



## SEMS

### POLLUTION PREVENTION

#### OUR SEMS GOALS FOR THIS YEAR

1. Reduce Energy Consumption by 2.5%
2. Reduce Water Consumption by 2%
3. Implement a Green Procurement Program
4. Increase Recycling Rate to be greater than 50%

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- A short Environmental Performance Assessment System Summary 1
- Sustainable Urban Greening Practice 1
- Lawn Mowers with ECO Gas 2
- Green Corner: Micro-plastic in Cosmetics 2

#### INTERESTING WEBSITES

Environmental Officer (EO) Training Link:  
<http://cti.na.amec.com/IMCOM/login.asp>

Visit our share portal:  
<https://home.army.mil/sites/eurl/Ger/Ans/dpw/Environmental/default.aspx>

## Thank you for your Support!

### A short Environmental Performance Assessment System Summary

The Environmental Performance Assessment and Assistance System (EPAAS) is the Army's program for auditing installation-level environmental performance. It is the key element in the plan-do-check-act framework of the Sustainable Environmental Management System (SEMS).

Periodic external EPAASs are conducted every 3 years and in combination with the annual internal EPAAS audits they provide the Garrison Commander with a current picture and overview of the installation's overall environmental performance posture.

An EPAAS assessment includes:

- an assessment of the SEMS's conformance to ISO 14001, EMS policy and the installation's own EMS procedures,
- an assessment of the installation's compliance with

legal and other environmental requirements, and

- an outline of corrective actions required to address deficiencies identified during the assessment.

We, the USAG Ansbach, had our external EPAAS from 13 - 17 June 2016. Many thanks to all for your hard work and cooperation.

In 2016, a total of 46 noncompliance findings were detected, compared to 75 findings during the last EPAAS in 2013. The results of the EPAAS show that we have significantly improved our environmental management performance compared to the last EPAAS in 2013.

It is important to remember: after the EPAAS, we need to work together to correct the findings. So please help us in continuing to improve our environmental performance.

by Anette Gross

## Sustainable Urban Greening Practice



On 1 July 2016, DPW attended a field trip that offered numerous opportunities to conserve natural resources and save money for the garrison. The trip was guided by Dr. Philipp Schoenfeld, Bavarian State Institute for Viticulture and Horticul-

ture. DPW visited the agricultural research facility in Veitshochheim, where experimental wild flower seed mixtures are planted. The seeds re-seed themselves annually, requiring no external watering or maintenance, only a single cutting towards the end of the summer. Furthermore, these wild flowers are ecologically beneficial as insects and honey-

bees thrive in these areas. Then, the trip led to downtown Würzburg. With the global climate changes, the urban trees suffer. Trees that once thrived in areas of Germany are now struggling. The state institute is testing tree types from other geographical areas that are more resilient to climate changes and still beautify the area and provide a vital refuge for bees and other insects. by Anette Gross

### Environmental Tips

#### San Francisco bans Coffee-to-go Mugs and Take-Away Boxes

The City of San Francisco decided to be a "Zero Waste" area in 2020. Therefore, an extensive ban of styrofoam products, such as take-away boxes and coffee-to-go mugs, was established. The sales ban of most of the Styrofoam products will be effective as of 1 January 2017.

#### Green Procurement Labels at Commissary

As of now eco-friendly products are labelled at Commissary.



Find the green procurement labels at the shelves.

## Lawn Mowers with ECO Gas - eco-friendly and healthy now



| ECO Gas | Conventional Gas |
|---------|------------------|
|         |                  |
|         |                  |
|         |                  |
|         |                  |
|         |                  |

Since recently, the Self Help Issue Point (SHIP) in Katterbach replaced regular lawn mower fuel with ECO gas. Conventional fuel contains more than 100 different hydrocarbon fractions of refined crude oil possessing different efficiency characteristics, health hazards and environmental impacts. Many of these hydrocarbons are very harmful to human health and the environment. The substitute ECO gas has been developed for industrial purposes and contains only approximately 10 less harmful alkylate-based hydrocarbons. More importantly, ECO gas does not contain harmful substances such as benzene (toxic and can cause cancer), (poly) aromatic hydrocarbons, and alkynes. Therefore, health

hazards from fuel vapors and emissions have been substantially reduced. Also, ECO gas is the only special fuel without the GHS label Fish & Tree.

Looking at the environmental impacts, a mower operated with conventional gas emits as much benzene per hour as 3 modern cars.



But 36 mowers operated with ECO gas emit as much benzene per hour as one car.



A mower fueled with ECO gas can be operated for 108 hours until emitting the same

amount of benzene as a lawn mower operated with conventional fuel.

Additionally, ECO gas extends the engine life, because it is cleaner than regular fuel and improves reliability of the engines. It can be stored without degradation for 3 - 5 years compared to 3 - 5 months that regular fuel can be stored. Special accessories are available to improve safety during fueling. A nozzle-spout stops the flow, when the tank is full. A cone is no longer necessary. Spills and vapors are reduced.

All in all, substituting conventional fuel with ECO gas for lawn mowers tremendously reduces environmental impacts and health hazards.

by Anette Gross

## Green Corner: Microplastics in Cosmetics

### Did you know,

that nowadays products such as toothpaste, soap, and skin care products contain microplastics and that in the United States alone billions of these microbeads are discharged into waste water?

Microplastics are considered plastic particles that are smaller than 5 millimeters in size. Beads are factory-made for cosmetics or generated, when plastic parts such as plastic bags disintegrate. Some producers advertise their cosmetic products as good for skin and hair. However, can it be healthy or reasonable to shower and wash hairs with microplastics? Plastic is a huge environmental issue. Firstly, plastic is a product of the nonrenewable resource petroleum and is not bio-degradable. Secondly, the small plastic particles reach waste water treatment plants through waste water and the treatment plants cannot filter these particles out of the water. Therefore, microbeads reach more or less unresisted rivers, lakes and seas, where they are already found in vast amounts. Plastic can adsorb toxic pollutants, such as pesticides and are ingested by microorganism, fish, and seabirds. This can be lethal to these creatures or poisoned seafood ends up on our dishes.

Six U.S. States already acted and banned or at least restricted the use of microplastics. Just recently California joined as the seventh state. Will the producers finally rethink?

In 2014, 10% of the American population was living in California. With California banning microplastics, a huge part of the cus-

omers will be lost. So there is hope that producers stop using microbeads in future.

### How to identify microplastic containing products?

It is not easy to identify products containing microplastics. Usually, names like Polyethylen, Polypropylen, Polyamid, or Polyethylenterephthalat give a hint. American customer may scan the bar codes of products using the "Beat the Microbead" app, <http://get.beatthemicrobead.org>, which will provide information. In Germany, apps such as ToxFox or barcoo, <https://www.barcoo.com>, may help.

**Which products should you avoid?** You may find microbeads in peelings, shower gels, powders, lipsticks, shampoos, make-up, suntan lotion, etc.

**Alternatives:** Microplastics are not approved for certified natural cosmetics. These producers use herbal and mineral substances, such as clay, chalk, silicic minerals, or salt in toothpaste, dried and powdered nutshells, stones of olives, apricots, and grapes, wheat bran in peelings, powdered minerals and gems in powder and eye shadow. You can recognize natural cosmetics by labels such as Natrue, Ecocert, Naturland, or Demeter.

by Anette Gross





US ARMY GARRISON ANSBACH, DPW ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EMD)

# Environmental News

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

JUNE 2016

## SEMS POLLUTION PREVENTION

### OUR SEMS GOALS FOR THIS YEAR

1. Reduce Energy Consumption by 2.5%
2. Reduce Waster Consumption by 2%
3. Implement a Green Procurement Program
4. Increase Recycling Rate to be greater than 50%

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Environmental Outreach & Education             | 1 |
| Plastic Bags                                   | 1 |
| How do you prefer to have your Coffee prepared | 2 |
| Green Corner: Coffee Mugs                      | 2 |

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTERESTS:

Environment Officer (EO)  
Training Link:

<http://tti.na.amec.com/IMCOM/login.asp>

Visit our share portal:  
<https://home.army.mil/sites/eur/Ger/Ans/dpw/Environmental/default.aspx>

## Environmental Outreach

### Earth Day 2016

On the morning of 20 April, EMD celebrated Earth Day 2016 at Oberdachstetten together with 150 US and German Elementary School children.



EMD prepared 9 booths with different environmental topics. The children had the opportunity to learn about the forest, fire department, beekeeper, soil, shepherd,

flowers, tastes and water.



### Arbor Day 2016

This year's Arbor Day celebration was held on German Arbor Day 25 April 2016 at the Ansbach Brückencenter in coordination with the City of Ansbach. 50 participants joined the tree planting ceremony.



## Plastic Bags

It is commonly known that plastic bags contaminate the oceans and are responsible for the deaths of many fish and birds. The fact that the amount of plastic bags must be reduced to turn this situation An option to achieve this is to ban free plastic bags and introduce a fee. Experience in countries such as Ireland shows that a reduction

from 328 to 16 plastic bags used per person per year can be achieved by implementing a 22 Cent fee. The background is that the EU requires their member states to reduce the number of plastic bags to 90 per year per citizen until 2019 and to 40 plastic bags until 2025. 240 companies in Germany will now im-

plement a voluntary self commitment starting 1 June 2016 to introduce a fee for plastic bags. The companies can decide the amount of the fee. Some companies such as C&A have already started to charge 20 Cent per plastic bag and reported a decrease in the demand of plastic bags of about 50%.

## Reminders

### External Environmental Performance Assessment and Assistance System (EPAAS) Audit

13 to 17 June 2016

During the EPAAS the Environmental Status of the USAG Ansbach will be audited. Please check your documentation to have current

Appointment Orders, EMS Information, Training & Inspection Records, Spill/Red Plan, SDS, HM Inventories, Labelling & SOPs



Android iPhone

**USAREUR Soldier  
Field Card App**

## How do you prefer to have your Coffee prepared?

Regular coffee capsules<sup>1</sup>German Bio-Label<sup>2</sup>Refillable Coffee Capsules<sup>3</sup>

First there was the coffee bean, then the instant coffee jar, and then expensive coffee shop drinks on the go.

In the past decade coffee drinkers worldwide have adopted a new method of getting their daily jolt of caffeine - the coffee capsule machine, in which capped small aluminium pods containing coffee grounds are put into a machine that fills a cup quickly with palatable coffee. The largest market share is still with the traditional drip-brewed filter coffee. The coffee capsules are second in the US with 33% and third in Germany with approximately 10%. However, the capsules are the fastest growing portion with a growth rate of 2,500% from 2005 to 2015. This is interesting, when looking at the significant variance in cost of the different coffee types:

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| - Filter Coffee | 10 Euros/kg |
| - Coffee Pads   | 20 Euros/kg |
| - Capsules      | 50 Euros/kg |

By the way, coffee consumption in Germany is with 162 liters per person per year higher than the annual consumption of beer or mineral water.

Increasingly the single-serving coffee pods, which Nespresso first sold in 1986, are attracting critics who say they are an environmental problem. It is fair to say that 70% of the total environmental impacts related to coffee is due to the long transportation distances from the main producing countries in South America, Africa and Vietnam, water consumption during coffee farming (140 liters/kilogram coffee beans) and the application of pesticides and fertilizers during farming. However, looking at the waste side, coffee ground and filter as well as used coffee pads are compostable, but plastic and aluminium coffee capsules are not.

The following shows how much packaging material is used for one cup:

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| - Filter Coffee | 0.2 g/cup |
| - Coffee Pads   | 0.8 g/cup |
| - Capsules      | 2-3 g/cup |

It seems, coffee capsules provide little coffee for the amount of packaging they come with.

Over 3 billion coffee capsules were sold only in Germany in 2015 and generated 5,000 tons of waste. Placing all coffee capsules consumed world-wide in 2015 in a row, the capsules row will 10 times circle the equator.

It is sometimes difficult to act against trends, especially if you need your cup of coffee in the morning to get you started; however, there are environmentally preferable options regarding coffee capsules that may even save you money. Therefore, consider buying:

- Bio-labeled coffee capsules
- Coffee pads against capsules
- Reusable coffee capsules made of stainless steel or other material that you can fill and refill with your favorite brand of coffee.

### Green Corner: Single or Multiple Use Coffee Mugs

The coffee-to-go single-use coffee mugs have become a symbol for our throw-away society. 2.8 billion single-use mugs are filled with coffee in Germany every year. 320,000 mugs per hour. Every German citizen is using 34 mugs per year. 29,000 tons paper are required to produce the mugs or 64,000 tons of wood. Therefore, 43,000 trees are being cut every year, which is an area of approximately 80 hectares of forest. This is equivalent to an area of 160 soccer or football fields of forest per year for the production of an annual demand of single-use paper coffee mugs. Additionally, 1.5 billion liters of water are required for the production of the mugs; 0.5 liter per mug. This is equivalent to the annual water consumption of 32,000 people. 320 million kilowatt hours are required for the paper fiber production. This equals the annual consumption of a city with 100,000 residents. 22,000 tons crude oil or 11,000 tons plastics are used to produce the mug coating and lids. The mugs have an average service life of 15 minutes and then turn into waste. The 2.8 billion single-use mugs produce an annual waste amount of 44,000 tons just in Germany.

Only a small portion of the used mugs are being recycled through the yellow bag and the green dot system. The majority of the mugs end up in public trash cans and are being burned. The only ecological alternative that makes sense is the use of multi-use double-walled coffee mugs made of stainless steel or plastics. With every saved single-use mug we are saving natural resources (430 milliliter water considering washing) and energy (0.1 kilowatt hour) and prevent the emission of harmful greenhouse gases (21 grams of carbon dioxide) and generation of waste. Therefore become a Coffee Mug Hero and use Multiple-Use Mugs.



<sup>1</sup>images.google.de ; <sup>2</sup>de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bio-Siegel; <sup>3</sup>kapsel-kaffee.net



# Environmental News

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

APRIL 2016

## SEMS

### POLLUTION PREVENTION

#### OUR SEMS GOALS FOR THIS YEAR

1. Reduce Energy Consumption by 2.5%
2. Reduce Waster Consumption by 2%
3. Implement a Green Procurement Program
4. Increase Recycling Rate to be greater than 50%

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Cross Function Team                       | 1 |
| How Well Do You Flush?                    | 1 |
| The Dark Side of Beauty: Flower's Edition | 2 |
| Green Corner: Eco-Labels                  | 2 |

#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTERESTS:

Environment Officer (EO) Training Link:

<http://tti.na.amec.com/IMCOM/login.asp>

Visit our share portal: <https://home.army.mil/sites/eur/Ger/Ans/dpw/Environmental/default.aspx>

## Cross Functional Team *By Andria Smith*

Do you know how the USAG Ansbach Garrison promotes sustainability? The Garrison operates using the Sustainable Environmental Management System (SEMS). SEMS is a framework in which the Garrison manages its responsibilities to become more sustainably efficient. The SEMS also includes measurable sustainable goals, objectives, and targets that are reviewed and updated annually. The goals set by the SEMS can be seen in the column to the left. A new goal added this year is to increase the Garrison's recycling rate greater than 50%.

Another measure to ensure sustainable efforts are put forth are through the Garrison's Cross functional Team (CFT). The CFT actively implements the SEMS to achieve goals and targets. The CFT is comprised of representatives from across the USAG Ansbach functional areas and directorates. For example, there are members representing areas from the DPW, DoDDS, 12th Cab, DECA, and many more. They support the SEMS Management Representative and SEMS Coordinator.

The CFT is further broken down into working groups that focus on the following themes: Water Conservation, Energy Consumption, Recycling, Green Procurement, Environmental Awareness, and Housing.

The members of the CFT are expected to communicate SEMS information to/from their respective functional areas and directorates. The team meets every couple of months in order to report progress on how goals and objectives are being met. Members also use the time to report any concerns their respective functional areas need brought to attention. The team is able to address these issues and create the best strategy for the sustainability of the Garrison.

If you have any ideas or concerns regarding the topics listed earlier pertaining to your functional area, please contact your CFT representative. Also, if you have any ideas that may be an improvement for the Garrison, please contact the SEMS Coordinator, Mrs. Gerda Koss, in the DPW EMD.

## How Well Do You Flush? *By Andria Smith*

Yes, you read the title correctly. This is actually an article about toilets. You may be thinking to yourself what is there to know, it is not rocket science. You simply do your business and then flush.

With that logic, you would be correct. However, have you noticed the difference between toilets in Germany and the US? German toilets have a different way to flush with a two-button

system. The small button is for small business and the larger button is for big business. German toilets also have a flush system that looks like a large panel. This works by pressing the panel to start the flush and pressing it for a second time to end it. This way you have the ability to judge how much water you need. It is as simple as that!

These systems tend to save up

to 3 gallons of water compared to toilets in the US for every flush. Think about it, if you go to the restroom about 3-4 times in a day, you would save up to 12 gallons of water by flushing properly. That is a lot of water saved and in return, the Garrison saves money on sewage costs. With water scarcity being a global issue, make the change today and flush properly. It is as easy as a push of a button.

## Reminders

### Saub(ä)er Action Day

Join the city of Ansbach for their annual clean-up day.

Meet at the Katterbach Kaserne Main Gate at 08:30am on 9 April 2016.

### USAG Ansbach Earth Day



April 20, 2016

### Joint US-German Arbor Day



April 25, 2016



Android iPhone

**USAREUR Soldier Field Card App**

# The Dark Side of Beauty: Flowers Edition

By Andria Smith



Veriflora Certified Flowers<sup>1</sup>



Rainforest Alliance Flowers<sup>2</sup>



Fair Trade Certified Flowers<sup>3</sup>

Most people know the saying April showers bring May flowers, but how true is that statement today? When you pass boutiques and see the many beautiful array of bouquets, do you wonder where the flowers come from or are you simply mesmerized by their beauty?

The sad truth is over 80% of cut flowers sold in the United States come from South America. Most countries in South America have more relaxed environmental, health, and safety laws and the implications go far beyond deciding what flowers to buy for whatever occasion. The irony is that flowers are said to be one the most beautiful expressions of the Earth's bounty, however the majority of the industry produces flowers in an unsustainable manner.

It is important to not let organic purchasing end with food. Traditionally, flowers sold in the markets are raised in chemical intensive systems that ex-

pose workers to dangerous toxins. According to a study by the International Labor Rights Fund, workers on flower plantations near Bogota found that workers were exposed to nearly 127 pesticides, 3 of which were extremely toxic. One-fifth of chemicals used in South America are DDT and Methyl-Bromide, which are carcinogenic and banned in the US and Europe. In addition, the toxic exposure expands to also children, florists and consumers. Essentially, all those who participate in the process from growers to consumers come into contact with these chemicals.

Conventionally grown flowers also create negative impacts on the environment. The large of amount of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides end up working their way into the food chain from the water, to animals, and back to us. These toxic chemicals also end up in the soil, waterways and groundwater leaving the surrounding environ-

ment poisoned and uninhabitable. Through the process of evaporation, sprayed toxins also end up in the atmosphere and travel globally falling as rain or snow.

With Mother's Day approaching, this year consider purchasing organically grown flowers. Look for certifications such as Fair Trade, Gardenia Organic, Florverde, Veriflora, Rainforest Alliance, and USDA Organic. You can also do some small research and see where to purchase from local farmers. Another idea is to also consider purchasing an organic living plant as they last much longer than cut flowers.

If you are in Germany, go to your local farmer's market and purchase from home growers. Also consider picking your own flowers at any one of the roadside gardens where you pay for what you pick. This year think beyond the beauty and stand for a better environment not just for you, but the world.

## Green Corner: Eco-Labels

by Andria Smith

Eco-Labels are symbols that manufactures put on their products to demonstrate that their products are better for the environment and therefore better than comparable products without any labels. Eco-labeling is mainly voluntary and based on a set of criteria a company must follow in order to prove their products are compliant with their eco scheme.

There are many different eco-labeling schemes that operate worldwide. They range from type of product to type of environmental criterion. For example, a label saying "100% recycled" just means the product is from recycled materials, but that does not tell you if less pollution was created or if child labor was used or worker rights were violated.

According to the International Standard Organization (ISO), although there are many labels and different types of scheme, labels "encourage a general raising of environmental performance, even among products that aren't labeled".

This Earth Day consider making a conscious effort to purchase eco-friendly products. Just look for the label.

**Type I** is a third party assessment of a product based on a number of criteria/issues involved in the environmental impact of a product throughout its lifecycle. This is the strongest type of scheme.



**Type II** is a single-attribute label developed by the producer, such as making a claim that item x is made from y% of z material. This is the second strongest scheme.



**Type III** is awarded based on a full life-cycle assessment of a product. This the weakest of the three types.



<sup>1</sup>iminthegardentoday.blogspot.com ; <sup>2</sup>nepcon.net; <sup>3</sup>theyee.ca



# Environmental News

**SEMS**

**POLLUTION PREVENTION**

**OUR SEMS GOALS FOR THIS YEAR**

1. Reduce Energy Consumption by 2.5%
2. Reduce Water Consumption by 2%
3. Implement a Green Procurement Program

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- Lip Smacking Good? 1
- Eco-Friendly Tips for Valentine's Day 1
- Bird of the Year 2016: European Goldfinch 2
- Eggs Beyond Easter 2

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTERESTS:**

Environment Officer (EO) Training Link:  
<http://tti.na.amec.com/IMCOM/login.asp>

Visit our share portal:  
<https://home.army.mil/sites/eurl/Ger/Ans/dpw/Environmental/default.aspx>

## Lip Smacking Good? *By Andria Smith*

Valentine's Day is right around the corner. Everyone is thinking about how to make this year romantic for that special someone. We all run out to find the perfect gift and spend hours getting prepared for the evening. The one item that most people tend to purchase leading up to the big day is lip balm or chapstick. No one wants to have dry, cracked lips when they are trying to smooch their loved one. But do you ever stop to think what is in your preferred lip balm?

A recent study on lip balms concluded that brands *Labello*, *Blistex*, and *Carmex* may contain harmful



Test Products<sup>1</sup>

substances. The study found traces of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) and mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH). This may sound very scientific, but what is important to know, MOAH is considered to be carcinogenic and mutagenic, while MOSH builds up and deposits in the organs.

Some may wonder, how can lip balm be a health concern? According to the Committee for Consumer Safety for the European Commission, lip balm is fine as long as it stays on the lips. But many people tend to lick their lips, which causes the ingestion of MOAH and MOSH. This is turn, harmful for the consumer.

Consider this, the European Agency for Food Safety does not allow the presence of MOAH in foods. Why should it be present in products directly applied to the mouth? Also, the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment has advocated that MOSH not be present in foods, as it accumulates in the body. And according to the study, users of lip balm consume or ingest about four sticks a year on average.

So in consideration for you and your special someone, think about purchasing natural lip balm or chapsticks this Valentine's Day. They are just as effective and in many cases, they are more affordable. When looking for these cosmetics in Germany, try looking for the word "Naturkosmetik". Nothing says I love you more than caring about the health and well-being of others.

## Eco-Friendly Tips for Valentine's Day *By Andria Smith*

**1** Consider Fair Trade Certified chocolate as your choice sweets this year. Fair Trade ensures that farmers receive a fair price, sustains regional flavor authenticity, and strictly prohibits slave and child labor.

**2** Show some love for not only your Valentine, but also seasonal foods. Think about purchasing foods from your local farmer's market and butcher when considering making a romantic home cooked meal.

**3** A romantic night would not be complete without candlelight. Love the indoor air you breathe and purchase natural beeswax candles. Don't spoil the night with carcinogenic fragrances.

**Reminders**

IDLING IS PROHIBITED



Although it is still cold out, according to §30 of the German Road Traffic Regulation (StVO) and the USAG Ansbach Noise SOP, idling is prohibited on- and off-post.

Turn off your engine when stopped more than 20 seconds.

Not only does idling waste fuel and money, it contributes to air and noise pollution.



Android iPhone

**USAREUR Soldier Field Card App**

<sup>1</sup>ndr.de, 2016

# Bird of the Year 2016: European Goldfinch By Andria Smith



European Goldfinch<sup>2</sup>



Goldfinch Flying<sup>3</sup>



Goldfinch Food Source<sup>4</sup>

The Nature Protection Federation of Germany (NABU) and the State Federation for Bird Protection in Bavaria (LBV) has awarded the European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) "Bird of the Year" for 2016.

The Goldfinch is a member of the large family of finches and is relatively the size of a sparrow. It is one of the most colorful birds in Germany, but can also be found in many regions. It ranges widely, from southern Scandinavia in the North to North Africa in the South and from Ireland in the West to the Himalayas in the far East.

Unfortunately, the umbrella organization of the German Avifaunists (DDA) found that the European Goldfinch population has decreased by almost half from 1990-2013. This is due to their deteriorating living conditions. The Goldfinch thrives in grassy pastures, open fields, gardens and parks, which are being destroyed by chemical

sprays and newly constructed infrastructure. The population also declined greatly due to illegal caging activities as well as being poisoned by pesticides used by local farmers and gardeners.

The European Goldfinch was chosen by NABU and LBV as ambassadors for flowering landscapes. As a resident of open and semi-open countryside, they are dependent on varied plant structures with a large proportion of seed-bearing plants. They especially like to get their food from thistles, which grows plentiful in Oberdachtstetten.

NABU and LBV have started a campaign called "Colorful Metering for Germany". Essentially, they are working to ensure new policies are introduced into law, making it mandatory to incorporate more green spaces for newly constructed projects. They are also encouraging locals to create nature

friendly environments in their own backyards. In order to invite Goldfinches into your garden, you can simply plant flower stripes (at least 5 meters apart) of a variety of seed bearing plants, such as sunflowers. Bird feeders with a mixture of seasonal seeds and small water baths are also ways to create a nature friendly environment.



Mixed seasonal seed birdfeeder<sup>5</sup>

It is important to be good stewards of the environment. This spring consider giving back to mother nature and planting more native species of plants and flowers. Also consider organizing beautification efforts for your local communities.



## Green Corner: Eggs Beyond Easter by Andria Smith

Last year, Americans purchased nearly 180 million eggs to color and decorate for the Easter holiday. Although it is a time of celebration, we should try to do our part to think of how our food is produced beyond the holiday. So this year let's keep in mind the welfare of hens and how their treatment affects even us.

In order to do so, it is important to understand the labeling system here in Europe and in the US. The different labels give information about the type of food the hens are given and are listed as numbers on European eggs (0, 1, 2). In the US, the labels (cage-free, free-range, pasture-raised, certified-organic) are written on cartons, but they do not have official standards.

Since 2012, egg-laying hens bred in battery-cages have been forbidden in the European Union, whereas the vast majority of them (95%) are still bred this way in the US with less than 67 in<sup>2</sup> per hen.

In the US, as in Europe, hens producing organic certified eggs are fed with an organic, all-vegetarian diet and are free of antibiotics and pesticides. At the commissary in Urlas, you can buy European organic certified eggs.

The **cage-free** production of eggs is represented by the number 2 on European eggs. Each egg-laying hen lives in 1 ft<sup>2</sup> (see picture<sup>5</sup> to right).



The **free-range** production corresponds to the number 1 on European eggs. Hens are uncaged, inside barns and have some degree of outdoor access (see picture<sup>6</sup> to the right).



The **organic certified** production is the most humane for the hens' welfare. 2.8% of the US egg production is organic, against 8% in Germany. It lists as the number 0 on European eggs (see picture<sup>7</sup> to the right).



<sup>2</sup>500px.com; <sup>3</sup>tcpermaculture.blogspot.com; <sup>4</sup>singing-wings-aviary.com; <sup>5</sup>freefromharm.org; <sup>6</sup>glauemegranth.com; <sup>7</sup>minimacfarm.com