

SUSTAIN*ALANYC*

Sustainability Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER 2025





Welcome to the latest issue of Summer/Spring **2025 Issue of SustainALANYC.**

Through our newsletter, we provide information on how each of us individually and as organizations is responsible for economic, social, and environmental change and what we can do to make a difference.

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Meet the Sustainability Team

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Earth Day 2025

Our Power, Our Planet

Gayatri Joshi, Vorgate Impact

On April 22nd, we observe the 55th anniversary of Earth Day. For 2025, the theme "Our Power, Our Planet" emphasizes the urgent need to transition to renewable energy sources. This initiative aims to triple global renewable energy by 2030, which will address climate change, promote human health, and foster economic growth through renewable energy solutions.

Incredibly, we already possess the solutions to create clean, inexpensive and unlimited energy for the entire planet. In the US, California, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Nevada and Arizona are leading the solar revolution, helping to produce the cheapest electricity in history. Texas leads the US in wind energy generation. The US is also using its drilling capacity to become the world's leading producer of advanced geothermal energy. China is leading the world in wind and solar, with twice as much capacity under construction as the rest of the world in 2024. Uruguay generates 98% of its electricity from renewable sources. India has set a target to achieve 50% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030. Kenya utilizes geothermal power for nearly half its electricity. These remarkable achievements are seen all across the globe and are not the distant future, they are here now in the present.

The capability and demand for affordable, clean energy continues to grow exponentially. For example, solar module costs dropped by 93% between 2010-2020, and with scaling, the costs will likely continue to fall. Communities are already experiencing benefits, including reduced air pollution from fossil fuel burning, which is linked to respiratory issues like asthma, cardiovascular disease, cancer, maternal health problems, and increased mortality rates. By shifting to clean energy, we not only lower greenhouse gas emissions but also help reduce healthcare costs associated with fossil fuel-related air pollution. Moreover, clean energy, by its reduced emissions, plays a role in mitigating the effects of climate change, like extreme weather events. The demand and investment in renewable energy has grown steadily. In 2023, renewable energy, worldwide, was worth \$1.21 trillion and is projected to grow 17.2% annually from 2024 to 2030.

For office administrators, Earth Day 2025 offers a pivotal opportunity to lead sustainability efforts within the workplace, particularly with energy. As policy, look at your leases and building environment and investigate green energy, solar capacity, and renewable energy credits. If your lease is coming up or you're contemplating a move, use them as must-haves or like-to have. Review your operations and equipment for optimizing energy efficient technologies and look for opportunities to make changes. Raise awareness about energy consumption and efficiency with your employees and what they can do at work and home to conserve. From advocating for policy changes, to capital projects to behavioral changes, every office can play a meaningful role in Our Power, Our Planet.



Exploring NYC's Urban Green Spaces This Summer

That time of year is approaching, the weather is warming, the trees and flowers are budding with the backdrop of iconic skyscrapers, and the call to sit outside with the sun's warmth and the shade of green trees is hard to resist. New York City's urban green spaces, areas of natural land designed for recreation and conservation, are calling. These spaces are enjoyed as parks, gardens, green roofs, and green walls and contribute significantly to the well-being of residents and visitors.

They offer a peaceful escape and can contribute to lowering stress and providing a place for relaxation or physical activity and a break from urban noise. These green treasures also improve air quality by filtering out air pollutants, contributing to better health for residents and visitors alike. Aside from their peaceful beauty, New York City's green spaces, naturally cool in the summer, support biodiversity, and help manage stormwater, combating the effects of climate change and the urban heat island effect.

While there is nothing like Central Park, there are more than 1,700 parks, playgrounds and recreation facilities that are worth visiting in New York City, offering places to connect with nature, take a stroll, or enjoy the scenery with your colleagues, friends, family or by yourself. Opened in 2023, Gansevoort Peninsula is Manhattan's first official public beach with a 5+ acre oasis and is now the largest standalone recreational space within Hudson River Park where people can lounge, kayak, and play. Nearby is the famous High Line Park built on a historic freight rail elevated above the Manhattan streets, where visitors can enjoy the gardens, art and history. A visit to Little Island on the Hudson will offer performances, art installations, food trucks, and a host of biodiversity for any nature lover. The New York and Brooklyn Botanic Gardens burst into color each spring with cherry blossoms, while Wave Hill in the Bronx offers beautiful garden and river views. Staten Island's Greenbelt is a hidden gem of forests and hiking trails. There are smaller, tucked away treasures in the heart of midtown that offer a lovely midday break, like Bryant Park with its enormous London Plane trees or Greenacre Park by 51st with its lovely waterfall.

This summer, take time to explore NYC's green spaces and remember how they offer beauty, relaxation and create a resilient and healthy urban environment.



Clearing the Gridlock: Can Pricing the Roads Save the City?

Elba Cortes, Fox Rothschild, LLP

Congestion pricing in NYC is a major policy initiative aimed at improving traffic flow, reducing pollution, and supporting sustainable urban living. It's the first of its kind in the U.S. and after many delays was finally implemented in January 2025.

Whether you were for or against it, it's here and has surprised many by actually reducing traffic, making it easier getting around the city whether you are walking, riding your bike or actually driving.

Overview: NYC Congestion Pricing Plan

- Location: Manhattan south of 60th Street
- Fee: Estimated \$9–\$23 for cars during peak hours (lower for off-peak)
- Revenue: Estimated \$1 billion annually, mostly to fund MTA public transit improvements

Sustainability Benefits

1. Reduced Emissions

- Fewer vehicles and smoother traffic reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants.
- Especially critical in Manhattan, where air quality impacts dense populations.

2. Boosts Public Transit

- Funding helps modernize subways and buses, making public transit more reliable and appealing.
- Encourages a shift away from car use.

3. Encourages Active Transportation

- Reduced traffic makes streets safer and more appealing for walking and cycling.
- Supports NYC's larger "Vision Zero" and "Open Streets" goals.

4. Urban Resilience

- Less reliance on cars means less vulnerability to fuel disruptions or climate events.
- Makes the city more adaptable to future sustainability challenges.

Challenges & Equity Considerations

1. Equity Concerns:

- Critics argue it may burden working-class drivers, though most commuters to Manhattan use transit. Proposals include discounts or exemptions for low-income drivers, people with disabilities and EZ Pass members.

2. Public Buy-in:

- Successful implementation depends on public perception, transparency in how revenue is used, and improvements in transit service.

Bottom Line

NYC's congestion pricing is a sustainability strategy: it's designed to cut emissions, improve mobility, and support greener, more livable urban spaces. But to be truly sustainable, it needs to be equitable and supported by strong transit alternatives.

New York City's congestion pricing program began on January 5, 2025, with the goal of reducing traffic congestion and generating revenue for public transportation. The program imposes a \$9 toll (if you are an EZ Pass member, otherwise the toll is \$13.50) on vehicles entering Manhattan south of 60th Street during peak hours.

Four months in, congestion pricing has achieved notable traffic reductions and garnered increasing public support but it faces significant legal challenges and concerns about its economic impact on local businesses.

The consensus seems to be "I'll pay the toll for less congestion."

I myself was a skeptic but have seen the difference in traffic flow and congestion. I'll pay the toll.

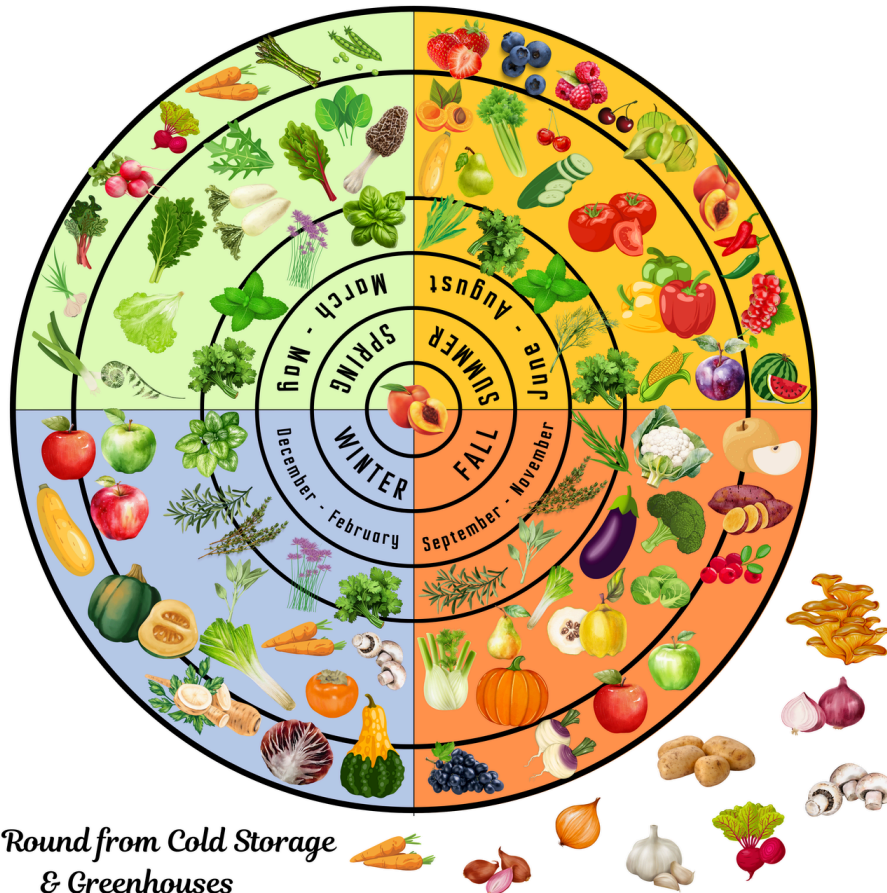
SPRING/SUMMER SUSTAINABILITY HOLIDAYS

Spring and summer are full of opportunities to celebrate our planet—here are the key sustainability holidays to know.

April 22: Earth Day
April 25: Arbor Day
May 16: Bike to Work Day
May 16: Endangered Species Day
May 22: World Biodiversity Day
May 23: World Turtle Day
June 5: World Environment Day
June 8: World Oceans Day
June 9: Coral Triangle Day
June 15: Global Wind Day
June 17: World Day to Combat Desertification & Drought

June 22: World Rainforest Day
July: Plastic Free July
July 11: World Population Day
July 30: World Day Against Trafficking in Persons
August 9: International Day of the World & Indigenous Peoples
August 19: World Humanitarian Day
September 21: Zero Emissions Day
September 22: Car Free Day

Seasonal Produce in NY



The Seasonal Advantage: Understanding the Importance of Local and Seasonal Produce

Camille Gallardo, Ellis Law Group

In an era of global food systems and year-round supermarket availability especially in a food-rich metropolitan city such as New York, the concepts of seasonality and locality have become increasingly overlooked. Yet, these principles are fundamental to understanding not just the quality of our food, but also its environmental, economic, and nutritional impact.

The Nutritional Powerhouse of Seasonal Produce

Fruits and vegetables that are harvested in their natural growing season are nutritional powerhouses. When produce is picked at the peak of ripeness, it contains the highest concentration of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Seasonal fruits and vegetables are typically more flavorful and nutrient-dense compared to their out-of-season counterparts, which are often harvested early and transported long distances. For example, during summer, a tomato grown locally such as in Long Island, and picked at full ripeness will have significantly more vitamin C and lycopene than a tomato grown in a greenhouse or shipped from thousands of miles away. The moment produce is harvested, it begins to lose nutritional value. The longer the time between harvest and consumption, the more nutrients are lost.

Environmental Sustainability

The environmental benefits of seasonal and local produce cannot be overstated. Transporting food across continents requires massive amounts of fossil fuels, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. When you choose locally grown, seasonal produce, you dramatically reduce the carbon footprint associated with your food. Seasonal farming also supports natural agricultural cycles. Crops grown in their traditional seasons require less artificial intervention, such as heated greenhouses or extensive irrigation. This means fewer resources are expended in producing the food, and the farming practices are more aligned with natural ecological patterns.

Supporting Local Economies

Buying seasonal, local produce directly supports local farmers and regional agricultural economies. When you purchase from local farmers' markets or Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, a significantly higher percentage of your money stays within the local community compared to buying from large supermarket chains.

Local farmers who grow diverse, seasonal crops also contribute to agricultural biodiversity. They often cultivate heirloom varieties and heritage crops that might not survive in industrial farming systems, preserving genetic diversity and traditional agricultural knowledge.

Economic Benefits for Consumers

Contrary to popular belief, seasonal produce is often more affordable. When fruits and vegetables are in abundance during their natural growing season, prices tend to be lower. This economic advantage is passed directly to consumers who are willing to adapt their diets to what's currently growing.

Culinary Creativity and Connection

Embracing seasonality encourages culinary creativity and a deeper connection with food.

Instead of relying on the same ingredients year-round, seasonal eating challenges home cooks to experiment with what's currently available.

This approach not only makes meals more interesting but also reconnects people with the natural rhythms of food production.

Practical Tips for Embracing Seasonality

1. **Visit Farmers' Markets:** These are excellent places to find fresh, local, and seasonal produce.
2. **Join a CSA:** Community Supported Agriculture programs provide weekly or monthly boxes of locally grown produce.
3. **Learn Local Growing Seasons:** Understanding what grows when in your region can help you make more informed choices.
4. **Preserve Seasonal Abundance:** Learn techniques like canning, freezing, and pickling to enjoy seasonal produce throughout the year.

Seasonality and locality are more than just buzzwords—they represent a holistic approach to food that benefits personal health, local economies, and the environment.

By making conscious choices about the produce we consume, we can enjoy more nutritious, flavorful, and sustainable meals.

The next time you're shopping for fruits and vegetables, take a moment to consider not just what you're buying, but when and where it was grown.

Your choices matter, not just for your plate, but for the broader food ecosystem.

Following are some useful resources, which include local CSAs in New York and New Jersey, a basic diagram showing produce by season and a link to the [Seasonal Food Guide](#) (please refer to previous page)

Local CSAs:

New York:

- Stoneledge Farm: Located in Leeds, NY, Stoneledge Farm offers a 22-week CSA program from June to October, featuring certified organic vegetables and optional shares of coffee, mushrooms, and fruits. [Stoneledge Farm](#)
- Hawthorne Valley Farm: Based in Ghent, NY, this farm provides a 25-week CSA program with over 40 varieties of organic and Biodynamic® vegetables, delivering to various locations including New York City. [Hawthorne Valley Farm](#)
- Harvest Moon Farm & Orchard: Located in North Salem, NY, Harvest Moon offers a CSA program running from July through October, providing members with a weekly bounty of farm-fresh produce. [Harvest Moon Farm and Orchard+1](#)[Condé Nast Traveler+1](#)
- Roxbury Farm: Situated in Kinderhook, NY, Roxbury Farm offers CSA shares with the option to pay using SNAP-EBT benefits, delivering to various locations including the Hudson Valley and New York City. [Roxbury Farm CSA+1](#)[HV CSA Coalition 2+1](#)

New Jersey:

- Stony Hill Farms: Located in Chester, NJ, Stony Hill Farms offers a CSA program from June through November with various box sizes and optional shares including meat, cheese, and ice cream. [Stony Hill Farms - Chester, NJ](#)
- Alstede Farms: Based in Chester, NJ, Alstede Farms provides a customizable CSA membership with over 250 varieties of non-GMO fruits and vegetables, running seasonally. [Alstede Farms](#)
- City Green: Operating in Clifton and Mt. Olive, NJ, City Green offers a CSA program providing members with fresh, organic produce grown on their farms. [city.green](#)

- Von Thun Farms: Located in South Brunswick, NJ, Von Thun's offers a 20-week CSA program with weekly pre-packed baskets of fresh-picked produce, including options for beef, fruit, and egg shares. [stokesfarm.com+8](#)[Courier News+8](#)[city.green+8](#)
- Flocktown Farm: Situated in Pittstown, NJ, Flocktown Farm offers home delivery of organic produce to various counties in NJ, PA, and NYC for a minimal fee. [Flocktown Farm](#)
- Ort Farms: Based in Long Valley, NJ, Ort Farms offers a CSA program with seasonal produce, with sign-ups available for their upcoming season. [Ort Farms](#)
- Abma's Farm: Located in Wyckoff, NJ, Abma's Farm provides a CSA Crop Share Program offering a season's worth of sustainable, locally grown produce. [Abma's Farm](#)
- Stokes Farm: Situated in Old Tappan, NJ, Stokes Farm offers various CSA programs, including fresh vegetables, flowers, and an Artisan CSA. [stokesfarm.com](#)
- Fernbrook Farms: Located in Chesterfield, NJ, Fernbrook Farms offers a CSA program providing members with a variety of produce throughout the season.



Green Cleaning 101: How to Keep Your Home Clean and Eco-Conscious

Rose Hirsch, Emmet, Marvin & Martin, LLP

Sustainable spring cleaning involves adopting green solutions that minimize waste, reduce exposure to harmful substances, and improve air quality. DIY natural cleaners and reusable tools help create an environmentally responsible home. Conventional cleaners contain toxins like ammonia, bleach, and formaldehyde, which can trigger allergies and respiratory issues. Eco-friendly products are just as effective without harmful substances.

Why Choose Eco-Friendly Cleaners:

- **Pollution:** Traditional cleaners release VOCs, causing dizziness and irritation. Eco-friendly products use plant-based alternatives.
- **Carbon Footprint:** Chemical cleaners contribute to plastic waste, shipping emissions, and manufacturing pollution. Zero waste solutions and DIY cleaners reduce this impact.
- **Synthetic Fragrances:** Artificial scents contain harmful chemicals like phthalates and formaldehyde. Essential oils offer natural fragrance and antibacterial properties.

DIY Natural Cleaners:

- **Vinegar:** Dissolves grease and kills bacteria.
- **Baking Soda:** Scrubs grime and absorbs odors.
- **Castile Soap:** Gentle, plant-based cleaner.
- **Lemon Juice:** Antibacterial properties.
- **Essential Oils:** Add antimicrobial power.

Switching to sustainable cleaning supplies reduces toxins and keeps your family safe.



Easy Steps to Host a Sustainable Event this Summer

Camille Gallardo, Ellis Law Group and Gayatri Joshi, Vorgate Impact

Did you know that one of Camille's passions is sustainability? ...Maybe that was obvious... Did you know that Camille focused on sustainability with the events team to reduce our environmental footprint? You might not know that she evaluated vendors, collaborated with them on diverse menus, as well as how to minimize waste. Creating a sustainable event is all about planning and collaboration with eco-conscious vendors and attendees.

Whether it's selecting a green venue, minimizing waste, or reducing energy usage, every small step contributes to a larger environmental impact. You can use these quick tips to host your own sustainable event this year. If you can hit at least ten, great job!

Items to Consider:

If a venue has sustainability certifications like LEED, it might check many of these items.

a. Waste Management and Diversion

- i. Ask about food composting
- ii. Ask about recycling procedures for any bottles, cans, paper, etc.
- iii. Do they provide Leftover Takeaway and can they provide sustainable or reusable packaging
- iv. Do they participate in Food Donation from the event, and if they don't, how can they help your firm do so?

b. Water Conservation

- i. Ask about use of bottled water and its minimization
- ii. Water-efficiency for dishwashing
- iii. Water saving devices like low-flow faucets

c. Energy-Efficiency

- i. Energy-efficient lighting and heating/cooling
- ii. Use of renewable energy sources like solar, wind (especially if the firm has emissions goals)
- iii. Any energy-saving technologies or practices

d. Catering

- i. Locally sourced menu items
- ii. Inclusion of plant-based items
- iii. Organic/pesticide-free/certified humane

e. Transportation

- i. Is the venue easily accessible by public transportation or walking
- ii. Consider shuttle services, carpool, etc.

f. Materials & Décor

- i. Ask venue if décor is reusable or sustainable
- ii. Reduce paper materials or make them available digitally
- iii. Retrieve and reuse nametags
- iv. Use of QR codes or event app
- v. Digital signage

g. Carbon Offsetting

- i. For events, especially large ones, consider carbon offsetting the event



Let's Eat!

Sustainable Recipe Corner: Baked Pears

Oria Aponte, Hodgson Russ LLP



This recipe is simple and quick, yet the most delicious baked pear dessert you will ever make. It is absolutely perfect for the upcoming cool spring evenings we will soon have. It requires only four ingredients:

1. Bartlett or Anjou pears
2. Cinnamon
3. Maple syrup
4. Pure vanilla

The instructions are even easier.

Cut the pears in half, scoop out seeds. Assemble face up in a lightly greased baking tray. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of cinnamon. Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of maple syrup with 1 teaspoon of pure vanilla. Drizzle mixture over pears.

Bake at 375 degrees for about 25 minutes. For an added touch...consider sprinkling the pears with granola.

Serve warm and enjoy!

Hydroponic Gardening

Rose Hirsch, Emmet, Marvin & Martin, LLP

Imagine growing fresh herbs, leafy greens, and even small vegetables indoors—all without using soil. That's the magic of hydroponic gardening! It's all about using water mixed with essential nutrients to feed your plants, letting you grow your favorite greens in a small space wherever you are.

What Is Hydroponic Gardening?

Hydroponics is a method of growing plants where you don't need traditional soil. Instead, plants get the water and nutrients they need from a solution that you provide. You can use growing media like clay pebbles, perlite, or coconut fiber to give plant roots a little support. This system means you can create your mini garden on your kitchen counter, balcony, or any small space—even during winter!

Why Try Hydroponic Gardening?

Perfect for Small Spaces: Even if you live in an apartment or don't have a yard, hydroponics allows you to grow your own fresh produce. You can set up a simple system on a windowsill or countertop and enjoy the satisfaction of harvesting right at home.

Faster Growth and Bigger Yields: Because you control the environment, your plants can grow faster than they would in soil. Many hydroponic systems help plants grow up to 50% faster and produce more than traditional methods. Imagine having a constant supply of fresh basil or lettuce throughout the year!

A Cleaner, Eco-Friendly Choice: Since there's no soil, you avoid issues like soil pests or diseases. And with careful use of water through recirculating systems, hydroponics is a super-efficient way to conserve water, making it a green choice that's friendly to our planet.

There are several ways to set up a hydroponic garden, so you can choose one that fits your space and needs:

Hydroponic gardening is a modern, practical way to produce fresh food right where you live. It's perfect for small spaces, encourages faster plant growth, and even gives you a greener, more sustainable option for gardening. Start small, experiment, and soon you'll find yourself enjoying the delicious rewards of your very own indoor garden.

