

A Quarterly Newsletter of

Reduce - Reuse - Recycle



For A Better Today and Tomorrow

Recycling and Waste Reduction
District of Porter County

(219) 465-3694

www.ItMeansTheWorld.org

Spring 2009



Gather today for a greener tomorrow!

Join us in celebrating the fourth annual Northwest Indiana Earth Day 2009 on Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Sunset Hill Farm County Park, at the corner of Meridian and U.S. 6 near Valparaiso.

Earth Day will include a variety of exhibitors, children's activities, vendors,



our display of alternative fuel vehicles, or fill out a survey and get a tree sapling (while supplies last).

There will truly be something for everyone, from kids to adults, at this event. So, walk, bike, or carpool, and join us in celebrating the planet Earth and all of its precious resources. The

Earth Day Grocery Bag Project

Students from several elementary schools in Porter County will be joining other schools across the nation by participating in this year's Earth Day Grocery Bag Project. The project's goal is to promote environmental education and awareness. Local grocery stores have donated paper grocery bags for students to decorate with environmental artwork and messages for Earth Day. On Earth Day, which is April 22, these decorated grocery bags will be passed out to the customers at participating stores. Check our website, www.ItMeansTheWorld.org, for participating schools and grocery stores.



silent auction, food, and live music. Staff from Secure Shred will be on-site to provide confidential document destruction and recycling free of charge. There will also be chances to visit with an Indiana Dunes State Park naturalist and to meet potential pets from the Animal Shelter. Stop by and see



Northwest Indiana Earth Day 2009 event is FREE.

A calendar of events for Northwest Indiana Earth Day will be posted on our website, www.ItMeansTheWorld.org.



seminars, and family-focused demonstrations, all with one purpose in mind—to help Northwest Indiana residents live a “greener” life. Other Earth Day activities will include a family tent full of hands-on activities, the Magic of Recycling show, a

2009 Calendar

*Restrictions and/or fees may apply to some events. Events provided for residential use only. Contact District for all event details.

Standard Events

Event	Date(s)	Time	Location
NW Indiana Earth Day	April 18	10:00 am to 3:00 pm	Sunset Hill Farm County Park Hwy 6 & Meridian, Valparaiso
International Compost Awareness Week	May 3—May 9	Various events and locations to be announced	
HHW Tire Collection Appliance Collection	May 16	9:00 am to 2:00 pm	Expo Fair Grounds 49 & Division, Valparaiso
HHW	July 11	9:00 am to 2:00 pm	Westchester Inter. School 1050 S. 5 th Street, Chesterton
HHW	August 15	9:00 am to 2:00 pm	Portage High School 6400 E. US 6, Portage
HHW	October 10	9:00 am to 2:00 pm	Expo Fair Grounds

Compost Sites

Location	Days & Hours	Start/Closing/End
Boone Grove 400 West 550 South	Mon/Wed/Fri = 12:00 to 5:00 Sat = 9:00 to 4:00	April 13 - Start of season May 23 - 25 - Memorial Day
Valparaiso 2150 Lincolnway	Off SEASON (before April 13) Sat = 9:00 to 2:00 REGULAR SEASON Mon - Fri = 9:00 to 5:00 Sat = 9:00 to 4:00	July 3 - 4 - Independence Day Sept 5 - 7 - Labor Day Nov 26 - 28 Thanksgiving Dec 5 - End of season



Ask Glen

Dear Glen:
I know the recycling symbol has three chasing arrows, but what do they really mean?

Sincerely,
Chasing Knowledge

Dear Chasing Knowledge,
Many people think the three arrows in the recycling symbol represent the three Rs of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Even though the principles of the three Rs are

very important, this is not the complete answer.

Each arrow represents one step in the three-step process that completes the recycling loop. The first step is collection. This is when you put your recyclable materials into your curbside recycling bin or take them to a local drop-off center.

The collected materials are then prepared to be marketed and are sold to a manufacturing facility. The manufacturing process is the second arrow in the recycling symbol. The recyclable materials are converted into new products and shipped to stores across the country to be placed on shelves as new consumer goods.

The third step is where you, the consumer, purchase products made with recycled content. When you “Buy Recycled,” you complete the recycling loop, or “close the loop.”

Happy Recycling, Glen the Garbologist

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

Clean Your House Without Hurting the Planet
www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/03/18/possessions-cleaning/

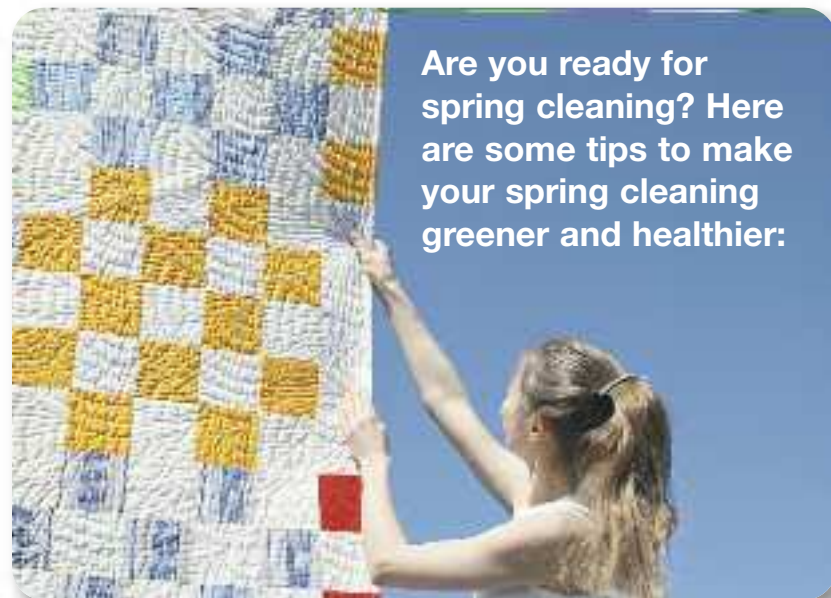
Greener Cleaning
www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning

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

Non-Toxic Home Cleaning
www.earthesy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm

A Test of Green Cleaners
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.

- 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, www.bookmooch.com, www.paperbackswap.com, or 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.

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.



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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



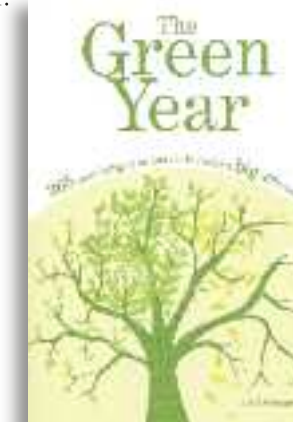
The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope.

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



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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, www.planetnatural.com, www.gardeners.com, www.reelin.com, or www.reelmowerguide.com/.

