

Volume 3 Issue 8  
August 2021



Climate Smart  
Communities  
Certified Bronze

# New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter

## August 3<sup>rd</sup> Climate Change Solutions *Meetup*: Energy Efficient Solutions For Your Home

The Hudson Valley Green Team is made up of Sunpower by New York State Solar Farm, RYCOR HVAC, Foamco Insulation, and New Beginnings Window and Door. They are four local companies committed to reducing the carbon footprint and fighting climate change. The Hudson Valley Green Team will present energy-efficient solutions for your home. They will each give a short presentation but there will be plenty of time for questions, answers and discussion about other energy efficient solutions people would like to share.



This Tuesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> event will begin at 6:00 pm and will be a hybrid live-in-person and Zoom meeting at RYCOR's new building at **135 N Chestnut Street in New Paltz** or join us via Zoom at this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/91869204188?pwd=bm9PYXMvVGdJMF5TG43S1oyVVlvZz09>

Each company will present the services and products they provide and what that means to the homeowner. They will also review government incentives that assist homeowners in purchasing these products. Note that this will be an educational event and not a sales opportunity. There will be plenty of time for a questions and answers session and any related general discussion.

For more information about the Hudson Valley Green Team, click on the links below:

<https://hudsonvalleygreenteam.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HVGT.20/>

Happy homes are green homes!

## Climate Smart Book Club: August Book Pick

### Animal, Vegetable, Miracle - A Year of Food Life

Book Discussion Tuesday, August 17, 2021 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM EST

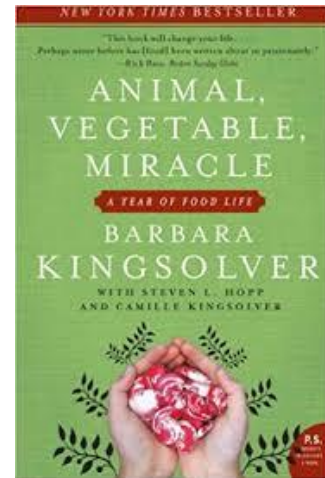
Online event

[Click here for Zoom link to Climate Smart Book Club](#)

Our book pick for August is *Animal Vegetable Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver.

When published in 2007, *Animal Vegetable Miracle* was embraced by readers worldwide and quickly earned its place as a credo for the locavore movement. The family's chronicle of struggles and triumphs as they rooted themselves to their Appalachian farm and adopted a locally-produced diet was met with critical acclaim, spent years on bestseller lists and won the James Beard Award. The Chicago Tribune named it “an important contribution to the chorus of voices calling for change.”

Washington Post Book World called it, “Charming, zestful, funny and poetic...a serious book about important problems.”



“Ten years ago, we wrote this book about our decision to get serious with eating local, more or less forsaking all others,” Barbara writes. “It was such a novel idea that we had to make up our own language for it, although the word ‘locavore’ germinated so naturally from the lexicon that it was invented simultaneously by many people at around the same time. Now it’s in the dictionary and on menus all over the place. What we’d thought of as our eccentric family notion broke out into something of a scene. I don’t mean that we created a scene—not at all—but that we happened to publish our family’s story at a moment when lots of families were ready to examine and take more control of their own food stories.”

In the intervening years, Steven has added restaurant director to a résumé that already included professor and farmer, with a farm-to-table restaurant helping to revitalize their rural community. Camille attended college, became a mental health counselor, and with her husband Reid and son Owen now lives just minutes away from the family farm. Lily, whose egg-gathering business at age ten kept readers entertained, believes her land-based upbringing profoundly shaped her interests as an aspiring environmental scientist. Each family member explores this ten-year journey in a new final section of the book.

*Animal Vegetable Miracle* has only become more relevant since its publication, increasing our awareness of how the agricultural establishment can affect our health and environment for the worse, or for the better. And how a world of choice is in our hands.

For those reading ahead, our September Climate Smart Book Club read has also been selected: *The Overstory: A Novel* by Richard Powers

# How To Support Local Restaurants Without Contributing to Single Use Plastic Pollution

Are you troubled about coming home from a restaurant with plastic, Styrofoam or other “compostable” containers that you have to then throw away or wishcycle? Are you confused about what to do with these single use containers or feel bad about not ordering take out from local restaurants because you can’t justify the glut of single use containers you will bring home? Read on because there is an answer to this problem!

The plastics industry did not waste a millisecond when COVID hit last year by putting out misleading propaganda about how single-use plastics were the only hygienic thing we could do in a public health crisis. Yet plastic is a major driver of climate change worldwide. Though companies that produce and sell plastic tout recycling as a solution, less than 9% of American plastic waste is recycled and in reality plastic is never really recycled but only downcycled.

Some restaurants have worked hard to try to source sustainable types of single use take out containers that are not plastic or Styrofoam but there are real problems with most of these containers too because greenwashing is so prevalent. Greenwashing is where a company will use sustainable-sounding phrases and words to make a product sound more eco-friendly than it is. Terms such as biodegradable and oxo-degradable, as well as sourcing statements such as Made From Corn can mislead consumers into thinking a product belongs in the composting bin when it does not. They often say “compostable” but when you really read the fine print it will say “compostable in an industrial facility” and yet most Americans don’t have any access to compostable industrial facilities. Many places are starting to ban plastics but replacing them with compostables is not a viable solution except in a very few locations. Well, you say, “my favorite restaurant uses those fiber bowls or clamshells and they are compostable”. You probably don’t know their troubling secret: [All fiber bowls contain PFAS](#), a cancer causing class of chemicals with no known half-life, even when they’re certified compostable.

**So what is the answer? Enter the tiffin...**

“Tiffin” means different things to different people. The term originated during the days of the British Raj, and was used to refer to afternoon tea, to push out the traditional Indian light meal typically eaten at a similar time of the day. The word was adopted into Indian culture, and depending on which part of India you are in, can mean the lunchtime meal, an afternoon snack, or a sweet treat eaten midday. Tiffin carriers are used throughout Southeast Asia as a way for office workers to eat home-cooked, or even restaurant-delivery meals, though they have different names in different regions.



As the “zero-waste” movement catches on in North America, people are looking to the tiffin carrier as a convenient way to bring their own lunches and to cut back on the unnecessary waste associated with take-out food. Tiffins are reusable, dishwasher safe and therefore easily

sterilized, and if ever necessary, fully recyclable. Tiffin style carriers are great at keeping the foods separate, in a structured container, to prevent your meal from getting soggy or squashed before you can eat it. They come in 2, 3 or 4 layer styles and are typically made with stainless steel.

Restaurants may also find it very cost effective to move towards the use of tiffins. How much does the cost of disposable items figure into the price of a to-go order? The short answer is - more than you might think. Any restaurant that does a brisk take-out or to-go business feels the pinch. To get compensated for disposable materials, restaurants work them into their cost structure. Anytime you hear a restaurateur talk about “food cost,” he’s referring to all raw material costs associated with that item—which in the case of to-go orders means plates, napkins, food containers, plastic flatware, condiments, cups, lids, etc. If the target food cost is 33% for example (which is common), every .10 of cost needs to generate .30 in revenue.



New Paltz Climate Smart is proposing the consideration of tiffin purchases by consumers and restaurants for use both for take-out and as to go containers used at the end of a meal you can’t finish. There are examples of other communities that have done this successfully including San Diego, Vancouver, and closer to home – in New York City. Khiladi in the East Village hopes to bring dabba service with tiffins into the mainstream and has launched a lunchbox service earlier this year and orders are slowly picking up. The tiffin lunchbox

has a \$20 deposit fee that diners can claim when they drop it back at the restaurant or they can buy it and continue using it by bringing it to the restaurant for future meals. It is much like the old idea of glass milk bottles – you return a milk bottle and are credited which can come off the next bottle of milk you buy. We would like to start a pilot project in New Paltz featuring select area restaurants. Will you help us launch the New Paltz Tiffin Project? Please contact the New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force for more information or to help with this project by emailing us at [newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com](mailto:newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com).

## Video Tutorial for NRI Story Boards Available Soon!

The Town of New Paltz recently completed a comprehensive Natural Resource Inventory that includes a wealth of information on the physical, geological, biological, historical, and cultural resources found in our Town and Village. The report hard copy can be accessed at both the Town and Village Halls and at the Elting Library Research Room. Electronic versions of the report, large maps, and online interactive Story Boards can be accessed on Town Board webpage of the Town website. There you will soon find a brand-new feature - a video tutorial for the interactive Story Boards to help you get started using them.

## Town Compost Bins and Pollinator Garden

Want to participate in composting at the Town of New Paltz Community Center but not quite sure what to do? See this illustration for some easy Do's and Don'ts!



Inquiries? Email: [newpaltzpollinatorparadise@gmail.com](mailto:newpaltzpollinatorparadise@gmail.com)

## New Paltz Climate Smart August Calendar

**Tuesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> 6:00 pm: Climate Solutions Meetup: Energy Efficient Solutions For Your Home**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/91869204188?pwd=bm9PYXMvVGdJMF5TG43S1oyVVlvZz09>

**Monday August 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm** monthly Climate Smart Task Force meeting

[Link to Zoom Meeting of Task Force](#)

**Tuesday August 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm** Climate Smart Book Club: Animal, Vegetable, Miracle [Click here for Zoom link to Climate Smart Book Club](#)

**Monday August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm** Ulster County Climate Smart Committee

<https://zoom.us/j/94174947702>

If you have any questions about anything in this newsletter, please contact Janelle Peotter, Climate Smart Coordinator at [newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com](mailto:newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com)



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