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The lesser of two evils... pg. 2

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Master Recycler Newsletter

Taking the waste out of take-out



Perhaps it's a frothy Frappuccino. Or spicy bean burritos. No matter your tastes, plenty of scrumptious snacks are regularly picked up at favorite eateries around the country and enjoyed at home.

While packaging is part of the deal with to-go orders, various restaurateurs and patrons are devising fresh approaches to make take-out more lean and green. Happily, some environmentally responsible techniques are delightfully simple. Other efforts to reduce waste take a bit more effort. But, if it's kinder to the environment, each bite is going to be so much tastier.

Think About It

If you're debating what to eat, try to select menu items that involve the least amount of disposable components. Perhaps a hearty sandwich would be just as satisfying as a multifaceted meal that requires elaborate packaging, a throng of plastic utensils and extra containers for sauces and condiments.

This approach works for snacks and desserts too. At the ice cream shop, ask for your scoops of rocky road in a cone, rather than in a disposable cup. Not only will you not have excess packaging, but you get to *eat* your "cup" too. Sweet.

Another point to consider is driving distance. When ordering take-out, choose

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*"If you want one year of prosperity, plant corn. If you want ten years of prosperity, plant trees. If you want one hundred years of prosperity, educate people."
~ Chinese proverb*

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restaurants that don't require a long drive. Even better, order from restaurants in the neighborhood, then hop on a bicycle or take a stroll to pick them up.

BYOB

Assign your reusable grocery store bags to double duty. Use them at restaurants to cart home leftovers and when picking up take-out orders. In addition to bags, add other items to the bring-your-own repertoire like coffee mugs. Starbucks, for example, offers a financial incentive (a 10-cent discount) for supplying your own. Coffee lovers apparently are taking advantage of that approach: according to a Starbucks spokeswoman, customers in 2007 supplied their own beverage mugs almost 20 million times.



Recommend Reusables

If you enjoy take-out regularly from specific places, ask those restaurant owners if they'd stock reusable to-go containers, such as glass or stainless steel. Tell them you'll return the container when you're back for another dinner. It's sort of a library approach to packaging. You drop off the used containers and pick up fresh ones packed with food each time you go. The advantage to the restaurant is reduced costs on disposable packaging and loyalty of regular diners.

If the restaurant doesn't like the idea of reusable containers, bring your own. Some eco-minded restaurant-goers tote around personal food storage containers to wrap up their leftovers and also use them for take-out items - just make sure the restaurant agrees to use them.

No matter what your favorite take-out joint may offer, you can take these easy steps to maximize your eco-friendly efforts and minimize your footprint. Restaurants will appreciate your increased patronage, and you'll feel good about taking your trash levels down a notch or two.

-From Earth 911.com

In the battle of disposable cups the winner is.....

Whoops! You showed up at your favorite coffee shack without your tried-and-true reusable cup for your decaf mexi-mocha. The barista gives you a choice: paper or styrofoam. What is a power waste-reducer like yourself to do? Paper cups are not easily recyclable into new paper products. Styrofoam IS currently being recycled but at what environmental cost? This question was recently posed to a Master of Masters, **John Matthews** of Garten Services. Here are some highlights from his answer:



Expanded polystyrene (a.k.a. "Styrofoam"): The environmental impact of its raw material extraction, refining, fabrication, manufacturing, and transportation does not make this a preferable choice for most applications... including coffee

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cups. Even the recycling is energy intensive, and in Marion County requires transport to a separate collection site at the Fresh Start Market.

Coated paper : Solid waste in Marion County is burned in a facility with a highly engineered air pollution control system to recover energy—approximately enough to power the City of Keizer. The most environmentally sustainable solution available at this time for a disposable coffee would be a paper cup to put into the trash.

Ultimately **composting** paper cups is the most environmentally sound solution to the disposable dilemma. This is a slow process in your home composter, but is viable in commercial composting operations. There is currently no collection program available except for a few special events (such as the Marion Co. and State Fairs), but providing encouragement to our decisionmakers to support efforts to include non-recyclable paper products in curbside and depot yard debris collection could help make this a possibility.

Don't like these choices? Better throw an extra reusable cup in the car for next time...



Crafty!

Attention Artists and potential artists:

Garten Services currently has a supply of VHS and other magnetic tapes, various disks, and CDs that do not currently have a robust market as well as glass wine bottles

They are offering these items to Master Recyclers for use in art projects. If you are interested, please contact Judy Skinner at jskinner@garten.org.



Back to School... And PVC ?

Many children's school supplies, such as lunchboxes, backpacks and binders, can be made out of PVC - a flexible form of plastic which has been removed from most children's toys due to health concerns surrounding the compounds used in its manufacture.

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice has put together a document with tips for avoiding PVC in school supplies. Check it out at:

www.childproofing.org/



Show me the money!



There is still plenty of time to apply for a Marion County Waste Reduction Grant.

This may be your chance to get that dream project started that will help MC's mission to reduce, reuse and recycle!

There is \$100,000 available for funding waste reduction projects from public, private and nonprofit organizations. What are you waiting for? The application is available online at www.co.marion.or.us/pw/es.

Deadline is Oct. 30, 2009.



Call to Serve (and report your hours)!!



Marion County's Master Recycler classes are currently experiencing record attendance – thank you all for your enthusiasm and willingness to learn about solid waste issues and reduction strategies. Our goal for this year is to experience a record number of MRs serving in the community and reporting their payback hours! There are great outreach opportunities listed below, but they can't be a success without your help. Call today!

Dog Fest 2009

Chemeketa Community College

Saturday, Sept. 12

10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Come help this doggone great way to raise money for the County Dog Shelter by staffing a recycling area used by both vendors and the public. And don't come alone! You are welcome to bring your canine companion as well (as long as Sparky is on a leash).

Contact: Alan Pennington

503 365 3188

Oregon Garden Home School Day

Tuesday, September 15th

9:15 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Two Master Recyclers are needed for a day of teaching kids about how to make worm bins. The activities will take place at the beautiful Oregon Garden in Silverton. Shifts for two volunteers are from 10:00 - 12:00 & 12:00 - 2:00. For more information contact Cindy Quamm 503-584-7256 or cquam1@chemeketa.edu)

Lead a Tour of the Nature Walk

Salem-Keizer Recycling & Transfer Station

Saturday, September 19th

10 a.m. - 12:00 noon

A Master Recycler volunteer is needed to help lead a tour of the Salem-Keizer Recycling & Transfer Station's recycling area and Nature Walk. The group will be 15 1st - 5th grade Cub Scouts and their parents. The tour itself will probably take 45 minutes - 1 hour. If you can help, please contact Bailey at 503-588-5169 ext. 5991 or bpayne@co.marion.or.us

Salem Home and Remodel Show

Oregon State Fairgrounds

October 23-25th

Fri: 3p.m.—8p.m.

Sat: 10a.m.—8p.m.

Sun: 10a.m.—5p.m.

Multiple Master Recyclers are need to staff Marion County's booth. 2-3 hour shifts are available all days. The booth will have displays on Household Hazardous Waste, Composting and Green Building . For more information contact Beth Myers-Shenai—503-588-5169 x5920, smyersshenai@co.marion.or.us or Alan Pennington—503-365-3188, apennington@co.marion.or.us

Building a Worm Tower

Thanks to Sally White for this submission for this month's newsletter. Got a great idea or article to share? Let us know!



ADULT SUPERVISION IS
NECESSARY FOR
YOUNGER CHILDREN

MATERIALS:

- Two 2 liter soda bottles – colorless best
- One votive candle
- One dissecting needle (or pin and pliers)
- Drill with 1/16" drill bit
- Scissors
- Sharp knife or razor blade
- Black marker that will write on plastic
- Metric Ruler
- A piece of wood on which to work
- Matches
- Shredded paper, leaves, food scraps
- Sand (a couple of pinches) crushed egg shells
- 6 – 12 red wiggler worms (*Eisenia fetida*)

1. Remove labels from both bottles.
2. Rinse both bottles and keep the lids.
3. Use the ruler and marker to mark one bottle 5.5 cm from the bottom.
4. Use the ruler and marker to mark the second bottle 19 cm from the bottom.
5. Continue marking both bottles until you have made a series of dots around the bottles. (Easier to work with a partner while doing this step.)
6. Use the sharp knife or the razor blade to make a slit in the dots so that you can cut the sections apart. The slit must be long enough to insert one blade of a pair of scissors. (You may need an adult to help you.)
7. Carefully insert the scissors into the slit and begin cutting the two parts of the bottle apart. It is very important that you make your cuts even all the way around the bottle. If there are some ragged edges, carefully cut them off.
8. Place the bottle halves with their lids on the piece of wood.
9. Use the drill with the 1/16" drill bit to drill three or five holes in the lids.
10. Light the candle.
11. Hold one of the bottles steady while you place the pointed end of the dissecting probe in the flame. (It might take practice to know how long to heat probe.)
12. Quickly use the very hot probe to make a small hole in the shoulder and neck of the bottle. About six to eight will be enough for both bottles in this area.
13. Using the same method make additional holes in the body of taller bottle with the lid. Do the same with the body of the bottle that no longer has a top. You only need a few, and the smaller the better. (Large holes allow mama fruit flies in.)
14. Hold the taller bottle with the lid upside down over a sink or bucket and fill it with shredded paper and then with water.
15. Add the food (apple core, banana peel or a couple of tablespoons of left over veggies), the sand and the worms. Place this bottle in the large opening of the base bottle (the one with a bottom).
16. Invert the small top into the opening of the worm tower making sure the edges are aligned, snug and secure – no openings. Now observe & document!