

ECOVoyageurs



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Blossoms, Birth and an Hour for the Earth!

When does spring begin for you? Personally, I vote for any day that a delicate green bud or tiny sprout can be seen poking its head out, looking for longer and sunnier days.

Officially there is more than one start date for this most anticipated of seasons. Spring occurs on the Vernal Equinox according to the astronomical definition, usually March 20 in our part of the world. Meteorologists though, opt for March 1 in the Northern Hemisphere.

Be it at the beginning or the end of March, I am eager to say goodbye to the dead of winter (an apt expression if ever there was one!). For we Canadians living in northern climes, the arrival of spring is greeted with the anticipation usually reserved for long weekends, government holidays and heated butter tarts with ice cream on the side. Goodbye grey slush, black ice, and brown snow scraped to the sides of roadways.



March is the month during which Spring springs into action in Canada. I extend a hearty welcome to all the baby lambs, crocuses, garden shows, and budding lilacs that will soon join us. Welcome to daffodils and increasing daylight. Welcome to warmer winds and returning birds.

This issue of the EcoVoyageurs newsletter focuses on a recent global phenomenon that marks Spring – Earth Hour. And what an excellent primer to prepare us for Earth day, scheduled for April 22. So mark your calendars now.

Enjoy the read, and please [let me know](#) about your environmental teaching discoveries.

[Lisa Kelly](#)



Earth Hour

8:30 p.m. March 28, 2009

[Earth Hour](#) was born in 2007, when over 2 million homes and businesses decided it was time to turn off the lights. For over an hour, lights went out across the world as a message of hope and a show of solidarity towards action on climate change. In 2008 numbers grew exponentially to top 100 million people in 35 countries. 2009 promises to be even better, with 377 cities, and double the number of countries from 2008 committed.

There are any number of things that you and your students can do to support Earth Hour.

[Get the message out](#) Last year, as my family doused the lights and headed outside for a walk we were shocked by the number of lights on in houses (or lights out and televisions on), as well as the number of young people who had no idea what was going on.

We resolved to tell everyone we knew about [Earth Hour](#). Here are some things that you can do:



[Sign up](#) Become a part of Earth Hour and get useful tips and tools to reduce your carbon footprint everyday.



[Tell your story](#) How is climate change affecting families and communities? the Earth Hour Web site features amazing stories to share with your students. I recommend **Vladilen Ivanovich Kavry's** story. Vladlen lives in a village called Vankarem, in the Chukotka region, of the far eastern edge of Russia on the coast of the Chukchi Sea.

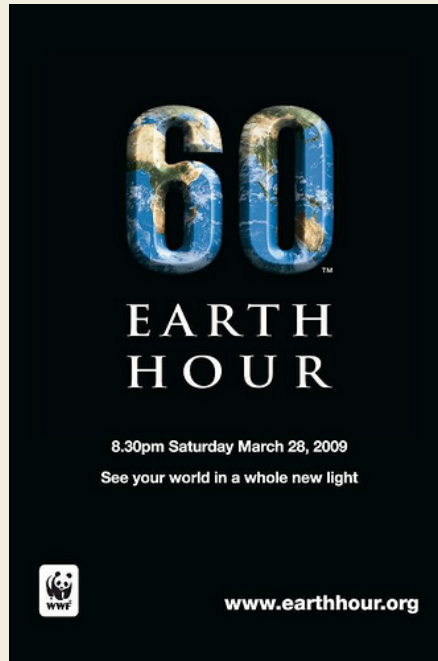


[Run your own Earth Hour](#) Download Earth Hour's info to run Earth Hour in your city or town.



[Monitor the updates](#) found on the Earth Hour in Canada page.

Flick a switch and show you care.



Echoage

Meaningful Birthday Giving



How to celebrate your child's birthday is always a thought-provoking exercise. There are the sheer logistics – do you invite friends or the entire class? How do you distribute invitations? These days, take-home bags cost almost as much as the party itself.

My daughter attended a lovely little school that embraced many environmental philosophies. The parents got together and made some suggestions regarding the celebration of birthdays and special

days. Talk to your class about eco-friendly ways to mark special occasions and see if you can reach consensus on new ways to celebrate in your school community. Here are some thoughts, and please send me your ideas.

- 🌸 Donate a book in the child's name to the school library. A sticker can be attached in the front of the book, acknowledging the child.
- 🌸 Make a donation to an organization the school supports instead of encouraging gifts or cupcakes.
- 🌸 In lieu of bringing wrapped and packaged presents, guests and students make secure online contributions toward the purchase of ONE meaningful gift or cause through EchoAge. <http://www.echoage.com/>

What's on in March

Canada Blooms, The Flower and Garden Festival



March 18 to March 22, 2009

The New York Times has called the Canada Blooms Flower and Garden Festival one of the top 3 shows of its kind in North America. It is held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and is Canada's largest flower and garden festival. There are six acres of green gardens in full bloom, more than 100,000 square feet of green-thumb shopping, over 200 hours of seminars, workshops and demonstrations, a special children's area and more.

<http://www.canadablooms.com>

Sense and Sustainability: Green Approaches to Reading

Friday March 13 to Saturday March 14, 2009

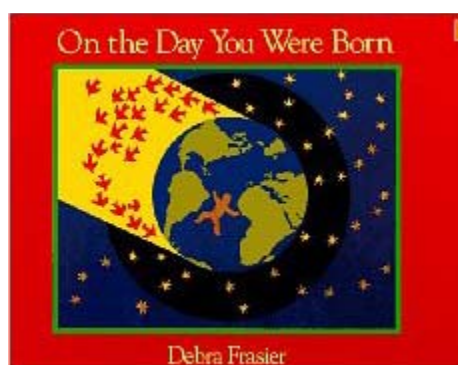
Université de Montréal hosts Clive Doucet, poet and author of 'Urban Meltdown' (2007) and Jacob Wawatie, Elder and director of Kokomville Academy during this two-day event. www.egss-umontreal.org/colloquium/



Book Beat

Here are two books that you just can't beat, if you want to capture the magic of nature and mother earth with elementary students.

On the Day You Were Born

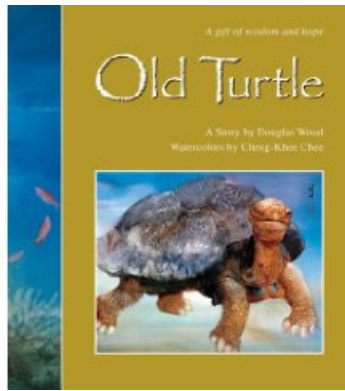


Debra Frasier, Harcourt Children's Books; 1 edition (Feb 15 1991)
A beautifully illustrated book that explains how the world works and all the magical things happening on the day that each of us was born.

Old Turtle

Douglas Wood and Cheng-Khee Chee, Scholastic Press, Reissue Edition (Sept 1 2001).

A wonderful fable about the arguments between mountains and rivers, stars and ants, until old turtle steps in to bring calm. Very poetic, and lovely illustrations.



EcoVoyageurs is a series of free teaching resources based on the Ecological Footprint concept. All focus on our ability to live within the limits of the Earth's resources. Materials include the [intermediate print kit](#) (classroom posters and teachers' guide with lesson plans and student worksheets) and its companion [Web site](#); [Count Yourself In](#) (a Web-based tracking tool that provides actionable steps to reduce your impact of the environment) and coming soon: junior materials.

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