are NOT, your hauler will dispose your blue bin items as garbage because it is considered contaminated.

The Town is collecting plastics # 1-7; however, this does NOT include plastic toys such as Little Tikes®, etc. They should be disposed of as bulky waste.

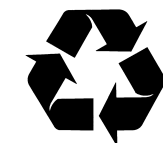
The Town no longer accepts latex (water-based) paint at its Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day. If you have paint cans with very little dried paint residue, please place in the scrap metal container at the Transfer Station. If there is “wet” latex paint in the cans, please place kitty litter or mulch in the can to speed up the drying process. When dried, empty contents in your garbage and place the paint can in the scrap metal container located at the Transfer Station. There is no charge to dispose of in the scrap metal container but please note that if dried contents are not emptied from paint cans, you will need to dispose as bulky waste and tickets will be required. Your refuse hauler can not take paint cans regardless if they are full or empty. Oil Based paints will continue to be accepted at the Household Hazardous Waste Days. Dates and locations are available on the Town of Wilton website: www.wiltonct.org

Household Batteries - The Town is no longer accepting household batteries in the Electronics trailer at the Transfer Station. (EX: Alkaline batteries“AA or AAA/C/D or 9V) as they are not considered hazardous unless collected in large amounts. Please dispose of them with your regular household garbage. All non-alkaline batteries such as “rechargeables”, cell phone batteries (lithium ion), etc. will still be accepted. Car batteries should be returned to the retail outlet where they were purchased.

Your Town officials post valuable information online for your convenience. Please visit www.wiltonct.org regularly for Rt 7 construction updates, trail maps, Wilton’s zoning and wetland regulations, and more.



**RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER
WILTON, CT 06897**



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SPRING 2010

Wilton Conservation Commission Newsletter



SHED YOUR MEDS!

Turn In Unwanted Medications on Saturday, May 1

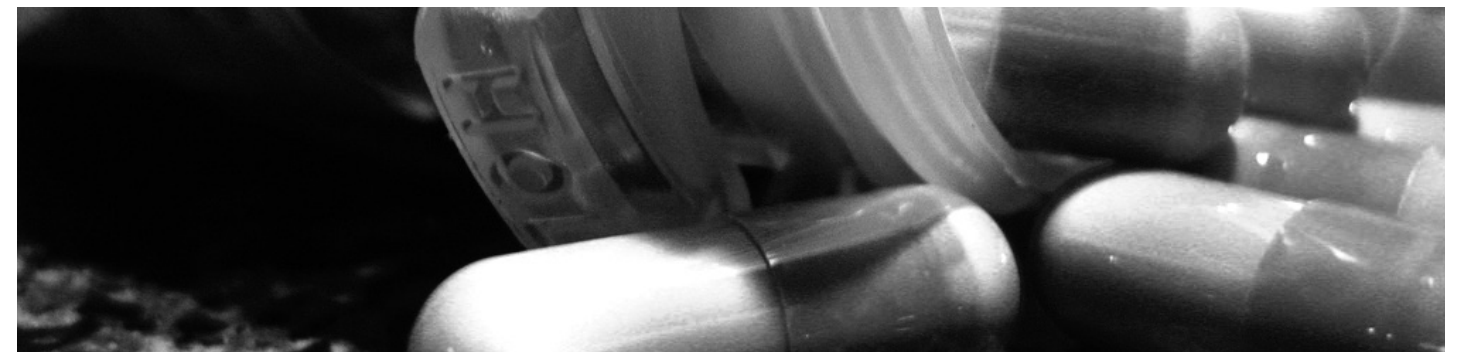
From 1993 to 2006 the number of prescriptions issued rose 71% in the U.S. as compared to a 14% rise in the population. During that same time, over the counter sales increased by 60%. Such changes raise a number of social concerns, but environmental concerns as well. To begin to address these concerns, the Conservation Commission is offering a **medication turn in day on May 1st from 10-2 at the Comstock Community Center.**

For more than a decade it has been well documented in Europe and more recently in the U.S. that water discharged from waste water treatment plants contains residue from prescription drugs excreted from humans and also from unwanted medications that are flushed or rinsed down the drain. Alarmingly, there is enough drug residue to affect aquatic organisms. The clearest example is the effects of edocrine disrupters on fish, resulting in fish having both male and female reproductive organs in the same individual. This is not wholly surprising since sewage treatment plants are designed primarily to disinfect wastewater and do not have the mechanisms to treat for pharmaceuticals. In Texas, detectable levels of eight antidepressants were found and these, like many pharmaceutical

contaminants do not have water quality standards associated with them; we don’t know how much is too much, nor do we know what the cumulative impacts are of long term exposure to these contaminants.

Since Wilton residents are served primarily by wells, is this something we need to worry about? The studies that have been done on groundwater suggest yes, we do need to think about groundwater contamination. In Cape Cod, where septic systems are also prevalent, a study was conducted on six ponds that are fed by groundwater. The three ponds that are in areas of high density residential development consistently had higher levels of pharmaceutical contaminants than the three in low density residential areas. These findings are consistent with research recently concluded in Connecticut by Professor David Skelly of Yale. Locally, Wilton’s water quality monitoring activities through Harbor Watch/River Watch also show levels of drugs in the Norwalk River and its harbor in Long Island Sound. If drugs are showing up in groundwater fed ponds and streams, then it is logical to be concerned that these drugs can also be present in our well water.

In addition to water quality, there are socially undeniable reasons to rid our homes of unwanted



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SHED YOUR MEDS! ON SATURDAY, MAY 1

medications. The Office of National Drug Control Policy presents compelling statistics regarding diverted drugs. In 2007, 2 million teens abused prescription drugs and each day 2,500 initiate abuse. The number of 12–17 year olds who smoke marijuana equals the number who abuse prescription drugs and the number of teens abusing prescription drugs exceeds the number of kids who abuse ecstasy, crack/cocaine, heroin, and meth, combined. Lastly, pharmaceutical drugs are the number one choice for 12–13 year olds and 60% of the teens who have abused prescription drugs did so before they were 15.

Many teens falsely believe that because these drugs are legally prescribed by doctors they are somehow safer than illegal drugs. The National Institute for Drug Abuse states otherwise. Prescription drugs can cause fatal seizures, life threatening depressed breathing, depressed heart rate, an irregular heart rate, high body temperature, and hostility. Further, the consequences of mixing prescription drugs outside of a doctor’s oversight can be lethal. The Institute reports that hospitalization and deaths have occurred, and manslaughter charges have been levied against the teens providing the drugs.

With such a clear need to rid our homes of unwanted drugs, the Conservation Commission readily accepted New Canaan’s invitation to join them in setting up a medication turn in day, which is structured much like Wilton’s Household Hazardous Waste Day. The commission readily gained local partners to help with the day from Wilton’s Police Department, CERT, WVAC, and Youth Services. Additionally, Norwalk Hospital, Silver Hill Hospital, Aquarion, and Stericycle have shown tremendous generosity. On May 1st, from 10–2, Wilton residents will be able to drop off their over the counter and prescription medications at the Comstock Community Center at 180 School Road. Residents are asked to keep the medications in their original containers and to “black out” only their names and other personal information from the label. The collection day is not intended to accept sharps, other medical waste, or illegal drugs.

For further information, please contact the Commission at 203-563-1080 or email patricia.sesto@wiltonct.org.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

TOWN-WIDE CLEANUP

Cleanup your own neighborhood or meet at the Town Green Gazebo to choose a community location. Gloves and bags will be available.

April 24, 9am–12pm

**GO GREEN FESTIVAL
SUNDAY, MAY 2ND, 11–4**

The Wilton Conservation Commission is proud to be one of the partner sponsors of Wilton’s first community wide event focused on “green” living. The Wilton Go Green Festival will be held on Sunday May 2nd from 11am–4pm in the Wilton Town Center. It will be a fun way to learn about energy conservation and sustainable living options. Its overall goal is to help people understand some of the small, practical and reasonable things they can do to save money and use scarce resources wisely.

Save the date! If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about this event, call one of the co-chairs, Jana Bertkau (203) 762-2993 or Becky Bunnell (203) 550 6540

NORWALK-WILTON TREE FESTIVAL

The Wilton Tree Committee is again partnering to present the Norwalk-Wilton Tree Festival. The festival is a free, family oriented event intended to help residents understand proper tree care and appreciate the value of our suburban forest. There will be kid friendly events, door prizes, demonstrations, licensed arborists to answer questions, and a free lunch! The Festival will be held at Cranbury Park on Grumman Ave. near the Wilton-Norwalk Town Line.

Questions? Call Patricia Sesto, 203-563-0180

ASIAN LONG HORNED BEETLE

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the Asian long horned beetle is “potentially one of the most destructive and costly invasive species ever to enter the United States.” Many in our area will remember the 1996 finding of Asian long horned beetles (ALB) in Brooklyn, New York. The response was swift and difficult to imagine: all infected trees, plus those at risk around the infected trees were cut and destroyed. Since then seven other areas from the east coast to Chicago have been affected, with the latest and largest being just to the north of us in Worcester, MA.

Adult ALB are ¾ – 1½ inches long. They are shiny black in color with irregular white spots on their backs. Asian longhorned beetles also have black and white alternating bands of color on their antennae. Their antennae are quite long, about 1½ – 2½ times the lengths of their bodies.

For our area ALB host trees include maple, elm, willow, birch, horsechestnut, London plantree, poplar, hackberry, and ash. Infection can be detected through the exit hole of the adult beetle. The hole is perfectly round and a bit bigger than a pencil. “Frass” or sawdust frequently can be found at the base of the tree or on the branch below the exit hole. The adult beetle lays eggs on the tree and the newly hatched larvae burrow into the tree. The larvae pupate into an adult; the adult emerges and repeats the cycle over again, on the same tree for the most part. The resulting tunnels of this cycle disrupt the tree’s ability to transport water and nutrients throughout its mass. A normal infestation will kill the tree in seven to ten years.



As was the case in Brooklyn, the response is to cut down the infected trees. Potential host trees within ¼ mile of the infected tree are also cut. Lastly, potential host trees from ¼ - ½ mile of the infected trees are treated with an injected insecticide for several years. In Worcester, approximately 5,000 infected trees and another 15,000 potential host trees are being cut following the August 2008 discovery of an infestation. The initial infestation zone was 16 square miles and by late 2009 the zone has grown to 74 sq.miles and includes parts of Shrewsbury, West Boylston, and Holden. This land area equals all of Wilton, Ridgefield, and most of Weston. The USDA, who manages the response, estimates that \$168 billion of federal money has been spent in all infected areas since 1996. Those in forestry related industries, tourism, construction, maple syrup and other tree dependent jobs will quickly attest to the economic cost if the beetle wasn’t managed.

Clearly, early detection is the key to limiting this destruction. In Worcester, it was an alert citizen who reported the exit hole. Thus, educating residents and land care professionals is likely the best way to protect ourselves. And if an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, we must be wary of our wood sources. Since the beetle spreads through transported wood, only buy firewood from trees harvested locally and ask questions of your tree professionals. Do they transport wood/brush out of the area; are they aware of the Asian long horned beetle?

Further information and great photographs can be readily obtained by searching “Asian long horned beetle” on the internet. If you suspect you have an infestation please report this to the USDA at 866-702-9938. — *Patricia Sesto*

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION



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