

talkin TRASH ...and more



Visit us at www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org

Tips for Keeping Thurston County Healthy, Spring/Summer 2010

New Drop Boxes for Old Drugs

Have you ever wondered how to dispose of old medications? According to a state survey, three in five teens said prescription pain killers were easy to obtain from parents' medicine cabinets. Medications that are placed in the garbage may still be found and abused or cause poisoning. Flushing drugs down the drain sends them into the septic system or sewage treatment plant, neither of which is designed to remove them, so the drugs end up in our waterways.

So what should you do with those old medications? Fortunately, there are three good options for safely disposing of old or excess medications in Thurston County.

Group Health Cooperative

The Group Health Cooperative pharmacy at 700 Lilly Road in Olympia offers a secure medicine disposal box. The Group Health box accepts most types of medications, however, it cannot accept narcotics ... which brings us to our next two options.

Sheriff's Office Drop Box

Thurston County hazardous waste specialists have set up a new prescription medication drop box just outside the Sheriff's Office at the Thurston County Courthouse, Building Three, 2000 Lakeridge Drive S.W. in Olympia. The drop box was set up with the assistance of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office; TOGETHER! The Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force; and the Washington Department of Ecology. Because the box is managed by the county Sheriff's Office, it can accept narcotics such as OxyContin and Vicodin.

Medications left in the metal box are incinerated. The drop box is open and monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

New boxes may be added at other sites around the county in the future. Visit www.WhereDoITakeMy.org for updates and to find out more details about the items accepted.

Tumwater Police Department Drop Box

The Tumwater Police Department has a prescription medication drop box at its City Hall location, 555 Israel Road. The drop box is open during City Hall hours, which are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Recycle Styrofoam!™



Terri Thomas of the Solid Waste Program recycles Styrofoam™ at the Dart facility.

We're excited to announce that Dart Container Corporation in Tumwater now accepts #6 polystyrene foam for recycling. What the heck is *that*? Most of us know it by the Dow trademark of Styrofoam™.

Dart accepts clean #6 polystyrene packaging material and food service items. The collection bin is located outside the entrance to the Dart facility at 600 Israel Road S.E. Please place small items such as cups and plates in bags before dropping them off, and rinse all food containers. Call 352-7045 to schedule large deliveries.

Packing peanuts are not accepted at the Dart site, but they can be taken to several shipping stores in Thurston County. For locations, visit www.loosefillpackaging.com or call the Peanut Hotline at 800-828-2214.

Thurston County residents and businesses threw away about 1,460 tons of Styrofoam™ last year, up from about 660 tons ten years ago. Considering the light weight of the material, this figure is significant.

In the future, we hope to accept polystyrene foam at the recycle bins at the Waste and Recovery Center. Go to www.WhereDoITakeMy.org and click on "Styrofoam™" to stay posted.

Remember: Styrofoam™ is not allowed in curbside recycle bins. LeMay Enterprises can provide recycling service to businesses that generate large quantities. (See page 8 for phone numbers.)

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WASHINGTON AMONG THE WORST: Washington has one of the highest rates of nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers in the nation, according to a study by the state Department of Social and Health Services released in September 2009. According to the study, Washington ranks sixth among the states in nonmedical use of pain relievers by people 12 and older, after Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Utah and West Virginia. The study notes that most of the pain relievers being abused are opioids — the family of drugs that includes OxyContin. (Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Abuse Trends in Washington State, 2009)

Since You Asked!



Is there a way to recycle empty plastic medication bottles?

The curbside recycling program does not accept straight-sided plastic prescription bottles. (These bottles are typically orange.) Consider reusing the straight-sided bottles to store beads, jewelry, fishing gear, nails or other small items. The program does, however, accept vitamin and other pill bottles that have necks that are narrower than their bases.

May we put empty plastic motor oil bottles in the curbside recycle bin?

No, empty plastic bottles that held toxic products should not be placed in the recycle bin. They belong in the garbage. Thanks for asking!

Is there someplace where individuals can take boxes of sensitive documents to be shredded?

Pacific Disposal provides drop-in shredding service at its main facility at 2910 Hogum Bay Road N.E. Pacific Disposal is located near the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center – just follow the signs to Pacific Disposal instead. The cost is \$5.50 per file box. A staff person will help you put the items in a locked box, and the contents will be shredded that day. For more information, call 486-8605.

What can I do with an old Styrofoam™ cooler?

Dart Container Corporation at 600 Israel Road S.E. in Tumwater accepts clean #6 polystyrene packaging material and food service items, including old Styrofoam™ coolers. See page 1 for details.

May I place baskets in my organics recycling bin?

No, unfortunately baskets contain dyes that pose a problem in the commercial composting process.

Is there any way to recycle an old mattress in Thurston County?

Currently there are no recycling programs for old mattresses in Thurston County.

Will I be able to dispose of an unusable love seat at the Hogum Bay Road site?

Yes, we can accept unusable furniture at the Waste and Recovery Center. There is a \$17 minimum fee for loads weighing 300 pounds or less, so it makes sense to gather as much material as possible in one load. Loads that weigh more than 300 pounds are charged at \$110 per ton, which amounts to about 5.5 cents per pound.

Community Garage Sale, May 1

Join the fun at Thurston County's second annual Community Garage Sale and Reuse Fair! This event will be held at the Thurston County Fairgrounds, 3054 Carpenter Road in Lacey. This is a great opportunity to sell, trade and barter with others in your community. An early-bird admission fee of \$2 will apply from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. After 9 a.m. the admission fee will be \$1. Come early for the biggest selection.

Coordinate with your friends, make it a family event, or use the opportunity to raise money for a charity. Booth space is \$25 for an outdoor booth and \$40 for a covered booth. (Booths are 10 feet x 10 feet.) Setup will be the day before the event, on Friday, April 30 from noon until 10 p.m. The doors will be locked after setup and security will be on-site until Saturday morning.

Goodwill will have a trailer on-site and will accept donations throughout the day. This is a great opportunity to donate your leftovers at the end of the day. Visitors may also bring items to donate. Items will be accepted for donation at Goodwill's discretion.

Sign up now if you would like to have an educational booth! All agencies, nonprofits, businesses, community groups and individuals working on sustainability-related issues are welcome.

Reusing products reduces waste, saves money, and has many far-reaching environmental, community and economic benefits.

Last year's event drew a crowd of nearly 3,000 people and we're expecting even more this year. To reserve your space or for more information, call the Thurston County Fairgrounds at 786-5453 or visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/fair. Don't forget to bring your books and magazines for the free exchange table!



Exchange books at Secondhand Safari

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BIG CROWDS, LITTLE TRASH: The Thurston County Community Garage Sale and Reuse Fair, also called "Secondhand Safari," is designed to be a nearly zero-waste event. Last year's crowd of 3,000 visitors generated only one small bag of garbage thanks to waste-collection stations staffed by Master Recycler volunteers.

Why Caps and Lids are Not Recyclable

We're often asked why plastic caps and lids cannot be recycled. If the entire container can be recycled, why not the top? Well, there are a couple of reasons.

First, caps are often made out of a different type of plastic than containers. Different types of plastics should not be recycled together because of contamination.



Second, lids of all sizes are a problem at sorting centers. Small lids tend to jam the equipment. Dairy-tub and detached metal lids are larger and flatter, so the automated sorting equipment sends them to the paper and cardboard area where they cause contamination.

To add insult to injury (literally), capped bottles can explode when compacted, which poses a danger to workers.

What to do? Plastic lids should be thrown away. Period.

Got a metal lid? A metal lid may be recycled only if it is still attached to the can (and folded into the can itself). Lids that are detached from cans often get incorrectly mixed with paper and cardboard during the automated sorting process at recycling plants. Also, do not flatten cans. The cans will be flattened after they're sorted.

One other common question: What about the little plastic ring around the neck of the bottle? Go ahead and leave it on. It's so small it won't cause contamination, and it's usually fixed in place so it won't pop off and jam the equipment.

Adapted with permission from an article by the City of Federal Way.

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RECYCLED ART: The Hands On Children's Museum art gallery is hosting its first exhibit of recycled art. The exhibit will feature a changing lineup of recycled art for at least the next year, starting with art by Diane Kurzyna of Olympia and Stuart Gullstrand of Seattle. The museum is located at 106 11th Ave. S.W. in Olympia. The fee is \$7.95 for adults, \$6.95 for ages 55 and older, and \$5.95 for children 12 to 23 months. Admission is free for museum members and babies younger than 12 months old. The art exhibit is being coordinated in partnership with the Matter Gallery in Olympia, www.matteroly.com.

Changes at HazoHouse

Thurston County's HazoHouse provides free and proper disposal of household hazardous waste for county residents. We've made a few changes at HazoHouse lately, so please be aware of the new procedures.

HazoHouse is open Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center, 2418 Hogum Bay Road.

Paint Options

HazoHouse accepts oil-based paint, along with all stains, varnishes and thinners. Latex paint is not considered hazardous waste and is no longer accepted at HazoHouse. The exception is latex paint made before 1989, since it might contain lead or mercury. (See related article to the right.)

Battery Options

HazoHouse accepts many batteries, just not the alkaline variety, which are the common household batteries used for many flashlights and small electronics. Bring all other batteries to HazoHouse, including rechargeable, NiCad, lithium, silver oxide, and button cell batteries.

Place batteries in individual plastic baggies or place tape across the terminals. This prevents the terminals from making contact and causing a fire during storage or shipping. (See related article to the right.)

HazoHouse also accepts up to three car batteries per residential customer per day. Many automotive stores will take them as well.

Interstate Battery at 3480 Martin Way E. in Olympia recycles alkaline batteries as well as car batteries.

Propane Tanks

Up to three propane tanks are accepted from residential customers per day. HazoHouse accepts 20 pound/5 gallon or smaller standard barbecue tanks only. There is no need to de-valve the tanks.

Fluorescent Lights

Fluorescent lights contain a small amount of mercury, so HazoHouse accepts all fluorescent light bulbs, tubes and yard light bulbs. Ballasts are limited to 15 per day, and please bring no more than 30 tubes or bulbs per day. Do not tape tubes together, or they might break when they are separated. Do pack them carefully in their original boxes or in newspaper or plastic so they don't break in your car.

If you have a group that would like to learn more about household hazardous products, how to read labels, and how to choose the safest products, call Thurston County Environmental Health educators at 867-2674 to schedule a presentation. Scheduling is flexible and presentations may include a lesson in making a multipurpose "green cleaner" to bring home. (See page 5 for some of our favorite recipes.)



Sally Toteff prepares materials for HazoHouse.

Batteries Must Now Be Taped

The U.S. Department of Transportation in April 2009 announced new regulations for handling, shipping and transporting batteries. As a result, Thurston County must now ask residents to tape both contact points (terminals) of their batteries, or place each battery in an individual plastic baggie, before delivering the batteries to HazoHouse. Any type of tape will work, but clear tape is better because it allows the batteries to be identified easily.

So how do you know where to put the tape? Identify the energy-points of the battery. In the case of A, AA, AAA, C and D batteries, the tape should go on both ends of the battery. This is also true for button cell batteries.

In the case of 9-volt batteries and other batteries that have two terminals side-by-side, you may place one piece of tape across both terminals.

The new regulation is designed to help prevent fires and other dangers while the batteries are transported. Private companies that accept batteries for recycling will need to enforce the same requirements.

Please remember: HazoHouse no longer accepts alkaline batteries for recycling. (See "Changes at HazoHouse" article to the left.)



Photo courtesy Retrofit Recycling, MN

What to Do With Leftover Paint

What should you do with your leftover latex paint? If you have no projects that could benefit from a coat of many colors, try donating the paint to neighbors, schools or theater groups.

If your paint can is one-quarter full or less, remove the lid and let the paint dry out in a safe, ventilated area. If your paint can is more than one-quarter full, you can add a commercial paint hardener (available at hardware stores), kitty litter, shredded paper, or another type of absorbent filler to help it dry out.

Check the paint's dryness with a stick. Once paint is a tacky, oatmeal-like consistency and will not spill, it is ready for disposal.

Please make sure the paint is not runny and the lid is off the can. Spilled paint can cause a mess on the road, so haulers will not accept any liquid or runny paint.

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FLUORESCENT RECYCLING LEGISLATION: The 2010 state Legislature approved a bill that would require producers of fluorescent lights to either set up their own recycling programs or make annual payments into a fund for a shared program. As Talkin' Trash went to press, the bill, ESSB 5543, awaited Governor Gregoire's signature to become law. The producer-financed recycling program would begin January 1, 2013 and would be available in all counties.

Organics Pop Quiz

...which items belong in your organics bin?

Plastic straw



No

Paper fast-food wrapper



Yes

(provided there's no foil)

Plastic cups



No

(paper cups are ok)

Fruit sticker



No
(fruit is ok)

Ice cream carton



Yes

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BIODEGRADABLE VS. COMPOSTABLE: When you purchase bags for your organics bin or home compost bin, make sure the box says "compostable" – not just "biodegradable." Biodegradable plastic will degrade as a result of bacterial activity. In order to also be classified compostable, the degradation must meet certain specified criteria such as a certain rate of biodegradation. All compostable plastic is therefore also biodegradable. Use only compostable bags that are certified "ASTM D 6400-99."

Save Money on Trash Costs



Paying bills is never a fun task, but at least you can save money on garbage bills by generating less trash. Here are some tips:

- “Right size” your trash container. If your bin is usually not full on collection day, you are paying for air. Ask your hauler about a smaller container size or less frequent pickup. Some residents are hesitant to change their service because they worry about those rare occasions when they have too much trash for the can. Don't be concerned! If you occasionally have more trash during the holidays or other events, you may always set out an extra can or bag. The one-time charge may be less than a year's worth of higher service.
- Watch what you buy! Think about your purchasing habits. Buy brands that have less packaging or that come in recyclable containers, or buy in bulk.
- Visit www.WhereDoITakeMy.org for our database of reuse and recycling locations. The Web site includes more than 130 categories.
- Subscribe to the curbside organics collection service through your hauler or start a home compost bin (see page 6). Food waste, yard debris and compostable paper make up a very large percentage of the average household's garbage.
- If you own a business, sign up for LeMay's Certified Green, a customized set of environmentally friendly recycling services that will reduce your trash-service needs. Call 486-8608 for more information.

How is Our Service?

Thurston County would like to hear about your most recent experience at the Waste and Recovery Center or the drop boxes at Rainier, Rochester or Summit Lake. Share your views at www.ThurstonSurveys.org.

Best Buy Among Best Recyclers

Next time you walk into a Best Buy store to check out the latest gadgets and electronics, remember to take your old products in for recycling. All U.S. Best Buy stores now accept nearly every type and brand of electronic item regardless of where it was purchased. Below are rules for plugging into the Best Buy program.

Electronics

Best Buy accepts virtually every type of electronic item, including TVs and monitors, peripherals, DVD players, home and car audio, cell phones, MP3 players and cables. The limit is two items per household per day.

Most items are free; however, there is a \$10 charge for CRTs, monitors, laptops and TVs. In return, Best Buy will immediately provide a \$10 Best Buy gift card to offset the cost.

The size limit for TVs and monitors is 32 inches for tube varieties, and 60 inches for flat-panel models. Best Buy will collect larger TVs and monitors from homes for a fee (see next column).

Hard drives must be removed from desktop and laptop computers. Do-it-yourself instructions are available on www.geeksquad.com/intelligence/blog/geek-squad-2mm-disposing-of-your-hard-drives. Best Buy will remove hard drives for \$9.99 per computer.

Best Buy will also accept small electric items, such as printers, fax machines, phone/fax/printer “all-in-ones,” fans and vacuums.



Other Items

Recycling kiosks: Ink cartridges, rechargeable batteries, cell phones, CDs, DVDs, PDAs/ smart phones and gift cards are accepted at kiosks near the front of the store.

Appliance and TV pickup: For \$100, Best Buy will arrange a home visit to remove up to two appliances or TVs for recycling. The cost for more than two units is \$20 per additional unit. Other businesses also offer TV and appliance pickup service. For a complete list, visit www.WhereDoITakeMy.org.

Trade-in program: Customers can visit www.bestbuy.com/tradein to trade in certain gently used electronics for a Best Buy gift card.

Also remember that computers, laptops, TVs and monitors can be recycled completely free of charge through Washington's E-Cycle program. For details, visit www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org and select “Electronics & Technotrash.”

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PRINTER CARTRIDGES: Ink and toner cartridges can take hundreds of years to decompose in a landfill because of the plastic casing. Consider taking your cartridges to Cartridge World in Olympia or Cartridge Care in Lacey. Both businesses recycle printer cartridges of all shapes and sizes by either refilling or remanufacturing them. Cartridge World is located at 345 Cooper Point Road N.W. in Olympia. Phone: 753-0380. Cartridge Care is located at 1314 Lebanon Street S.E. in Lacey. Phone: 459-8845. Most office supply stores also accept printer cartridges for recycling. Visit www.WhereDoITakeMy.org for details.

Thurston Wins EPA Award

The Thurston County Solid Waste Program was honored in February when the federal Environmental Protection Agency awarded the county its “2009 WasteWise Gold Achievement Award for Organic Material Reduction.” The award was made possible thanks to you – Thurston County residents, businesses and schools who go the extra step to place food scraps and soiled paper into an organics-recycling bin instead of the trash.

As thousands of people have already discovered, the process is easy: Simply place food and food scraps in your organics bin (formally known as a yard waste bin), and a hauler will empty the contents and deliver them to Silver Springs Organics in Rainier to be turned into compost. Schools and businesses go through a similar procedure.

Today, nearly 14,000 households and 117 local schools and businesses are recycling their organic materials through the collection program. Participating schools have reduced kitchen and cafeteria waste by approximately 80 to 90 percent. These figures do not include City of Olympia residents and businesses who participate in the city's excellent organics recycling program.

The EPA award also commends Thurston County's highly successful in-house organics-recycling program. In 2008 alone, county employees recycled more than 154 tons of organic material from lunch rooms, break rooms, coffee stands, jury rooms and the county jail. Thurston County Fairgrounds also diverts a significant amount of manure and hay for composting. Tonnages are being compiled for 2009.

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OTHER HONORS: The EPA award is the third major award won by the Thurston County Solid Waste Program in the past three years. In 2007, the program received the Recycler of the Year award from the Washington State Recycling Association. Thurston County Public Works educator Colleen Uuereb received the “Outstanding Nonformal Environmental Educator Award for 2009” from the Environmental Education Association of Washington.

Beware of Greenwashing

Stroll down any supermarket aisle and you'll likely see bold environmental claims such as "all natural," "non-toxic," "ozone friendly" and "organic." Consumers have become more concerned about environmental issues over the past few decades and some companies are trying to cash in on that awareness through "Greenwashing."

Put simply, greenwashing is the act of providing misleading information about the environmental benefits of a product or service. This practice can be seen in household cleaners and personal care items, as well as services that launder clothes or offer carbon credits.



To illustrate how common greenwashing really is, researchers from TerraChoice Environmental Marketing in November 2008 and January 2009 selected 2,219 products from some of the nation's largest retail chains, and evaluated the environmental benefits proposed by each product label. Of the products surveyed, more than 98 percent committed at least one of the "Six Sins of Greenwashing" – a list of little green lies that TerraChoice originally identified in 2007. The 2008-2009 study prompted TerraChoice to add a seventh sin, as shown on the next page.

According to TerraChoice, the most common types of misleading claims include hidden trade-offs and choosing the lesser of two evils; the vagueness and irrelevance of claims; and claims that outright lie or offer little proof to back them up. TerraChoice discovered that the average number of "green" products per store almost doubled between 2007 and 2008.

TerraChoice found that greenwashing is most common in three household categories: children's items (toys and baby products), cosmetics (beauty and health) and cleaning products.

Greenwashing has become so common, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and Canadian Competition Bureau are enforcing laws about environmental claims and are suing companies that do not comply.

What You Can Do

While it may seem daunting for the average consumer to sort out which claims are true and which are false, one important rule of thumb is to look for third-party certification. USDA Organic and Energy Star are examples of certification by government agencies. Green Seal, EcoLogo and EPEAT (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool) are examples of independent certification. These organizations have specific guidelines that each product must meet to claim an environmental benefit.

It is important to keep in mind that not every certification organization may have a legitimate interest in encouraging honest label claims. There are a few questions to ask when looking at third party certification.

First, who makes up the organization? Is it just industry executives, or does it include scientists, environmentalists and government representatives?

Second, where does the organization get its funding? Is it a nonprofit organization supported by government grants, or is it sponsored by a major chemical company?

Finally, what type of certification standards does the organization use? Are the standards specific and based on current environmental data, or are they vague or unwilling to disclose information about certification standards at all?

Many of these questions can be answered by visiting the organizations' Web sites. The Consumers Union provides a searchable database that provides information about a wide range of products and third party certifiers: www.greenerchoices.org/eco-labels/eco-home.cfm.

Although greenwashing is a common practice, TerraChoice urges consumers not to become so skeptical they consider every product labeled "green" as untrustworthy. According to TerraChoice, many companies end up greenwashing not to deceive customers, but because the companies are not adequately informed. The best way to fight greenwashing is to seek out and support products that list more information and offer certification.

Cleaning Recipes



After a long winter, it's time for spring cleaning. Creating your own low-toxic cleaners is a great way to have a healthy home. Homemade cleaners are easy to make, effective, affordable, and they don't pollute indoor air. Here are a few of our favorite recipes:

All Purpose Cleaner

1 ²/₃ cup baking soda
1/2 cup liquid castile soap*
1/2 cup water
2 tablespoons vinegar
16-oz bottle with flip-top cap

Mix baking soda and liquid soap in a bowl using a fork. Add water. Add vinegar last. Pour into the squeeze bottle. If the cleaner is too thick, add a little more water. Shake well. Squirt in tub, sink, toilet, counter etc. Scrub and rinse.

Scouring Powder

baking soda
liquid castile soap*

You can use baking soda in place of scouring powder. First, wet the area you want to clean. Then sprinkle baking soda on the area and rub the surface with a wet rag. Add a little castile soap to the rag for more cleaning power. Rinse well.

Mirror & Window Cleaner

club soda
spray bottle

Put club soda into the spray bottle. Spray on surfaces. Rub surfaces with a lint-free cloth (such as a cloth diaper) or squeegee.

For more green cleaning recipes, visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhm/greencleaning.html.

*Liquid castile soap is available with other soaps in most supermarkets and drugstores. Food co-ops often sell castile soap in bulk.

A Deadly Mix

As a rule of thumb, never mix any commercial household cleaners. Many cleaners have either a bleach or ammonia base. Mixing ammonia (often found in window cleaners) and bleach can cause deadly fumes.

Look for These Labels



EcoLogo and Green Seal are the only two programs in North America that have been accredited by the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN).

EPEAT is a system to help purchasers evaluate, compare, and select desktop and laptop computers, thin clients, workstations and computer monitors. EPEAT is a program of the Green Electronics Council. Original development funds came from the U.S. EPA.

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

USDA ORGANIC certifies that the product has been made according to a strict set of federal standards and regulations set forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Give Home Composting a Turn

Compost is a great soil amendment that helps conserve water, control weeds and reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers. Composting can also reduce trash disposal costs. Food waste, yard waste and compostable paper make up 31 percent of the average household's waste. By sending these materials to the compost bin instead, you may be able to reduce the size of your trash can or the frequency of your pickup service.

First, you'll need a compost bin. Bins are sold through the Master Gardener Foundation and subsidized by Thurston County Solid Waste to reduce the price. Bins are shipped directly to homes, and the price includes tax and delivery.

For details or to order, visit www.compostbinthurstoncounty.com, e-mail bins@compostbinthurstoncounty.com or call 481-4204. Composting guides and accessories are also available through the Master Gardeners Foundation.

Next, you might want a bit of education. Thurston County Master Composters offer free composting workshops throughout the county from April through October. Topics include yard waste, food waste, and leaf composting. For a schedule, go to www.mgftc.org/Composting.html or call the Master Gardener Foundation at 867-2163.

Thurston County features three great demonstration gardens. The sites have a variety of bins on display and Master Gardeners or Master Composters are often on hand to answer questions. Locations include Closed Loop Park at the Waste and Recovery Center on Hogum Bay Road; Dirt Works behind Yauger Park in west Olympia; and the Olympia Farmers Market on Capitol Way.

Bins at a Glance

Earth Machine and Biostack bins may be used to compost food and yard waste. For food waste, simply attach a galvanized ¼-inch screen to the bottom of the bin to keep out pests.



Earth Machine - \$40



Biostack - \$60



Kitchen Collector - \$10 each.

Shipping is free if you order the collector with one of the compost bins above; otherwise, a \$5 shipping fee applies. This is one of the most popular items sold through the Master Gardener Foundation. (Look under "Accessories" on the Web site.)

Seven Sins of Greenwashing

Sin of the Hidden Trade-off: A claim suggesting that a product is "green" based on a narrow set of attributes without attention to other important environmental issues.

Sin of No Proof: An environmental claim that cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information or by a reliable third-party certification.

Sin of Vagueness: A claim that is so poorly defined or broad that its real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the consumer.

Sin of Worshiping False Labels: A product that, through either words or images, gives the impression of third-party endorsement where no such endorsement exists; fake labels, in other words.

Sin of Irrelevance: An environmental claim that may be truthful but is unimportant or unhelpful for consumers seeking environmentally preferable products.

Sin of Lesser of Two Evils: A claim that may be true within the product category, but that risks distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole.

Sin of Fibbing: Environmental claims that are simply false.



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NAME THAT SIN: The TerraChoice Web site offers a fun, interactive greenwashing game. Images of products pop up on the screen and Web visitors are asked to identify the correct greenwashing sin. To play, visit www.sinsofgreenwashing.org. Good luck!

When in Doubt, Leave it Out!

When it comes to recycling, don't let your good intentions go to waste. Be sure to place the correct materials in your recycle bin, otherwise, the bin will become contaminated. Contamination increases processing costs and makes it less likely the materials will be turned into new products. Here are some tips:

- No lids or caps of any kind – plastic or metal (with the exception of metal lids that are still partially attached to cans). See the related article on page 2.
- Don't flatten or smash cans or plastic containers. The optical sorting equipment thinks flattened materials are paper and they end up at the paper mill.
- The ONLY plastic items that go in the recycle bin are narrow-neck bottles, dairy tubs, plastic jars and yogurt cups. No plastic bags, clamshells or other types of packaging belong in the recycle bin.



Allyson Ruppenthal of Thurston County Solid Waste places items into a curbside recycle bin.

- Keep recycling dry. Wet cardboard and paper tears into small pieces and falls through the sorting screens.
- Paper should be at least two inches square. Smaller pieces fall out through the sorting screen, so they should be composted instead.
- Shredded paper should not go in your recycle bin at all. This one surprised us. In the past, we have told residents to place shredded paper in paper bags because loose shreds can blow all over the neighborhood. As it turns out, shreds in paper bags cause problems at the recycling facility! The preferred method is to place shredded paper in a paper bag, and then place the bag in your curbside organics bin or home composting bin – not the recycle bin.
- Rinse metal cans to remove food residue. Labels can stay on the cans.
- No scrap metal. Scrap metal can create safety hazards during compaction.
- Bunch clean aluminum foil pieces together into a ball at least the size of your fist. Sorting equipment can mistakenly identify flat foil sheets or pans as paper. Smaller pieces often end up with residue, known as fines.
- Customers of LeMay Enterprises must keep glass separate from the other recyclables. Glass shards often end up mixed with paper and can damage expensive equipment, cause streaking during the coating process and become embedded in the finished product.

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WHERE RECYCLABLES GO: Materials collected from the curbside recycling program in Thurston County are transported to SP Recycling Corp., a recycling plant in Tacoma that is a subsidiary of SP Newsprint Company, LLC. At the Tacoma plant, the items are sorted and processed for sale. Processing typically includes sorting and then flattening aluminum cans; perforating plastic bottles; crushing glass bottles; and baling newspapers and other items to be transported. Once processed, the materials are sold directly to specialty recyclers.

Health Matters



News from Thurston County Environmental Health

Weed & Pest Control

The sheer variety of lawn and garden products can seem overwhelming, but the new *Grow Smart, Grow Safe* guide is available to help you find the option that matches your needs. The guide rates 600 pesticides, fertilizers, and soil amendments for health and environmental hazards. Results are organized in easy-to-use categories that help you find lawn and garden products least hazardous to your pets and loved ones, wildlife, lakes, streams, and ground water. This and other guides are available from the Thurston County Common Sense Gardening program, 360-867-2674 or www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehcsg. Click on the guides and resources link. (TDD 360-867-2603)

Gardening Classes

Looking for a beautiful landscape to relax in? An abundant vegetable garden? How about a good-enough looking yard that won't make anyone cringe? Learn common-sense gardening tips to have a lovely looking yard that will enhance the environment, satisfy the neighbors, and give you time to relax too! We'll talk about garden basics, landscape design, strategies for easy maintenance, and ways to encourage birds and other wildlife. A free Common Sense Gardening presentation can be arranged for your group by calling 360-867-2674 or by e-mailing venninj@co.thurston.wa.us.

Thurston County Public Health is also co-sponsoring a series of gardening workshops this spring and summer with GRuB, Sustainable South Sound, and the Olympia Food Co-op. See the schedule and register online at www.oly-wa.us/SustainSouthSound/WorkshopGuide.php.

Wipe Your Feet!

Mom was right – wipe your feet when you come in the door! Better yet, take off your shoes. Shoes carry lead, arsenic, pesticides and other harmful compounds indoors, and the contaminants stay in household dust. Plus, dust is a common asthma and allergy trigger. Wiping shoes on a high quality, rough doormat reduces indoor dust by 75 percent. Removing shoes at the door reduces dust by 86 percent! These simple steps help limit young children's exposure to toxins in dust as they play on the floor, and benefit all of us who grumble when housecleaning!

For more healthy home tips call Thurston County Public Health at 360-867-2674 for a free copy of the "Breathe Easier Home Assessment" developed by the American Lung Association. Information is also available at www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhm under "Popular Pages."

Beware of Cadmium in Jewelry

Most parents are concerned about what their children eat, but less obvious are all the toxic metals that can end up in children's mouths when they suck or chew on toys or jewelry. Lead, cadmium and arsenic are just a few of the toxic materials often found in jewelry, toys and other children's products.

The lead content in toys and jewelry has dropped in recent years, thanks largely to the 2007 recall of millions of lead-containing toys – including such favorites as Thomas the Tank Engine and Elmo. The recall led to the passage of a 2008 federal law that now makes it illegal to produce children's products with more than 300 parts per million of lead. Yet in some cases, the lead has been replaced by cadmium and other heavy metals.

The swap from lead to cadmium is particularly notable in cheap metal jewelry. Traditionally, lead has been the metal of choice for manufacturers of inexpensive jewelry; faced with new restrictions on lead, some manufacturers have turned to cadmium instead. Cadmium is known to cause cancer, brittle bones, and kidney and lung damage at high levels of exposure.

In January, Wal-Mart recalled two types of toy jewelry that contained high levels of cadmium, and some federal lawmakers have proposed legislation to ban cadmium in children's jewelry altogether. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) advises parents to take away all cheap metal jewelry from children who might swallow, suck, or chew on it. Parents can throw away cheap metal jewelry in the regular trash.

- Jewelry is not the only concern. In 2009, the nonprofit group HealthyStuff.org tested nearly 700 toys and children's products for lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic and bromine, and found that one-third of the items tested contained one or more of these hazardous chemicals.

- How can you find out if an item contains a toxic substance? Check the results of testing on www.HealthyStuff.org. Also check the Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site for a list of recalled products at www.cpsc.gov/onsafety.



Tips for Septic System Care

1 The best way to protect your septic system is to remove sludge and scum buildup before it washes into the drainfield. The schedule for pumping depends on the size of the tank, the size of the household, the volume of water used, and the amount of solids entering the system. Generally, tanks should be pumped every three to five years.

2 Septic systems treat sewage – they are not designed to treat food wastes from garbage disposals, chemicals from many household products, baby wipes, diapers, condoms, or feminine hygiene products. Your septic system will last longer and work better if you do not flush these items down the drain. So compost and recycle whenever possible, and place trash in the garbage can, not down the toilet!

3 Use less water indoors. Less water flowing into your septic system means less water to treat. Stagger the timing of large water-use activities such as laundry. Solids need time to settle to the bottom of the septic tank before the next large volume of water arrives.

- **4** Learn the location of your drainfield and protect it. The drainfield provides important treatment for your sewage and is one of the most expensive components to replace. Plant grass or shallow-rooted plants on the drainfield. Direct water from downspouts and sprinklers away from the drainfield. Do not allow parking or large animal grazing on top of the drainfield.

- For more tips, visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehoss. The Web site also features lists of septic professionals licensed to work in Thurston County, details about different types of septic systems, step-by-step directions to inspect your septic tank, and more. A septic help line is also available at 360-867-2669.



This edition of Talkin' Trash does not have a calendar because there are no events scheduled for spring/summer.

Garbage and Recycling Resources

► The information on this page is correct through 12/31/10.

Contacts

Talkin' Trash is produced by Thurston County Public Works. Phone 867-2491 or e-mail wwm-webmaster@co.thurston.wa.us. TDD: 754-2933.

Thurston County Public Works

Thurston County Solid Waste Administration: 867-2491. TDD: 754-2933

WasteLine: 786-5494
(24-hour recorded information)

Food Recycling Hotline:
754-2953 (24-hour recorded message)

Webs: www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org
www.WhereDoITakeMy.org

Curbside Collection (Haulers)

Thurston County does not own or operate garbage and recycling trucks. Call your service provider for information about collection schedules.

- Butler's Cove Refuse..... 923-0111
- Eastern Grays Harbor (Summit Lake) 923-0111
- Joe's Refuse 736-4769or 1-800-525-4167
- Pacific Disposal 923-0111
- Rural Refuse 923-0111

The above companies are owned by Harold LeMay Enterprises, which has been purchased by Waste Connections. Organics/yard waste collection service is also available in many of the service areas. Call for more information or visit www.lemayinc.com.

- City of Olympia residents, call 753-8368 or visit www.olympiawa.gov. Olympia provides its own trash, recycling and organics collection service.
- Town of Bucoda residents, call 278-3525 to arrange for curbside trash and recycling service with LeMay Enterprises.

Public Health and Social Services, Environmental Health

Phone: 867-2674 or TDD 867-2603

Web: www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehadm

Gardening guides: www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehcsg

Healthy home advice: www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhm

Note new address: 412 Lilly Rd N.E., Olympia WA 98506

Exchange Websites

The following websites provide an excellent way to sell or give away useable items. While you're there, you might just find some good deals on items you need.

- Thurston County's free online exchange program: www.2good2toss.com
- craigslist: seattle.craigslist.org/oly
- FreeCycle: www.freecycle.org

Facilities

Waste and Recovery Center

Located at 2418 Hogum Bay Road. From I-5: take the Marvin Road exit (Exit 111) and head north. Turn right onto Hogum Bay Road. The center will be on your right.

Rates (through 12/31/2010)

one ton = 2,000 lbs

Garbage

300 lbs or less.....\$17
more than 300 lbs ... \$110 per ton, prorated (One ton is 2,000 pounds, so the per-ton garbage rate is 5.5 cents per pound.) For refrigerated appliances, add a \$17 handling fee to the rate above. Rates include 3.6 percent state refuse tax.

Computers, Monitors, Laptops, TVs

Free through the E-Cycle Washington program. Take these items to the Goodwill donation station located across from the outbound scales.

Yard Debris

300 lbs or less.....\$8
more than 300 lbs \$42 per ton, prorated (One ton is 2,000 pounds, so the per-ton yard waste rate is 2.1 cents per pound.)

There is no state refuse tax on yard waste.

Hours

Weekdays:

Nov. 1 to March 317 a.m. to 5 p.m.
April 1 to Oct. 317 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays

Year round.....8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Drop Boxes

Rainier: 13010 Rainier Acres Road S.E. Friday and Saturday only, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (until 5 p.m. April 1 to Oct. 31)

Rochester: 16500 Sargent Road S.E. Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Summit Lake: 12133 Summit Lake Drive Sunday only, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

HazoHouse

Take household hazardous products to HazoHouse. Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone 754-3354. HazoHouse is located next to the recycling area of the Waste and Recovery Center. Service is free for residents; businesses pay a small fee.

Holidays

The Waste and Recovery Center, HazoHouse and all Drop Boxes are closed on the following holidays only: Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and July Fourth.

Where to Take...

Thurston County maintains a database of locations where residents can reuse and recycle virtually any item. Visit www.WhereDoITakeMy.org. Are we missing any locations? Call 867-2491 or e-mail wwm-webmaster@co.thurston.wa.us.

Compost Bin Sales

Reduced-price compost bins are available through the Thurston County Master Gardener Foundation. Visit www.compostbinthurstoncounty.com or call 481-4204.



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Produced by:
Thurston County Public Works
2404 A Heritage Court S.W.
Olympia, WA 98502-6045

ECRWSS
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
OLYMPIA WA
PERMIT NO 167

Recycle Blue Bins

Locations

Lacey: Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center, 2418 Hogum Bay Road N.E.

Rochester: Rochester Garbage Drop Box site, 16500 Sargent Road. Open Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays only.

Rainier: Rainier Garbage Drop Box site, 13010 Rainier Acres Road S.E. Open Fridays and Saturdays only.

Summit Lake: Summit Lake Garbage Drop Box site, 12133 Summit Lake Drive. Open Sundays only.

Items Accepted at Blue Bins

Thurston County's blue recycle bins accept:

- Newspaper
- Glass bottles and jars
- Tin and aluminum cans
- Mixed paper
- Plastic dairy tubs, yogurt cups, jugs, jars, and bottles
- Milk cartons and drink boxes
- Corrugated cardboard

Please place all materials loose in the bin – not in a bag. Bagged materials are difficult to sort out at the recycling plant.