



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Burt's Bees Closes NC Operations for One Full Day to Build Three Urban Gardens in Downtown Durham with NEEM

**DURHAM, NC** – Every year, local maker of earth-friendly health and beauty care products, [Burt's Bees](#), shuts its doors for one day to dedicate its nearly 400 employees to a community project. This year for their fourth Culture Day, Burt's Bees teams up with NEEM (Natural Environmental Ecological Management) to build three new urban gardens in downtown Durham on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The gardens will be constructed using natural and sustainable agricultural methods grounded in the practices of the "[Organoponicos](#)" of Cuba, where in Havana, 90% of the vegetables consumed in the city are produced there. NEEM has a similar vision for Durham where fresh, local produce is more readily available and new job opportunities in sustainable agriculture help create a lasting socioeconomic impact.

"NEEM is thrilled to partner with Burt's Bees and these three urban gardens would not be coming to life without their support, especially the volunteerism of their entire NC workforce. I cannot imagine the resources it must take for a global company to completely shut down operations for one day. It will make a big difference in the future of these communities," says Jeff Ensminger, Director of NEEM.

The three sites are made possible by donation and lease of over 10 acres from philanthropist Dr. William Chambers. Each has unique features, but in sum the sites will include self-sustaining urban farms (some with a community garden component), an Urban Agro-ecological Research Station and greenhouse, an edible park, a mushroom house and beehives.

"At Burt's Bees, our culture is strongly influenced by the values of our brand, and it's very important for us to take our culture beyond our four walls and into our community – it's a mutually enriching experience," says Nick Vlahos, VP and GM of Burt's Bees.

### **SITE SPECIFICS:**

*Photo opportunities and press interviews are available at all sites from 9-11am and 12-2pm*

**Organoponico Hazel:** Set on 1.5 acres, this unique urban garden will feature a mushroom house, beehive and a fresh produce store. The site will promote employment, hiring within the direct community and through an established ex-offender program.

Address: 1000 Hazel St., Durham, North Carolina 27701

Site Press Contact: Melissa Sowry - 917-583-6680

**Urban Agroecological Research Station:** Set on a 10 acre tract, the agro-forestry project will feature a greenhouse, nursery and farm that will grow vegetables and specialty items to be sold at NEEMs store and main headquarters.

Address: 1500 Block Ridgeway, Durham, North Carolina 27701

Site Press Contact: Gabi Prohn (919-457-3535)



**Historic "Rolls Gardens":** A historic preservation of the old "Rolls Gardens" where Duke Chapel operates a community outreach house in Lakewood Park Community and NEEM's main headquarters located in the 110 year old florist shop and greenhouse. Fred Rolls was the Duke family horticulturist and opened here in 1899 across from the then Lakewood Amusement park.

Address: 2001 Chapel Hill Rd., Durham, North Carolina 27701

Site Press Contact: Mariah Kulp - 917-783-9602

***Burt's Bees** has been offering distinctive earth-friendly, [natural personal care products](#) for 25 years. From a beekeeper's backyard in Maine to the leading edge of natural, Burt's Bees knows natural body care solutions from head-to-toe. The company creates products for total skin health that keep [The Greater Good™](#) top of mind. Burt's Bees has approximately 400 employees with products available in the United States and nearly 20 markets worldwide as well as on its website [www.burtsbees.com](http://www.burtsbees.com)*

***NEEM** Founded by Durham Agroecological consultant, Executive Chef and Director Jeff Ensminger, NEEM is a start-up nonprofit focused on community sustainable development and local sustainably produced food in the urban sector. In a community based fashion NEEM approaches its mission of promoting sustainable development through community engagement, education and action by the introduction of neem (*Azadirachta indica*, the tree of a thousand and one uses) as a naturally occurring alternative to chemical inputs. NEEM works to unite and sustain communities through use of disused urban property in integrated, agroecological, school garden classrooms and food projects that benefit the environment and improve the socioeconomic status of the people who live there. NEEM addresses nutrition, obesity, food security and seeks to break the fast food chain. All projects are in low – moderate income areas in Durham, the Navajo Reservation, Kenya and Cuba. NEEM replicates the oldest and most successful country wide agroecological model in Cuba where 60% of dietary requirements are met by inner city farms (*Organopónico's* and our project goal).*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SET UP AN INTERVIEW:**

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