

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



City of Downey  
562-904-7102  
www.downeyca.org  
Spring 2009



## Safely Manage Your "Sharps" Waste

- The safest way to dispose of sharps waste is to use only State-approved sharps containers. Check availability at the collection sites, a Goodwill store, your local pharmacy, or the L.A. County Department of Public Health.
- If you use a plastic bottle, do not use water bottles. They are made of plastic that will puncture. Use a clean bleach or detergent bottle. Seal the top with tape and label the container "SHARPS."
- Do not fill your container to the top; fill it only until it is about ¾ full. Seal it securely.
- Do NOT flush your sharps waste or medications down the toilet or drain.
- Do NOT place your sharps waste in the trash, green waste, or recycling containers.
- Keep your sharps containers out of reach of children and pets.

## Be "sharps" smart



As of last fall, sharps used for in-home medical care can no longer be thrown in the trash. "Sharps" include hypodermic needles, syringes, lancets, intravenous needles, and other medical devices used for self-injection or blood testing by people with chronic or acute medical conditions or those caring for pets at home.

In the past, many of these sharps were improperly disposed of and ended up in residential trash bins or recycling carts. In these containers, the sharps created a safety and health risk for children, people in the community, pets and wild animals, and, especially, waste haulers.

To properly dispose of sharps, you need to begin with the right container. By placing sharps in a sturdy, thick-walled, puncture-proof plastic container, you have created a safe storage location in your home. Refer to the sidebar for more details about safely managing your sharps.

Once your container is filled (to three-quarters full), you need to be sure to dispose of it properly. Remember—sharps containers do NOT go into your household trash, nor do they belong in recycling bins, green waste carts, or office trash cans. Sharps containers need to be dropped off at an approved collection center.

The L.A. County Household Hazardous Waste and E-Waste Roundups accept sealed sharps containers, as do the S.A.F.E. Collection Centers in Los Angeles. For details about collection centers, refer to the box with disposal information.

You can do the right thing with your sharps, protecting your family, your neighbors, and our environment. If you have questions, please call 888-CLEAN-LA or visit [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com).

## "Sharps" Containers

Dispose of your sharps container and/or pick up your free empty sharps container at any of these locations:

### Los Angeles County Household Hazardous Waste Roundups

For information, turn to the back page, visit [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com), or call 888-CLEAN-LA.

### City of Los Angeles S.A.F.E. Centers

For information, turn to the back page, visit [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com), or call 800-98-TOXIC.

### Department of Public Health

For clinic locations, visit [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com).

## Free mulch giveaway

CalMet Services, Inc., is providing Downey residents with up to 32 gallons of mulch for springtime planting. Please bring your own containers. The giveaway will take place at the old Albertson's parking lot at 8320 Firestone Boulevard on Saturday, April 18, between 9 a.m. and noon. For more information, call CalMet Services at 562-259-1239.

PRESORTED  
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RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

City of Downey  
Public Works Dept.  
P.O. Box 7016  
Downey, CA 90241-7016



## Extra leaf collection during June

During the entire month of June, Downey residents may place extra yard waste (that does not fit into their automated green waste barrel) at the curb on their regular pickup day. This special service is FREE and should be scheduled with CalMet Services one business day prior to pickup.

CalMet Services will collect up to FIVE bags, trash cans, or bundles of leaves, clippings, and yard waste per pickup. Please keep bundles of branches under 4 feet in length and under 50 pounds, and do NOT use your regular automated trash or recycling barrels for this service.

Call CalMet Services one business day prior to your pickup day at 562-259-1239, ext. 244 for English or ext. 245 for Spanish. Then, place these items at your curb by 6 a.m. on your regular pickup day.

Remember, this special, free yard waste collection service is available from Monday, June 1 through Tuesday, June 30. The program will resume again during the month of November.

## The power of many

Each spring, citizens fan out across California in the Great California Cleanup, a statewide litter prevention and cleanup program that is part of the Great American Cleanup. The efforts of each volunteer result in "the power of many" improving the communities in which we live.

Beginning March 1 and running through May 31, thousands of volunteers hit the streets, alleys, and waterways of their communities, picking up litter, planting flowers and trees, removing graffiti, and more. Locally, all of Keep Downey Beautiful's cleanups, beautification efforts, and community outreach programs that are held during this period will be counted toward the state's and country's largest cleanup program.

Join your neighbors and friends during this time and participate in one of Keep Downey Beautiful's scheduled monthly cleanups on the third Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.:

- April 18 – Lakewood Boulevard and Telegraph Road, southwest corner (meet in the Starbucks parking lot)
- May 16 – Northeast corner of Paramount Boulevard and Cole Street (meet in Tokyo Gardens' parking lot)
- June 20 – Woodruff Avenue, north of Washburn Road (meet in parking lot north of Mr. Pete's)

For these monthly cleanups, volunteers under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Keep Downey Beautiful will provide safety vests, gloves, and trash bags. The cleanups are sponsored by Stonewood Center.

Call 562-904-7159 or visit [www.downeyca.org](http://www.downeyca.org) for additional information.

# 10 tips for Greener Cleaning



(c) Ivonne Wierink / SnapVillage.com

## Read more about it!

**485 Ways to Clean, Polish, Disinfect, Deodorize, and Remove Stains**  
*Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping* by Annie Berthold-Bond (Ceres Press, 1994)

**All-Purpose Cleaners Buying Guide**  
[www.thegreenguide.com/buying-guide/all-purpose-cleaners](http://www.thegreenguide.com/buying-guide/all-purpose-cleaners)

**Clean Your House Without Hurting the Planet**

[www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/03/18/possessions-cleaning/](http://www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/03/18/possessions-cleaning/)

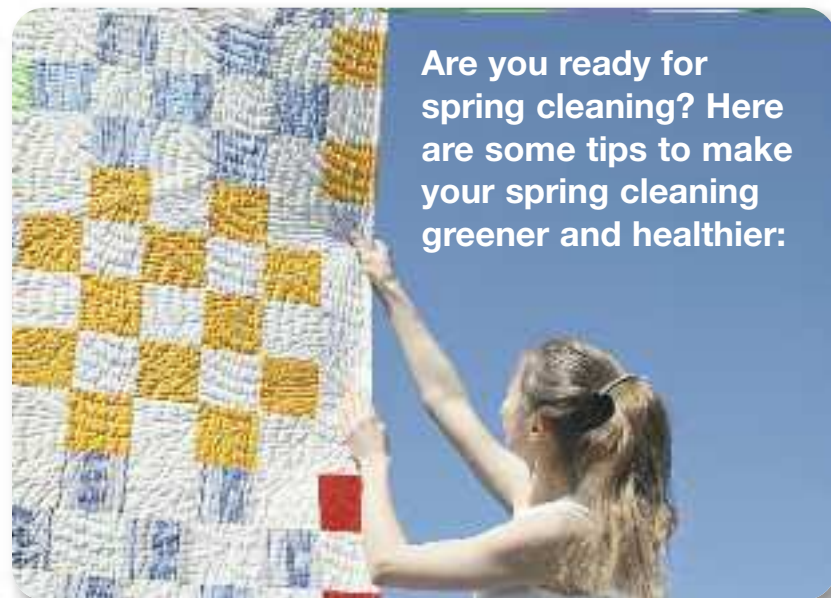
**Greener Cleaning**  
[www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning](http://www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning)

**How to Go Green: Cleaning**  
<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/green-cleaning/>

**How to Make a Non-Toxic Cleaning Kit**  
[www.care2.com/greenliving/make-your-own-non-toxic-cleaning-kit.html](http://www.care2.com/greenliving/make-your-own-non-toxic-cleaning-kit.html)

**Non-Toxic Home Cleaning**  
[www.earthesy.com/live\\_nontoxic\\_solutions.htm](http://www.earthesy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm)

**A Test of Green Cleaners**  
[www.grist.org/advice/products/2008/03/25/](http://www.grist.org/advice/products/2008/03/25/)



(c) Anita Salsara / SnapVillage.com

Are you ready for spring cleaning? Here are some tips to make your spring cleaning greener and healthier:

1. Open the windows. After the house has been closed up for most of the winter, the best thing to do is to give it a good airing out. On a pleasant spring day, throw open the windows and give the house a few hours to breathe in the fresh air.
2. Think mechanical first. A scrub brush, a dish scrubber, and a retired toothbrush can provide a lot of cleaning power with no chemicals at all. Drain baskets keep drains free of debris that can lead to clogs.
3. Use up chemicals that you have on hand before purchasing replacement products. If you have cleaners stored in multiple locations (some in the laundry room, others under the kitchen sink, and a few in the garage), find them and inventory what you have available.
4. Consider creating your own cleaners from common household products, such as vinegar, baking soda, salt, lemon juice, and mineral oil. Many of these cleaners are easy to make, effective, and less expensive than pre-mixed chemical solutions. (Remember that even homemade cleaners can be irritating to skin and eyes. Always use caution in mixing, storing, and using homemade cleaners.)

5. If you choose to purchase a cleaning product, choose the mildest and most benign chemical product available. Although it is not mandatory, a few manufacturers do voluntarily provide a complete list of ingredients. Try to select products that provide you complete information on ingredients, offer the most clear instructions on use, and don't require extraordinary safety measures for use or disposal.
6. When you purchase products or containers, look for recycled-content and recyclable containers. Rather than using paper towels, use reusable towels and old rags. If you purchase paper towels, please choose those made from recycled-content paper.
7. Buying concentrates reduces packaging waste. Some cleaning products are now sold in concentrated form; you finish making the solution by adding tap water at home. Other products, such as laundry detergent, are concentrated and ready to use when you get home. Remember—if you have softened water, you can use even less detergent.
8. Keep unfinished products in their original, labeled containers. *Never* pour potentially harmful chemicals into food or beverage containers for storage. Store all cleaning products out of reach of children and away from pets. Do not store potentially hazardous materials close to sources of heat or in direct sunlight.
9. Dispose of containers and unused chemicals properly. Follow the label instructions. If the instructions are unclear, call the manufacturer for more details or call us.
10. Make sure everyone in your family knows about your new "greener cleaning" habits.

## On the GO

If you're trying to trim your expenses, you may be walking or biking more. Walking and biking are good for your health and your pocketbook. Of course, they are also better for our environment because walking and biking don't require fuel or spew out emissions.

However, if you like to take a cup of coffee with you when you leave the house, what are you supposed to do? Reusable travel mugs are fine if you are walking, but may not be fully leak-proof when you bike. There's a simple, waste-free solution—thermal or canteen bottles. The thermal-style bottles keep hot drinks hot and cold drinks cold. These bottles can be sealed, so you can put them into a backpack or bag without worrying about leaks and spills. Many have a built-in loop to allow you to hang the bottle from your handle bars. Others have insulated pouches with handles or loops. Still others will fit right into your bike's water bottle holder.

If your drink of choice is water or a sports drink, you can use the same style bottles. Simply fill the clean bottle with tap water or sports drink from your gallon jug.

Look for leak-proof thermal bottles at local stores. Many carry these bottles and accessories. Or, go online and search for "thermo bottles."



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# Hope for harried readers Planet Green

"Like money, books must be kept in constant circulation. Lend and borrow to the maximum."

At a time when many have had to tighten their belts, novelist Henry Miller offers good advice for readers. Enjoying a good book doesn't require buying a new copy or even owning it. Books can be borrowed, shared, and swapped. The pleasure is the same, but the cost is less.

The library is, of course, the least expensive way to enjoy good books. You can borrow from the local library's many resources. All you need is a library card.

Another option is used bookstores. When you buy used books, you often pay only one-quarter to one-half of the original price. Some of the "used" books have never even been read. Many secondhand stores sell books, and books are a common item at garage sales, as well.

Sharing books with friends is free. Often, you and your friends enjoy the same types of books or authors. You can also spread your enthusiasm for a book that you couldn't put down by passing it along to a new reader.

In addition to these local resources, there are many online options as well:

- Book Crossing is a program that allows people to "read and release"

books. If you want to release a book or are hunting for one, visit [www.bookcrossing.com](http://www.bookcrossing.com).

- Several sites offer readers the chance to trade one or more books with other readers, usually for just the cost of shipping. For more information about book swaps by mail, visit [www.bookins.com](http://www.bookins.com), [www.bookmooch.com](http://www.bookmooch.com), [www.paperbackswap.com](http://www.paperbackswap.com), or [www.swaptree.com](http://www.swaptree.com).

- If you've ever wondered why there isn't a "Netflix" for books, your wait is over. BookSwim allows readers to rent books. This concept is not new. Before the age of downloadable audiobooks, readers could rent books on tape (and later on CD) by mail. Now, readers can rent bestsellers at a fraction of the purchase price. For more information, go to [www.bookswim.com](http://www.bookswim.com).

Books aren't the only media that can be borrowed, shared, swapped, or purchased used, of course. The same applies to DVDs and CDs, as well as many magazines.

You don't have to give up at-home entertainment, but you can lower its cost by lending and borrowing to the maximum.



(c) FutureDigitalDesign / SnapVillage.com

If you have a pay-TV service, such as cable or satellite, you may be getting the Planet Green network. If you enjoy the Discovery channel, you'll like Planet Green.

Planet Green offers a variety of original programs. If you love home renovation or want to know how to live an everyday green life, you'll be able to watch shows like *Living With Ed*, *Renovation Nation*, *Total Wrecklamation*, *Wa\$ted!*, *World's Greenest Homes*, *Focus Earth*, and *Greenovate*. Maybe you're more interested in food. Check out *Emeril Green* or *Supper Club*. If you're wondering what is new in transportation, catch an episode of *Mean Green Machines*. Do you love entertainment news? Watch *Hollywood Green*. How about a game show? Play along with *Go for the Green*.

In addition to the programming, you'll find "Go Green" tips at the website, <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/>, along with games and video clips. There is even a convenient "channel finder" — all you need to know is your ZIP code and your pay-TV service provider.

## QUOTES REQUOTED



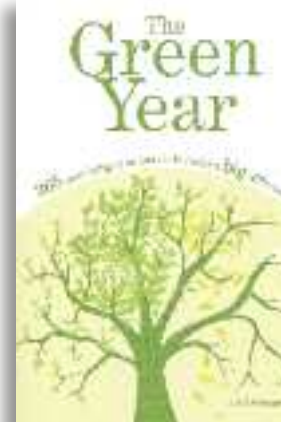
The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope.

Wendell Berry, 1934—  
American farmer and poet

## Greening your year

Looking for small steps that will make a big difference? Check out *The Green Year: 365 Small Things You Can Do to Make a Big Difference* by Jodi Helmer (Penguin Group, 2008). This book has one simple idea for each day of the year. Each page also has a spot for you to check off that you've done the activity or to write your own alternative that will work better for you and your family.

The ideas include reducing waste, saving energy, and much more. Some days suggest things that you probably already do—or have thought about doing—such as replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents and sharing magazines. Other days give you new and fun ideas. For instance, when you stop at your favorite ice cream shop, don't get ice cream in a cup. Instead, order your ice cream in an edible and waste-free cone. Here's another one: Clean out your car's trunk or cargo area and improve your gas mileage. According to Helmer, an extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce your fuel efficiency by 2 percent.



## CLIP AND SAVE



(c) Maypop / SnapVillage.com

Each year in the U.S., gas-powered lawn mowers consume more than 720 million gallons of gasoline. At the same time, these mowers spit out harmful air pollutants and disturb the peace and quiet of our spring and summer days.

However, gas-powered mowers aren't the only way to keep your lawn looking good. Electric mowers are quieter and exhaust-free. Some electric mowers need an extension cord, but many of the newer ones contain a rechargeable battery. With battery-powered models, you simply plug in the mower to charge it and then unplug it while you cut the grass. These cordless mowers are heavier and a bit more difficult to maneuver than the corded models. Neither type requires oil changes or gasoline. You do have the cost for electricity, but that may be as little as \$5-10 per year.

Another—and even more environmentally friendly—option is a manual reel lawn mower. Here are just a few of the great reasons to use a reel mower:

- Reel mowers leave behind healthier grass plants because they "snip" the grass, cutting it in the same way that a pair of scissors would. (Powered rotary mowers actually tear the grass blades.)
- Manual mowers don't need gasoline, so an empty gas can will never change your plans. They also don't require an electrical charge, so you don't have to remember to plug them in.
- Push reel mowers produce no harmful emissions and emit no exhaust into your face and your neighborhood's air.
- Manual mowers are whisper-quiet, allowing you to hear your children playing and to enjoy the birds chirping. You can still listen to your music on headphones, but you won't have to!
- You'll enjoy a brisk walk and some resistance training while you mow.
- Reel mowers are virtually maintenance-free. Occasionally, the bearings and cutting edges may need a little lubricant and a slight adjustment. The cutters will need to be sharpened every couple of years.
- You'll never struggle with the pull cord on a manual mower. Simply start walking and the mower starts, too.
- Reel mowers take less space in the garage or shed.
- Push reel mowers are the cheapest to purchase, operate, and maintain.

A manual reel mower isn't right for every yard. The mowers are best suited to smaller yards, such as those that are 10,000 square feet (about one-quarter acre) or less. However, many of today's yards are no bigger than this.

If you'd like more information about reel mowers (or about electric mowers), ask at your hardware store, lawn and garden center, or home supply store. You can also learn more at [www.cleanaingardening.com](http://www.cleanaingardening.com), [www.planetnatural.com](http://www.planetnatural.com), [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com), [www.reelin.com](http://www.reelin.com), or [www.reelmowerguide.com/](http://www.reelmowerguide.com/).

# WHAT'S UP?

## 16th Annual DOWNEY STREET FAIRE

Saturday, May 2  
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Brookshire Avenue  
(Firestone Boulevard to the north of Civic Center Drive)

*FUN for the whole family!!*

- Antiques
- Crafts
- Collectibles
- Entertainment
- Kids' Zone
- Car Show
- Food

Presented by the Downey Chamber of Commerce

562-923-2191



## Electronic Waste Collection at Stonewood Center

Drop off *electronics only* on Saturday, May 9, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Stonewood Center (parking lot on Firestone Boulevard). Just look for the big truck and sign.



## Attention, Kids!

Come to **Kids Day** on Saturday, May 9, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Furman Park, 10419 Rives Avenue. Enjoy the Penny Carnival, food, and entertainment by kids. Get information on youth organizations, and visit the *Environmental Fair*, which will promote recycling, water conservation, city beautification, backyard composting, and much more!

# Earth Day Every Day for Everyone

Earth Day is April 22. Each year when Earth Day comes around, we are reminded that the earth is our home 24/7/365. Which means, of course, that we need to be taking care of it year-round. Adopt these earth-friendly habits:

1. Save energy. Turn off lights when you leave the room. Turn off computer monitors when they aren't in use. Buy compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) to replace burned-out incandescent bulbs.
2. Reduce your waste. You probably have noticed that paper has a front and a back—use both. If you take lunch to work or send lunch to school, pack it waste-free with washable and reusable containers and a reusable lunch bag or box. Think before you buy. Sometimes you don't really need what you want.
3. Conserve water. Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth or shave. Run the washing machine and dishwasher with full loads.
4. Recycle. Recycling is about far more than just bottles, cans, jars, and papers. You can also recycle batteries, computers, appliances, and more. Not sure how? Contact us.
5. Spread the word. Just because you know about all of this stuff doesn't mean that your friends or coworkers do. Talk to them and share your ideas.



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Learn more at [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net) or at [www.epa.gov/earthday](http://www.epa.gov/earthday).

# Street Sweeping & Trash Collection Schedule

Observed Holidays	City Hall Closed	Sweeping	Trash
Memorial Day	Monday, May 25	No	No
Independence Day	Friday, July 3	Yes	Yes
Labor Day	Monday, September 7	No	No
Veterans' Day	Wednesday, November 11	Yes	Yes
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 26	No	No
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 27	No	Yes
Christmas Eve	Thursday, December 24	Yes	Yes
Christmas Day	Friday, December 25	No	No
New Year's Day 2010	Friday, January 1, 2010	No	No

## Street Sweeping

When there is no street sweeping, **it will not be made up**. Streets are always swept on the posted day.

## Trash Collection

When there is no trash collection, **it will be made up**. Trash will be collected the day after the normal collection day for the remainder of the week. For example, Friday's trash will be collected on Saturday.

## Please Note

On a few of the holidays, the schedule causes trash collection to be on the same day as street sweeping for the remainder of the week. During these times, we request that the trash barrels be placed up on the curb so as not to hinder the street sweeper.

## Questions?

Trash Collection: CalMet, 562-259-1239

Street Sweeping: Utilities Division, 562-904-1452

Parking Enforcement: Police Department, 562-904-2342

# Recycle your used motor oil!

For locations of certified used motor oil and filter collection centers, visit [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com) or <http://earth911.com> or call 888-CLEAN-LA (888-253-2652) or 800-CLEANUP (800-253-2687).



**Redeem the value of your California Refund Value (CRV) bottles and cans! For more information, including redemption locations, visit [www.bottlesandcans.com](http://www.bottlesandcans.com).**

# Dispose of hazardous wastes properly

If you have household hazardous waste (HHW), universal waste (u-waste), or electronic waste (e-waste), don't put it into the trash! Dispose of it properly at the L.A. County Roundups or the L.A. permanent collection centers. L.A. County Roundups are held weekly on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at various locations. These collections will be held in nearby communities:

- April 18 – Pico Rivera, Southern California Gas Co., 8101 Rosemead Boulevard
- April 25 – South Gate, South Gate Park, Tweedy Boulevard and Hildreth Avenue
- May 23 – Maywood, Maywood Park, 57th Street and Heliotrope Avenue

You can also visit one of the nearby S.A.F.E. Collection Centers. These centers are open every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, from 9 a.m.

to 3 p.m. The nearest S.A.F.E. Centers are:

- Washington Boulevard S.A.F.E. Center, 2649 E. Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles
- Gaffey Street S.A.F.E. Center, 1400 N. Gaffey Street, San Pedro

HHW includes paints, pesticides, solvents, cleaners, oils, and expired medicines. U-waste includes fluores-

cent tubes, mercury-containing items, and batteries.

E-waste includes televisions, computer monitors, CPUs, keyboards, printers, cell phones, and similar items.

For more information, call the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works hotline at 888-CLEAN-LA (888-253-2652) or the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County at 800-238-0172. Or, visit <http://ladpw.org/epd/hhw/>.



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*Please recycle this publication after you have read it!*

This newsletter is partially funded by a grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board.



This newsletter is partially funded by a grant from the California Department of Conservation, Division of Recycling.

## Beautiful is Good.

**One simple call can help keep Downey beautiful!**

- Abandoned Shopping Carts**  
800-252-4613
- Graffiti Removal**  
562-923-4484
- Illegal Dumping**  
562-904-1161
- Household Hazardous Waste Disposal**  
888-CLEAN-LA