

GREEN SCENE

REPORT CARD



STOCK XCHNG

Friends of the Earth graded 10 major cruise ship lines, including some of the biggest names in the business.

Environmental group grades cruise ships

By Mary Pemberton
The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - An environmental group released its report card on how well cruise ship companies operating in American waters are doing to reduce pollution, and not one received an overall grade of A.

Friends of the Earth graded 10 major cruise ship lines, including some of the biggest names in the business, such as Carnival Cruise Lines, which received a D-minus.

The report issued the highest grade — a B — to Holland America Line. Norwegian Cruise Lines and Princess Cruises also scored relatively well, each getting a B-minus.

The lowest grades — F's — went to Disney Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean International. Celebrity Cruises and Silversea Cruises also scored poorly. Cunard Cruise Line and Regent Seven Seas Cruises received about average grades.

"Typically, cruise ship passengers are attracted to cruise vacations with pictures of pristine waters and promises of unspoiled scenery and abundant wildlife, but these passengers are never told that their vacations could leave a dirty mark on the places they visit," said Marcie Keever, who spearheaded the "Cruise Ship Environmental Report Card."

The Cruise Lines International Association, a group representing 24 cruise lines, castigated the report, calling it arbitrary, flawed and ignorant of "the fact that our cruise lines comply with and in most cases exceed all applicable environmental regulations."

"It is regrettable that Friends of the Earth authors such misinformation when in fact this industry has made tremendous progress in the past several years in advancing technology and developing programs that go a long way in protecting the environment," the association said.

Surf the Web

Read more about the Report Card at foe.org/cruisereportcard

ECO SIMPLE with Robin Tierney

Super-chef secrets — fresh from their organic gardens

Tips for sustainable plots that yield succulent produce

By Robin Tierney
Special to The Examiner

When I was growing up, my father had the only organic vegetable garden in the neighborhood. Now organic gardens are popping up everywhere, from condo patios to the White House.

Edible gardens are also catching on among chefs who want chemical-free, succulent veggies, herbs and fruits for their restaurants. I consulted two for seasonal grow-your-own advice.

Nora Pouillon pioneered local and sustainable cooking in 1979 when opening Restaurant Nora in the District It became the country's first "Certified Organic" restaurant in 1999. A proponent and customer of farmers markets, she also grows herbs for signature dishes and fruits for desserts in a garden right outside her restaurant. When someone took one of her potted fruit trees, she attributed it to growing interest in urban gardening.

Chef Nora's tips:

» Turn waste into gold. "We do our own composting at the restaurant, filling about two 50-gallon drums a day with vegetable trimmings." Nutrient-rich decomposed matter is then used to replenish the soil.

» Match plants to soil and sun and shade conditions. Her soil works great for rosemary and oregano, but not cilantro. Agricultural extension services can offer advice based on soil samples.

» Repel pests naturally and increase your bounty by diversifying. "One row green beans, one row lettuces, one row corn, one row something that needs more shade," she says. Add herbs such as bay leaves and flowers like marigolds to repel unwanted diners.

» As the weather turns cold, aerate and compost the soil.

Alex Young was named one of James Beard Foundation's Best Chefs in America for 2009. His organic vision blossomed into a farm within bicycling distance of Zingerman's Roadhouse, the Ann Arbor, Mich., restaurant where he orchestrates farm-to-fork feasts.

He grows 40 varieties of heirloom tomatoes, polycultures of corn, beans and squash, and grains for specialty breads. "It took a year of talking with growers to get these Red Fife [heritage wheat] seeds," he says, smiling. Even people allergic to gluten can



COURTESY ROBIN TIERNEY

Zingerman's Roadhouse Chef Alex Young tending to his fresh tomatoes.

still eat his breads, he says, mentioning the theory linking hybridization to allergies. Touring Chef Alex's farm, I harvested some tips:

» Skip chemicals. He sprays plants with composted sun tea and resident goat poop in the morning.

» In the fall, cover plots with two to three inches of fallen leaves.

» Plant green cover crops just early enough to get established before a hard freeze.

To lengthen the savoring season, Chef Alex offers these tips:

» "When your fresh herbs are bountiful, wrap small bunches in [plastic wrap] and lay them in your freezer door for cooking throughout the year."

Grow your own

Whether your concern is sustainability, avoiding chemicals or saving money, if you've started an organic garden, you're not alone. The National Gardening Association reports that the number of home vegetable gardens increased 10 percent in 2008 and predicts a 20 percent increase for 2009.

The average home vegetable garden size of 600 square feet can generate more than \$600 worth of organic produce.

Free advice and tips:

- » garden.org
- » nationalgardenmonth.org

» "Freeze whole tomatoes in Ziploc bags. When thawed, their skin will slip off — ready for cooking."

Reach Robin Tierney at robin-tierney@gmail.com.

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