

Wild Oats brings 'corncontainer' to Eugene

Biodegradable food containers are becoming increasingly popular throughout the Northwest

By Ali Shaughnessy
Senior News Reporter

A new kind of food container has hit Eugene: the 'corncontainer,' a plastic-like container that is completely biodegradable.

A Portland Wild Oats Natural Marketplace was the first store in the nation to offer NatureWorks PLA, a commercially viable polymer derived completely from renewable resources.

After the success in the Portland store, the corncontainer moved to all of the Wild Oats stores in the Northwest, according to Mark Cockcroft, Wild Oats Western regional marketing manager.

The corncontainer has "worked beautifully," Cockcroft said. "Customers have loved it, and the staff has been really excited."

According to a Wild Oats press release, the process of creating the corncontainer generates 15 to 60 percent fewer greenhouse gases than the petroleum-based material it replaces.

Kurt Luttecke, the Natures/Wild Oats area director of operations, said in a statement that NatureWorks was a giant step in continuing efforts to

seek the cleanest, freshest and most environmentally sound products and procedures that contribute to the health and well-being of Wild Oats customers and employees.

"Not only are these new containers 100 percent natural," he said, but "they're as functional or better than the plastic tubs the industry uses as far as strength, clarity and sealing in the flavor and aroma of our deli products."

University senior Carrie Sabin, a Wild Oats customer, said she has always tried to be environmentally conscious, but has never come across anything like NatureWorks.

"I love that I can use the container

and then just throw it in my compost pile," Sabin said.

However, not everyone has their own compost pile. For that reason, Wild Oats has decided to put its own compost bins inside the stores where people can compost their corncontainers.

According to Cockcroft, corncontainers put in bins at the store are then used in the compost fertilizer that Wild Oats sells to the general public.

"We're taking something from the ground, using it, and then putting it back into the ground," Cockcroft said. "Now customers can use compost that they helped to create."

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FIG

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discuss the theme of their FIGs. Each FIG also has a teaching assistant who acts as a mentor for freshmen.

"It's really the College Connection component that makes a FIG unique," she said.

About 1,100 freshmen are in one of the 48 available FIGs.

The FIGs, which each consist of about 25 freshmen, are named according to their focus and each include classes pertaining to the subject. The Anthropology and Folklore FIG, for example, offer Anthropology 110, English 250 and a College Connections course, English 199. Other focuses include Environmental Studies, Psychology and Philosophy and Business.

The program was originally creat-

ed at the University about 20 years ago by Academic Advising Counselor Jack Bennett. Bennett said he created the concept because freshmen were sometimes academically and socially isolated when they first came to the University. He said that through the use of older students and faculty as mentors, freshmen could become more connected with one another and the campus.

"It gives them an academically based social connection," he said.

Giard said the program has expanded over the past 20 years, especially the residential component. About half of the FIGs are residential, which means students in the program live together in the same residence halls. Each residential FIG has a FIG academic assistant who also lives in the residence halls. She said this benefits students because they

get to know people in their classes who they can study with.

Coordinator for first-year programs Gretchen H. Lieberman said freshmen don't have to sign up for a FIG that coincides with their majors.

"What we try to encourage students to understand is that any of these are good for them," she said. "This is an opportunity to explore new topics and areas of study."

Senior Ricky Chen, who is a FIG academic assistant this fall, said the program connects freshmen with campus resources and provides them with information they can use to be successful during their college careers. He said the program set the tone for his study habits when he was a freshman.

"I realized that this was a big university," he said. "I took advantage of the opportunity."

A 2001 University study showed that, overall, freshmen who were in FIGs tended to have a higher GPA than those who were not in the program. The program has also lowered the rate at which freshmen drop out of the University, Lieberman said.

Associate Professor of Psychology Sara Hodges teaches Psychology 202 and the College Connections course for the Psychology and Anthropology FIG. She said she notices a difference between the students in her FIG and other students.

"They seem much more engaged in the lectures," she said, adding that FIG students, for instance, may sit closer to the front and often sit together.

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com.

CRAFTS

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workshops in glasswork, jewelry making, metalsmithing and "sock monkeys," where participants learn to construct stuffed monkeys from cream and brown socks with contrasting red heels.

"The Craft Center is a great place for students to meet people, relax and make something for their families," she said.

Although the Craft Center's current facilities have attracted many artists, Gerards said adding room for future and existing workshops would be beneficial.

"We are in need of more space," Gerards said. "We are hoping to ac-

quire the space of the Child Care Center in order to expand our woodshop and add a glass-blowing workshop."

The Craft Center was founded in 1973 by Adell McMillan, former director of the EMU, who was inspired by craft workshops she had seen at other universities. McMillan hired sculptor Tom Urban as the first coordinator and late University jewelry professor Max Nixon to design the Craft Center's space. The Craft Center existed solely as an open studio until 1974 when workshops began.

"Adell once told me she never imagined that the Craft Center would become this successful," Craft Center coordinator Diane Hoffman said.

Today, it still functions as an open

studio while offering nearly 50 different workshops each term. Prices range from \$5 for one-day workshops to \$66 for an oil painting workshop. Some materials are included; others must be purchased.

Prices are lower with a term pass, which allows an artist access to Craft Center tools and facilities during open hours. They can be purchased for \$8 by University students and their spouses, for \$15 by University staff and their spouses and \$20 by all others.

Eugene resident Anne Eagle said she has enjoyed the Craft Center's weaving and stained glass workshops and is looking forward to learning new weaving techniques in the fall.

"There's a core group of us who

keep coming back to the weaving workshop, and we learn something different every time," she said.

Fall registration will continue until workshops are full. The Craft Center will also offer two sales this fall: a ceramic pot sale on Oct. 30 and an open house and art sale on Dec. 2.

Hoffman said the Craft Center is important because people are free to be crafty just for their enjoyment.

"The Craft Center is a service the University community wants," Hoffman said. "There aren't many places like this in Eugene where people can take craft classes without being art majors at the University."

Contact the Pulse reporter at natashachilingirian@dailyemerald.com.

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