Summer is here with much warmer days, so keep an eye out for Air Quality Alerts as the temperature rises. We are giving a sustainability tour of campus for Team Green this month – RSVP if you would like to join us! Summer means the return of the Vanderbilt Farmers’ Market on June 1st and other farmers’ markets around the city, so go out and get your veggie fix! Do you like super cute animals? Then check out the video below showing Nashville Zoo inhabitants chowing down on strawberries from Vanderbilt’s Commencement. And a hearty congratulations to our fabulous Nashville Predators for making it to the Stanley Cup finals! Did you know… the NHL was the first sports league to counterbalance their carbon emissions and is the 26th largest green power purchaser in the U.S.? Go Preds! We hope you have a beautifully green June!

Andrea George, Director
Commencement Strawberries Donated

Animals at the Nashville Zoo and Walden’s Puddle recently enjoyed taking part in a bit of Vanderbilt tradition, thanks to the Office of the Chancellor and the Commencement Office.

The university donated strawberries left over from the Strawberries and Champagne celebration during Commencement to the two Nashville organizations once again. Because fresh produce cannot be re-served or repackaged, the donation prevented the uneaten food from being sent to a landfill. Staff from Vanderbilt’s Sustainability and Environmental Management Office organized the donation and delivery when Commencement events concluded on Friday, May 12.

The Nashville Zoo shared the strawberries with their clouded leopard, hyacinth macaw, lorikeys, red footed tortoise, and ring tailed lemur. The strawberries also were enjoyed by native species at Walden’s Puddle, a wildlife rehabilitation and education facility that provides care and treatment to sick, injured and orphaned wildlife native to Tennessee. See a movie of the animals enjoying their special treat!

Drug Collection Program Protects Water Quality
The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) continues to expand its efforts to protect water quality in Tennessee by working with statewide partners to provide more options for the disposal of unwanted medications. Collection programs reduce the amount of pharmaceutical products being flushed, poured down drains or sent to landfills.

Through TDEC’s Unwanted Household Pharmaceutical Collection Program, there are now 224 permanent collection bins for expired, unused or unwanted household medications across all of Tennessee’s 95 counties. In 2016, more than 80,000 lbs. of medication was collected – almost five times more than during the program’s first year in 2012. In 2017, more than 11,000 lbs. of unwanted pharmaceuticals has already been recovered and prevented from entering Tennessee’s waterways. Flushing or washing drugs down the sink allows chemicals to enter the watershed or groundwater, where they can affect drinking water and stream ecosystems. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to adequately remove chemicals found in drugs and drugs that end up landfilled as trash also end up in the watershed. Learn more here.

Vanderbilt Farmers’ Market Beginning in June

The Nashville Farmers’ Market at Vanderbilt University Medical Center returns to campus Thursday, June 1, and will be held every Thursday from 2:00-5:30 p.m. through October 26. The market is located on the Medical Center plaza near Eskind Library.

This month’s Team Green Engage Green event is a tour of Vanderbilt highlighting green buildings and sustainable practices at the University, including a tour of the VU Power Plant! The tour is free to the public and will be held from 6-7:30pm. Read more and RSVP here.

Urban Design Forum: “Grow, Eat, Repeat” – June 21

Nashville Civic Design Center’s June Urban Design Forum from 5:30-7:30pm will focus on food systems throughout Nashville, and what types of services are offered to support healthy farming, improve food access, and diminish food waste. Read more here.

Nutritious & Delicious: Juices & Smoothies – June 21

The best way to promote better health and nutrition is to eat in-season with local ingredients. In this workshop you’ll learn the difference between juices and smoothies, what you’ll need to make them, and the nutritional benefits of juices and smoothies.
Stop by and shop for local fruits and vegetables; dairy products such as goat cheese, milk and yogurt; grass-fed beef; free-range chicken; flowers; and more! Read more here.

Sign up for Air Quality Alerts

Summer is right around the corner and that means it is air alert season! The best way to stay informed is to sign up for air alerts.

An air alert, or “Air Quality Action Day,” is issued when the Air Quality Index (AQI) gets into the unhealthy range. When the AQI is forecast to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, or Code Orange, groups that are sensitive to the pollutant should reduce exposure by reducing prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors. For ozone this includes: children and adults who are active outside, people with lung diseases such as asthma, and elderly. On air quality alert days, think about steps like carpooling, taking the bus, combining errands, and avoiding yard work that uses gas-powered tools to lessen your impact! Read more about air quality alerts and how you can made a difference here.

For more information on any of these stories, events and more, visit the SustainVU website at www.vanderbilt.edu/sustainvu or contact the Sustainability and Environmental Management Office at sustainvu@vanderbilt.edu or (615) 322-2057.

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We have added more accounts to our social media arsenal! Here are more ways you can connect with us online:

For more information, visit the Cumberland River Compact website at www.cumberlandriver.org.