



Talkin' Trash

Spring 2009

A Teacher's Newsletter from the Ecology Action Center

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Tote Your Trash Challenge

For middle and high school students

To raise awareness about solid waste, teachers at an Ohio high school came up with an experiment. Students were asked to keep everything they threw away for one week. Students say they learned "a dirty lesson about their impact on the environment." Many became more self-conscious as they began to filter out material that could be reused.



As Earth Day approaches, you can challenge your class to conduct a similar experiment. Provide students with a plastic store bag and ask them to 'tote their trash' for a week. A reasonable exception is that only liquids and biohazards (personal hygiene items) may be thrown away. All other items must be placed in the plastic bag. If it become full, they may request a second bag, but must continue to carry the original bag in addition to the new bag. At the end of the week, weigh each student's trash. Ask them to think of different ways they can reduce their waste including recycling and reuse. Allow them to then recycle what they can and weigh the remaining waste. This should prove an eye-opening experience as to the amount of waste material we all create and discard.

Attention Art Teachers

At the end of your scheduled time with your students have the class make a memory collage out of their recycled art work that did not become a finished product. Look online to Mclean County Arts Center at http://www.mcac.org/new_page_2.htm to see the examples of "From the Streets" art exhibit made by elementary, junior high, and high school students. Students can write about the things they have learned during their time in Art class on the collage. Have the collage up for the next group of students to examine. As the final lesson, have the new students dismantle the creation and recycle or reuse all the materials. Here are some facts you can give students as to why this is so important.

Ecology Action Center

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9-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

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Sustainable Schools

(Art Teachers Continued)

- Each of us uses approximately one 100-foot-tall Douglas fir tree in paper and wood products per year. ([EPA, 2008](#))
- Recycling 1 ton of paper saves 17 mature trees, 7,000 gallons of water, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, 2 barrels of oil, and 4,100 kilowatt-hours of electricity – enough energy to power the average American home for five months. ([EPA, 2008](#))
- Recycling paper instead of making it from new material generates 74 percent less air pollution and uses 50 percent less water. ([EPA, 2008](#))
- Producing recycled paper requires about 60 percent of the energy used to make paper from virgin wood pulp. ([EPA, 2008](#))

Check out the FREE teaching materials at the Ecology Action Center

The EAC has five educational boxes with teaching materials for teachers to borrow when you teach your students about the ecosystem.

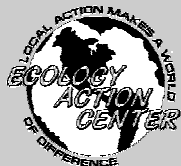
The following boxes are best used at the elementary level:

- Bug Box -contains plastic bugs, eyewitness insect video, books on stinging insects, and helpful insects books
- Bird Box- contains bird audio, bird identification cards, wing, and information on migration
- Rainforest Box-contains plant spices from the rainforest, books, and animal cards, and books about the rainforest
- Tree Box- contains dichotomy tree identification, tree rings, books and information about trees.

Junior High Activity for use in 6th, 7th, 8th grade Social Studies or Science or Math:

Garbage Dump Dilemma- Real World Problem Solving. Students figure out practical solutions to a question that affects us all: What to do with all that trash? This dilemma encourages students to collect and organize information, explore several variables, and come up with their own proposal. The class then weighs alternatives and makes a decision about waste reduction as real government councils have to decide for their communities. Contains "Garbage Dump Video," informational handouts, composition books, the "Franklin Newspaper" and teachers guides with pre designed handouts you copy for your class. A great educational experience!

Come to the Ecology Action Center to check out our curriculum in a box.



You can help!

Spice Up Mother's Day (and reuse something in honor of Mother Earth)

Give mom that special warm and fuzzy feeling by giving her wonderfully fragrant bath salts, made lovingly by her son or daughter. You can even help Mother Nature at the same time. While most empty jars are recyclable, **reusing** them is even better!

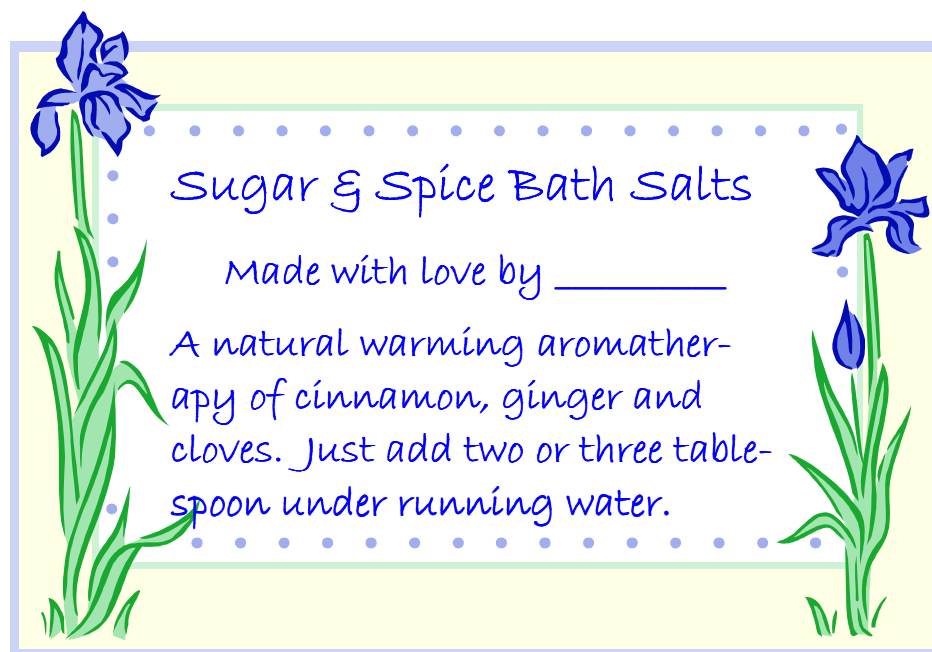


Ask each child to bring in a clean, empty peanut butter jar (18 oz.). You could also post a request on Freecycle at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/McFreecycle/>.

Fill the peanut jar with half Epsom salts and half sea salts to almost full, then add approximately 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 tsp ground ginger, 1/4 tsp ground cloves and two heaped teaspoons of brown sugar for each cup of the salts. Replace cap and have students shake the mixture to combine contents (if desired, add a few drops of red and green food coloring to enhance the golden brown color).



Have each student create their own special label, tie a satin ribbon around the neck of the jar, and tape the label to the front with clear packing tape. It's the perfect gift every mother will love.

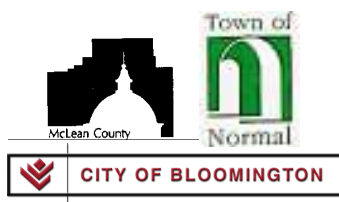


Recycle the Ecology Action Center Newsletter by passing it on to someone else after you have read it.



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Upcoming Events

April 16: Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo kicks off with Speaker Panel: "Clean Water, Healthy Food: Your Choice."

April 17-18: Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo

April 22: Earth Day

April 24: Arbor Day- Plant a Tree

May 2: Friends of Fell Arboretum Plant Sale at ISU.

April 17 & 18, 2009
Illinois Wesleyan University
Shirk Center



Clean Water: The Ripple Effect

www.islwe.org