

May
2012

Spring Into Cleaning Green!



Griselda! P. 5

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Master Recycler Newsletter



Want to get clean this spring but still want to keep your footprint light? Don't worry! Check out this handy guide adapted from Earth911.org, which will help you sort it all out.

Green cleaning products

Before you run to the store to stock up on harsh, chemical-laden cleaners, consider eco-friendly alternatives instead. Eco-friendly cleaners typically contain natural, organic, non-toxic, chemical-free or biodegradable ingredients for all the clean without the environmental impact.

Green cleaning supplies are available in most store where cleaning products are sold. Even better, if you're feeling ambitious, you can also whip up a few eco-friendly cleaning products from scratch using common household ingredients (see inset on page 2).

Unless a cleaning product is marked "biodegradable," avoid dumping half-full bottles down the drain or tossing them in the trash. Instead, clean with the product until it's used up, rinse the bottle and recycle.

Kitchen

1. Clean those surfaces

Before you buy a bunch of specialized cleaners to degrease your oven, decalcify your glasses and de-gross your stovetops, take a moment to think about what you really need. Select a product that will work best for its function, and only use the amount directed on the label to cut back on waste. More is not better for your home or the planet, especially when it comes to cleaners.

Whenever possible, use an eco-friendly multipurpose cleaner, as long as it's right for the jobs, to reduce the number of products you have to buy and dispose of, saving money and reducing the waste of your spring cleaning project.



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"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

-- Albert Schweitzer

2. Stock up on reusables

Paper plates, plastic cups and single-use containers are convenient, but most of these items aren't recyclable, especially after they've been soiled by food and oils. Fight back against waste by stocking up on affordable, reusable items ahead of time.

Check out reusable food storage containers, and try a few unconventional reusables like coffee filters, drink boxes, drinking straws and sandwich bags.

3. Purge your packaging

Whether the food packaging in your home is recyclable or not, it's always best to find ways to reuse it before tossing it in the bin. Go through your pantry and transfer dry items from their original packaging into reusable containers.

Once you have all your packaging in the same place, consult Earth 911's *Food Packaging Reuse Guide* to find ways to repurpose it. And take note of the products that the majority of your packaging waste came from. Can you buy any of these materials in bulk to cut back on waste? How about switching to homemade? A little planning could mean emptier trash cans all year long.

4. Pack smarter

No, we're not talking about your next business trip. We're talking about your fridge and freezer. Improperly packed freezers or refrigerators can cause a huge energy drain.

Think about it this way: When you open the door to your fridge or freezer, warm air from your kitchen comes in and replaces the cool air inside. Your fridge now needs to use more energy to maintain temperature. So, the more empty space you have, the more warm air will enter your fridge, and the more energy your fridge will use.

We're not telling you to stuff your cold-storage box to the gills with perishables, but in general, full is good. The refrigerator should be full, but there should still be enough empty space around your items for the air to circulate efficiently. The freezer should be more tightly packed, since your items will help to keep each other cool.

Don't want to stock up on food? Containers filled with water will serve the same purpose in both the fridge and freezer.

5. Create more space

If you feel like the limited space in your kitchen is stifling your culinary creativity, take a few minutes to de-clutter and get smart about storage to maximize your workspace.

Start by cleaning out your kitchen cupboards. Recycle or donate what you can. This will give you more room for appliances and other items you may not use every day and do not need on your countertops (like your cast iron skillet or blender).

And when you're contemplating storage space, don't forget about your walls! You can easily add a bookshelf for your spice rack and cookbooks or hang pots and pans, oven mitts and utensils like spatulas.

D-I-Y Cleaners



1. Laundry detergent

For cold-water wash: dissolve soap flakes in a small pot of water on the stove and pour about a cup in with each load. And skip the fabric softener. Adding 1/2 cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle will soften clothes just as well. For hard water areas, add 1/3 cup of wash soda to water before adding clothes (the wash soda softens water and helps clothes come out clean). Add 1/2 cup of borax for added cleaning power.

2. Glass cleaner

Mix 2 tablespoons of vinegar with 8 cups of warm water to give your windows, mirrors and glass countertops a shiny finish. You can apply your mixture with a towel or spray bottle.

3. Toilet cleaner

To get the bowl clean, simply sprinkle in about 1/4 cup of baking soda and drizzle with vinegar. Let the mixture sit and fizzle away for about 1/2 hour, and scrub clean with a toilet brush. Your commode will be just as clean without the harsh chemical smells. Try a pumice stone for any stubborn stains—it won't scratch the porcelain!

4. Tile and grout cleaner

Usually, mixing 1/4 cup of vinegar with about 15 cups of water will be enough to clean your tile. But if you've got some tough spots, you may need something a little stronger. Make a paste using 1/4 cup of baking soda and a tablespoon of liquid soap and scrub it onto tough areas with a scouring pad.

5. Wood polish

For ugly rings on your wood tables, just make a paste using equal parts baking soda and plain, non-gel toothpaste and apply your mixture over the ring with a cloth. Wipe off the film with a wet cloth, buff with a dry one and your table will be good as new.

To give surfaces a glossy sheen, mix about 1/2 cup of vinegar and a tablespoon of olive oil and apply like your usual polish. Vinegar will pull dirt out of your wood surfaces, while oil leaves them shiny and moisturized.

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Living Room

1. Choose an eco-friendly carpet cleaner

Carpets can get pretty grungy over the winter months. And those less-than-spotless floors are not only unsightly, but could also be harboring allergens and bacteria that may make your family sick. So, if you're planning some carpet-cleaning this spring, consider choosing an eco-friendly service for a greener side of clean.

Most eco-friendly carpet cleaning services use plant-based, biodegradable and non-toxic products to give your carpet that "deep clean" that's hard to achieve on your own. Not sure how to find an eco-friendly service in your area? A simple Web search with your town's name and the words "eco-friendly carpet cleaning" should point you in the right direction.

Don't want to have a pro come in? Vacuum your carpets well and open your windows to remove allergens and improve indoor air quality. When cleaning, vacuum against the carpet's nap with at least six to eight strokes over each area.

2. Give your furniture a facelift

Have stains, sunlight and wear-and-tear left your couch and armchairs looking dreary and drab? Before you buy a new living room set (which could run you more than \$1,500), consider using slipcovers for a good-as-new look. If you're feeling ambitious, try making your own slipcover (check the Web for how-to videos).

3. Dust, dust, dust!

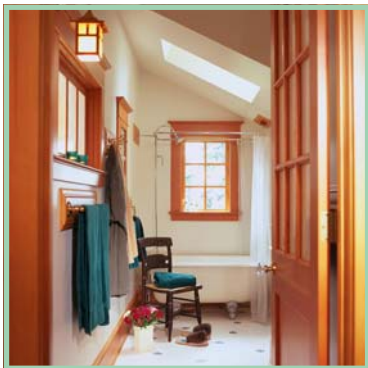
It's best to use a dusting product or at least a damp towel when it comes to dusting. A dry towel will just spread dust, dust mites and allergens around and can scratch wood furniture.

If you notice an excessive amount of dust in your home, this may be a sign of leaky ductwork pulling air from the crawl space or attic into your home – which can waste loads of money and energy and make cleaning your surfaces a full-time job. Call in a heating and cooling professional or home energy auditor to check for leaks.

4. Organize your entertainment center

Is your entertainment center piled high with 10-year-old movies, music and video games? Pick out the entertainment titles you don't watch, play with or listen to anymore and set them aside to give away.

Thrift and secondhand stores accept entertainment items, but if you'd rather exchange your unwanted titles for new-to-you movies, games and albums, check out Earth911's guide to swapping and bartering your old stuff online.



Bathroom

1. Take a look at your products

If the cabinet under your sink is practically exploding with half-full bottles of lotion, soaps and cosmetics, it's probably time for a purge. Combine similar soaps, shampoos, lotions and makeups, rinse the containers out and recycle them.

Most hygiene product bottles are recyclable. To be sure, check the number on the bottom of your plastic bottle (found in the middle of the chasing arrows recycling symbol) and compare to your town or city's list of accepted materials.

While you have all your bathroom goodies in one place, take a moment to read the backs of the bottles. Some personal hygiene and beauty products contain harmful substances known to be skin irritants, poisons and even carcinogens. Choosing natural-ingredient products helps you reduce your exposure to toxins, and you'll also be avoiding companies that produce excessive greenhouse gas emissions during manufacturing.

2. Avoid single-use towels

Cleaning the bathroom can be an icky job, and you may be tempted to use loads of single-use towels rather than soiling your dishcloths and sponges. Resist the urge and gather the proper reusable materials for all the clean without the waste.

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First, protect your hands with reusable natural, powder-free rubber or latex gloves to reduce the ick-factor. Both rubber and latex are plant-derived materials, making them biodegradable. If you plan to toss the gloves on your household compost pile, note that decomposition may take a while. And be sure to wash the gloves thoroughly to remove any cleaners that may contaminate your pile.

Once you have your hands protected, start scrubbing away with sponges and reusable towels. After you're finished cleaning, the thought of germs may tempt you to throw your sponges away. But a five to 10 minute soak in full-strength vinegar will banish bacteria. So, you can save your sponges for your next cleaning project.

3. Don't forget to recycle

Sometimes we forget about recycling outside of our kitchen wastebasket, but there's plenty to recycle in the bathroom, too!

Try keeping small, separate wastebaskets for trash, paper or cardboard and plastic to make sorting easier. And the next time you're out shopping for personal hygiene products, keep an eye out for items packaged in recycled or recyclable material.

Bedroom and Closet



1. Tackle the closet

It wouldn't be spring cleaning without a good old-fashioned closet purge. Cleaning your closet will not only cut back on clutter but also decrease the frustration of having "nothing to wear," which can tempt you run off to the mall for new clothes that you don't really need.

Go through each piece of clothing in your closet and divide your fashions into three piles – toss, give-away and keep. Generally, if you haven't worn an item in six months or more, it's time to get rid of it. If your clothes are in good condition, you could often score some cash (or new-to-you garments) by swapping and selling them online or at consignment stores.

Want to give your stuff away? Visit mcrecycles.net and find our Reuse and Donation directory in the Reuse section of the website.

After you've cleaned out your closet, get started on those dressers. If your sock or underwear drawer is bursting at the seams, chances are the bottom layer is packed with worn-out pieces you hardly use.

Remove everything from your drawers and assess the damage. Sort through your socks, set worn-out pairs aside for darning and put socks that are mateless or too worn to darn aside for reuse or recycling. Our favorite reuse tricks: Use mateless socks for dusting, pack them with potpourri to freshen drawers or use them to craft beanbags or other fun kids toys.

Disposing of old bras and underwear may sound a little tricky, as it can seem a bit gross to donate intimates to thrift stores. But recycling unwanted skivvies is much easier than you'd think. Check out Earth 911's guide to recycling old undies to benefit the planet and your community.

3. Replace old bedding

Have those sheets, linens and blankets seen better days? Before you replace them, consider a disposal plan first.

If your bedding is too worn to donate to a local thrift store or homeless shelter, take it to an animal shelter instead. They're always looking for bedding – no matter what the condition – to keep furry friends warm and cozy.

4. Freshen naturally

Most of us can seldom open our windows over the chilly winter months. So, if your bedroom is smelling a bit stale, throw open the shutters, part the curtains and crack those windows to improve interior air quality (and leave a naturally-pleasant scent).

For a sweeter olfactory experience, check out www.earth911.org for five low-waste air fresheners you can make yourself from flowers, produce and other natural ingredients.

~Adapted from Earth911.org

Moving on up!

We are delighted to once again welcome **Griselda Puga** to the ranks of the Marion County Waste Reduction program, this time as a full time member of our staff!

Griselda was the successful candidate for the position that was vacated by Sarah Keirns, and was chosen from a pool of over 40 qualified applicants. Her background in education, outreach, and multifamily recycling along with her degree from Western Oregon University in Sociology and Environmental Studies will serve her well in this position. She is also a native Spanish speaker and will continue to help expand our library of Spanish-language outreach materials.

She will take the lead in further developing our commercial food waste composting, multifamily recycling, styrofoam recycling, and waste reduction grant programs.

Asked what most excites her about her new position she replied “I am really looking forward to working with multifamily communities, especially the many with Spanish-speaking residents who may have been hard to reach in the past.”



Fun Facts

Does changing curbside collection from every week to every-other-week decrease greenhouse gas emissions? Oregon DEQ's David Allaway crunched the numbers in Portland to find out:

For every 100 tons of mixed recyclables collected from households:

- ◆ 6 MTCO₂e in greenhouse gas emissions from on-route vehicles (including diesel production)
- ◆ 232 MTCO₂e greenhouse gas savings (net) when these recyclables displace virgin feedstock in production

Reducing frequency from weekly to every-other-week recycling:

- ◆ –Reduce vehicle emissions by ~3 MTCO₂e
- ◆ –Reduce recycling benefits by 21-46 MTCO₂e (9-20%)
- ◆ –A net *increase* in GHG emissions



Graduate Gallery



Congratulations to **Desta Sirrine** on completion of her payback hours! Show her testimonial to your friends to spread the word about this great program!

"The Master Recycler program was so much fun! I really enjoyed our instructors and the interesting information they presented. I also had no idea that we would get to go on field trips. It may not sound like fun going to a landfill, but learning about all the inner working of things I had never thought of was very interesting. It really opened my eyes. It also made me feel good about Marion County. You see litter everywhere, and assume your area isn't doing very well so it was nice to know that our county has one of the best track records for reducing waste and recycling in the state and the nation. Now that I know more about what the people at Marion County Environmental Services do I have a deep appreciation for their hard work and dedication. They are passionate about what they do and are true innovators.

The other great part about this program is that after packing us full of information we get to give back time sharing that information with others. My 30 hours of volunteer payback were amazing! Environmental Services gives you plenty of opportunities to serve in a variety of fun ways like giving out information and goodies at events, speaking to groups, educational walks, and demonstrations. They also give you the opportunity to come up with your own ways to volunteer your time so you can feel like you are making an impact in the community in a way that is important to you. I plan on continuing to volunteer even after meeting my hours.

I encourage everyone who has always had certain questions about composting, reducing waste, or what can and can't be recycled to give this program a try. Even if you think you already know a lot like I thought. I learned so much more compared to when I started and it inspired me to do more in my community."

~ Desta Sirrine

Graduate Gallery



Shelley's Testimonial:

"Taking the Master Recycler class has allowed me to back up my passion with cold, hard facts. Instead of encouraging friends and family members to change their lifestyles "because it is the right thing to do" I can give them information that proves how small changes can make a huge difference for current and future generations. I really enjoy volunteering to work in the Marion County Environmental Services booth at events such as the Home Show, it is an opportunity to share information about a subject I feel strongly about. As a preschool teacher this has also allowed me to share recycling practices with my students who then transfer them to their homes."

Kudos to Shelly (& Bailey) from a SKSD teacher an Earthwalk tour:

"THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING! We had a GREAT time and it was amazing to see the great trail with creative works of art along the way. Who would've thought? You really have made something wonderful for the community to enjoy and I plan to tell many of my friends who have kids about it. Our specialist came with us today and said it was the best field trip she had ever been on (this is a huge compliment to you guys). Shelly, you did an amazing job with this age group! The "I spy" game was fun for them and kept them engaged. I hope you are okay with me giving your info to our Education Specialist so other teachers can book field

Congratulations to Master Recycler **Shelly Campbell** for completing her payback hours!

trips with you in the future. It was a great experience. We also really appreciated the stickers, books, and pencils you sent us. Have a great day and it really was a pleasure talking with you, meeting you and enjoying the great outdoors with you."

Thank-you!

Environmental Services wrapped up another successful composter truckload sale early this month (600 composters and 120 rain barrels sold!) and it couldn't have happened without these dedicated volunteers. Thank-you for your time and energy!



Lonna Boucher
Linda Buchanan
Shelly Campbell
Joe Capella
Megan Churchill

Amelya Cohn
Peter Dane
Millie Estrin
Debra Gallacher
Dan McGuire

Jim Nelson
Margaret Strong
Deb Skinner
Jamie Sturn
Janell Valdez



TASTY TIDBITS

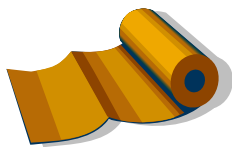


One is Enough!

Former Umatilla County District Attorney Joe Smith wowed the crowd at a recent TEDx conference in Portland with his elegantly simple approach to reducing paper towel waste.

In his humorous presentation he demonstrates how one can effectively dry one's hands with just one paper towel when reusables are not an option. If everyone who uses paper towels in the US did this, it would reduce paper towel waste by 285,615 tons a year!

Search for the the video and learn about the TED movement at www.TED.com.



Don't Bag the Reusable!



Despite the recent norovirus scare associated with a shopping bag in north-west Oregon, reusable bags are still the best choice for the planet.

In this case the shopping bag became the scapegoat in an unfortunate case of a food-containing item being left in a bathroom.

These circumstances asides, any risk to public health can be reduced to nearly nil by simply regularly cleaning your bags (or any other reusable item carried around regularly) either in the wash or by wiping with a disinfecting solution.



Repair it!

In a movement to change European's thinking about waste and reuse, "Repair Cafes" have started opening in the Netherlands and the interest is quickly spreading to other nations.

At the Café, community volunteers with tool boxes and sewing machines are waiting to help people with a number of household objects that still may have a lot of life left in them with the addition of a little TLC.

Do a search for "Repair Café" for more info.



Fall grant project anyone?

Net-togs?

If you have a baby, how does getting seven adorably cute reused outfits in the mail to keep until you need a bigger size sound? Then just put the old ones in a pre-paid bag and wait for a new set



in a few days. Sound like a familiar model? **Good Karma** is doing for baby clothes what Netflix did for movies. At \$30 a month high-quality baby clothes get more affordable and reuse gets a little easier.

www.goodkarma.co

Sourcemap

Supply chains aren't exactly easy for the average consumer to track. **Source-map**, a spinoff from the MIT Media Lab, wants to make it a little easier.

The site, which launched last year, wants to be an open directory of corporate environmental footprints and supply chains--a place where consumers can learn more about the products they use every day, and companies can upload information in the name of transparency.

So far, it seems, the site is a hit. There are over a thousand supply chains already posted, although there is currently no way to verify if the information in correct. www.Sourcemap.com



~ From Sightline.com

Greener Gardens

7 things to reuse for gardening:

1. *Lemonade container* - make a mini greenhouse
2. *Egg carton*—use as a seedling tray
3. *Milk jug*—cut in half to make a shovel with a handle
4. *Wine bottles*—for rooting plant cuttings
5. *Cinder blocks*—fill holes with soil and plant herbs
6. *Bottle caps*—super-glue onto flower pots to decorate
7. *Coffee can*—kitchen compost collector



Master Recycler Call to Serve



Saturdays through October Salem Saturday Market Downtown Salem

Love the Zero Waste Zone at the Salem Saturday Market? Now, more than half of what used to be trashed is composted or recycled! And the program is even better this year because vendors are using more compostable items. But we need some more love! We are seeking some dedicated volunteers to learn about the Zero Waste Zone, round up volunteers to educate the public at the stations throughout the market season, and train those volunteers. Interested? Just drop a line to zerowaste@friendsofsalemsaturdaymarket.org.

Zero Waste Station volunteers also needed! Volunteers educate shoppers about how to sort their items and keep containers free from contamination. Email zerowaste@friendsofsalemsaturdaymarket.org to sign up.

Thursday, July 12—Sunday, July 15

Marion County Fair Oregon State Fairgrounds

Volunteers needed to staff the Waste Reduction booth. Contact Alan Pennington at 503 365 3188 or apennington@co.marion.or.us.

Friday, August 3—Sunday, August 5

Fiesta Mexicana Woodburn

Volunteers needed to staff the Waste Reduction booth. Contact Alan Pennington at 503 365 3188 or apennington@co.marion.or.us.

Saturday, August 4 Riverfront Family Fest

Riverfront Park, Salem

Volunteers needed to staff the Waste Reduction booth. Contact Alan Pennington at 503 365 3188 or apennington@co.marion.or.us.

Events & Occasions



Sunday, June 3, 2012, 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Straub Nature Walks: Kingston Prairie Preserve

This 52-acre Nature Conservancy Preserve southeast of Stayton is the best example of native prairie remaining in the central Willamette Valley. Both wet and dry prairie habitats harbor native grasses and host several rare wildflowers. Sponsored by Willamette Valley Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon and Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center, the hike is free and open to the public. For more information, contact: John Savage, 503-399-8615 after 7 p.m.

Monday, June 11, 2012, 6:30-8:30

Climate Series: Transportation

Straub Environmental Learning Center

Our Climate Series continues with a presentation on transportation-related emissions and their effect on climate, led by energy expert Mark Kendall, formerly of the Oregon Department of Energy. Kendall has over 30 years of experience in energy management and renewable resource development. The class is part of our six-course climate series but is open to the public. Class is \$5. RSVP to 503-391-4145 or fselc@fselc.org.

Tuesday, June 12, 2012, 6:30-8:30 pm

On the Grid: Telecommunications

Straub Environmental Learning Center

“On the Grid, On the Ground” is a series of classes offered by the Friends of the Straub Environmental Learning Center that parallels Scott Huler’s book, *On the Grid*. Each enlightening class explores a different facet of the taken-for-granted infrastructure of our daily lives—drinking water, wastewater, storm water, telecommunications, energy, transportation, and garbage. The series continues in June with a class on telecommunications, lead by veteran telecommunications expert Fred Goodwin. Mr. Goodwin will explain our local telecommunications infrastructure including telephone, radio, TV, and of course, the internet. He will inform participants about specific technologies of each including landline, wireless, and VoIP phone systems, AM and FM radio, and antenna, cable, and satellite television services. Mr. Goodwin has over 30 years of experience in the telecommunications industry and has worked in all facets of this field, including engineering, rates and tariffs, research and development, auditing and compliance, and regulatory. He has served on our Oregon Public Utility Commission in the telecommunications division since August 2010. Class fee is \$5.00. To register, contact the FSEL Manager at (503)391-4145 or fselc@fselc.org. Class is limited to 50 participants.

Saturday, June 16, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Straub Nature Walks: Cascade Head Preserve

John Savage will lead a six-mile roundtrip hike with elevation gain to view the wildflowers of the Cascade Head Preserve near Lincoln City. The Preserve features a scenic coastal headland, many native grasses and flowers, and a population of the rare Oregon silverspot butterfly. Bring food and water. Sponsored by the Willamette Valley Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon and Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center, the hike is free and open to the public. For more information, contact: John Savage, 503-399-8615 after 7 p.m.



The Back Page



Photo by James Santana

This nondescript pile is actually 300 pounds of vermicompost (a.k.a. worm poop) produced with 6 months worth of food waste at Painter's Hall Café at Pringle Creek Community.

Those little red wigglers have been busy!
Thank-you worms :)



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