



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

Volume 14, Issue 3

Fall 2016

BN Green Events

Oct. 8, 5:30 - 7 pm
Composting Workshop
sign up online
ecologyactioncenter.org

Oct. 15, 9 - 10:30 am
Composting Workshop
sign up online
ecologyactioncenter.org

Oct. 22, 9 am - 12 pm
Sugar Creek Stewards
sign up online
ecologyactioncenter.org

Oct. 27, 6 - 8 pm
**Sustainable Gourmet
Wine & Local Foods
Fundraiser**
sign up online
ecologyactioncenter.org

Nov. 5th 8 am - 12 pm
**America Recycles Day
Mega Recycling**
IWU Hansen Center
ecologyactioncenter.org

Greening the End of the Season

It's autumn, and that means it's time to put our outside spaces to bed for the winter. There are annual plants to remove, pots to empty, leaves to rake, and rain barrels to winterize. The good news is that there are often beautiful fall days!

Removing the "dead" stuff

Of course, the annual plants, like those impatiens in pots, need to be removed, cut into small pieces and put into the compost pile (more about compost later). But many perennials should be left to die back on their own. The dormant plants may provide good cover for wildlife; the seed pods can provide good nourishment.

And what about all those leaves? As you may be aware, yard waste is banned from landfills in the State of Illinois, so that is all the more reason to recycle it on-site as mulch, or recycle it with the municipal leaf pick-up program. They are fabulous "browns" for the compost pile, but if you have too many, the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal provide leaf vacuuming. Please remember to rake the leaves just to the back side of the curb, not into the street.

The Compost Pile

Fall is a great time for composting. The mixture of the nitrogen-rich green plants you have removed from pots, plus the high carbon leaves, results in just the right ratio. Remember, the smaller you cut up woody stalks or garden vines, the quicker they will decompose. Also, think about saving a barrel of those leaves after you rake – it's nice to have that carbon-rich material to mix in with your kitchen scraps through the winter.

Rain Barrels

Your rain barrel needs to be emptied and stored for winter. Depending on how it is connected to your downspout system determines what you will need to do. The traditional method of cutting the downspout and redirecting the shortened end into the barrel means you will need to remove the elbows leading to the barrel and reattaching the cut downspout and your kick out (the metal or plastic tube or that is supposed to direct the rainwater at least 10' from the house's foundation). The EAC stocks two new diverter types that eliminate this tedious chore. The barrel itself should be emptied of water and cleaned. Then turn the barrel upside down so that it stays drained. You can keep it inside or outside; if outside, you may need to prop up or weight down the barrel so that it does not blow away.

Cigarette Butts

Cigarette butts are the most commonly discarded piece of waste worldwide. It is estimated that 1.69 BILLION pounds of butts wind up as toxic trash each year, creating an enormous environmental, health, and economic burden.

Contrary to popular belief, cigarette butts are NOT biodegradable! Cigarette butt waste is a huge environmental issue, with a global impact -- it is both unsightly and unhealthy.
no-smoke.org

Recycle Your Butts

Recycle your butts through Terracycle. Terracycle helps alleviate this problem by giving people the option of what to do with their cigarette waste.

The items that Terracycle collects are:

- Extinguished cigarettes
- cigarette filters
- loose tobacco pouches
- outer plastic packaging
- inner foil packaging,
- rolling paper
- ash

The paper packaging is not collected because that can be including in your single stream recycling.

What to Do in the Absence of a HHW Collection?

Household hazardous waste can be tricky, but the good news is that it doesn't have to be. This year, the Ecology Action Center will not be hosting a HHW collection event this year, but we have great information on alternative HHW collection sites to get you through until next fall's event.

Locally, there are a variety of locations that will take some common household hazardous waste. From small appliances such as toasters and microwaves and electronics to clothes, Home Sweet Home Ministries' warehouse and donation center is a great option. These items can be working, but do not have to be. Similarly, Habitat for Humanity is another location that will take both functioning and non-functioning appliances. Advanced Computing in Normal will accept computers and computer accessories. As most places no longer accept CRT/Tube-Style monitors, it is important to note that Normal Public Works Garage is the only place that *will* take these monitors.

There are a few pharmacies in Bloomington-Normal that will take medications for safe disposal. Eastland Pharmacy in Bloomington and BroMenn Regional Medical Center will take most medications, preferably in their original containers.

For motor oil and antifreeze, Speed Lube is a convenient option, as they have multiple locations through-out Bloomington and Normal. Team Automotive, Sears Automotive, and Walmart are some other mentionable locations.

Rechargeable batteries can be taken to most electronics retailers such as Best Buy, RadioShack, Sears, Office Depot, Lowe's, and of course Batteries Plus Bulbs and Interstate Batteries Center. Batteries Plus Bulbs and Interstate Batteries Center will take Lithium and non-rechargeable batteries; Lithium batteries will need to be bagged or taped to be accepted. Non-rechargeable batteries may cost a small fee for recycling.

There are three permanent HHW drop-off sites not too far from Bloomington-Normal.

- Rock River Reclamation District, Rockford (815) 987-5570
- City of Naperville HHW Recycling Facility, Naperville (630) 420-6095
- City of Chicago, Chicago (312) 744-7672

Any other materials not listed here, or if you would like more information on recycling, please visit our website at ecologyactioncenter.org.

Alternatively, there are ways to reduce waste from the beginning. Several ways to do this are to purchasing just what you need, exchange with your neighbors extra cleaning supplies and buy in bulk. There are also less harmful store-bought cleaners, which can be determined by looking for warning or danger labels on containers. Freecycle is an excellent online site that allows McLean County residents to safely give away and request used items no longer needed compared to disposing or buying a brand new item.

For more information or to contact us for specific inquiries, please go to our website at ecologyactioncenter.org or call us at (309) 454- 3169.

Holiday Lights: To go LED or to not go LED, that is the question

As we enter the preparing-for-the-holiday-season season, you may be going through your attic or basement pulling out your Xmas holiday lights (and your Halloween lights, your Kwanzaa lights, your Hanukkah lights, your Thanksgiving lights – you get the picture). As you look at those big, old incandescent lamps, you are probably thinking to yourself, “Boy, I remember going out in those snowy winter mornings, and seeing how beautiful these lights were, laying on the bushes full of snow. It’s amazing how they melted through the snow so quickly...”

Well, that is because the old-fashioned holiday lights are incandescent and, like other incandescent lamps (“lamp” is the technical term for what people usually call the “bulb”), they produce light by using electricity to heat up a metal filament. And, also like other incandescent, 90% of that electricity is wasted as heat rather than light! Here are the benefits of LED holiday lights:

- 75-90% less energy consumption than comparable incandescent lamps
- Reduces heat so greatly reduces fire risk
- Last up to 10 years longer

So how much money do you think you might save by switching over to LED lights? Let's start with the individual bulb differences: a 100-count string of incandescent mini-lights runs at approximately 40 watts, while a 70 count of 5mm Wide Angle LEDs is approximately 4.8 watts total. To calculate your own total power usage, use this formula:

$\$ \text{ Energy Cost} = \text{Total number of Watts used of all lights (X) 5 hours/day (X) 0.001 kilowatts/Watt (X) 30 days/season (X) } \$0.11/\text{kilowatt-hour.}$

Some average power consumptions for various lighting items and typical lighting display energy use and costs are provided (data and photos from <http://www.christmaslightsetc.com/pages/how-much-power.htm>):

Item	Incandescent Watts	LED Watts
wreath	21	4
garland	42	4
string of lights	40	5
outdoor decoration	80	38
icicle light	60	5
150' rope light	378	120
motif	110	55
Lighting Style		
typical light usage	635 W = \$11 energy	96 W = \$2 energy
typical heavy usage	6800 W = \$116 energy	900 W = \$16 energy
typical enthusiastic usage	18,300 W = \$311 energy	2,400 W = \$41 energy

ENERGYSTAR.gov. “Decorative Light Strings.” https://www.energystar.gov/products/lighting_fans/decorative_light_strings

“Christmas Lights Power Consumption.” <http://www.christmaslightsetc.com/pages/how-much-power.htm>

America Recycles Day

Join us at the IWU Hansen Center Parking Lot on Saturday, November 5th for America Recycles Day! Take this opportunity to assess your family's recycling – what are you already doing, and what can you do better?

In honor of this “holiday,” the EAC and Illinois Wesleyan co-host a mega recycling event. On this day only, you can bring lots of items that are regularly accepted year-round in our community, but have to be taken to many different locations. You can recycle electronics, textiles, mattresses, plastic bags and eyeglasses at this event. You can even bring your Terracycle items! (Not sure what that is? Check our website!)

We'll give you information about where to take these items throughout the year, but for this one day, bring them all to the wonderful volunteers at IWU, and we'll even unload your car!

We appreciate the help of our partners Home Sweet Home Ministries, Midwest Fiber, and the Lions Club for their assistance with this event.

America Recycles Day

When: November 5, 2016

Where: IWU Hansen Center, Parking Lot

Time: 8-noon

Holiday Lights: To go LED or to not go LED, that is the question CONTINUED...

In addition to the significantly lower energy consumption, LED lamps are estimated to last up to 100,000 hours, while incandescent lamps are estimated to last up to 3,000 hours. So, if you are one of those folks that leave your string lights up year-round, you can plan on having to climb up and down ladders a lot less frequently if you use LED lamps instead of incandescent.

Finally, because LEDs use 90% less energy than incandescents, more light strings can be connected in the same outlet or on the same circuit before the fuse in the light string burns out, or the circuit breaker or fuse is tripped. For example, a 1,900-Watt incandescent display would need 6 electrical outlets, while the same LED display would use only 38 Watts and need 1 outlet. Similarly, a home's typical 15-amp circuit can support an 1,800-Watt draw – or 1,440 Watts to maintain a 20% safety buffer – so you would need to have 2 circuits dedicated solely to your holiday lights!

So, now that you have decided to switch over to LED lights, what kind should you get? Well, as always, the EAC recommends that you purchase ENERGYSTAR-rated string lights; these models have been tested by the Department of Energy and found to use at least 15% less energy than a comparable string light. You can find information on almost 80 different models here: <https://www.energystar.gov/productfinder/product/certified-decorative-light-strings/results>

So, what should you do with your old incandescent string lights? Your options include: giving them away, recycling and trading-in. If the lights still work, you can join our FreeCycle program and give them away: <https://www.freecycle.org/>, and sign up for the McLean County group. String lights can be recycled in most electronic-waste ("e-waste") programs, including these in McLean County:

- Home Sweet Home Warehouse Operations, Bloomington
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Bloomington
- Normal Public Works Garage, Normal

The Ecology Action Center will be hosting their Mega Recycling event on November 5 from 8am-12pm at the Illinois Wesleyan University Hansen Center Parking Lot, 300 East Beecher Street, Bloomington, and can accept your holiday lights and other e-waste there.

www.BigGreenPurse.com lists several holiday light trade-in programs, both local and online:

www.HolidayLEDs.com as a supplier that will recycle your string lights when you mail them in, and they will give you a coupon good for a 25% discount on LED string lights purchased from them.

www.christmas-light-source.com/ is another online retailer that accepts working and broken string lights and gives you a coupon for a 10% discount on LED string lights purchased from them. Their recycling program has been going since 2008, and they donate proceeds from the recycling program to Toys for Tots.

HomeDepot has accepted incandescent string lights and given a \$3, \$4, or \$5 coupon for each string you trade in towards the purchase of LED string lights. <http://blog.homedepot.com/save-on-led-christmas-lights-when-you-recycle-your-incandescent-lights-2/>

Sears and Kmart: in years past, these retailers have given a \$4 coupon for every incandescent light string you trade in towards the purchase of LED string lights. <http://www.ctampa.com/news-views/environment/article/20741798/recycle-your-old-holiday-lights-and-get-a-discount-on-energy-star-sets>



ECOLOGY
ACTION CENTER

Sustainable Gourmet

Delicious hors d'oeuvres prepared
with locally grown ingredients,
organic wine, & silent auction

Proceeds benefit the Ecology Action Center.

Thursday, October 27, 2016

6:00-8:00 pm

Bloomington-Normal Marriott Hotel & Conference Center
201 Broadway, Normal

Tickets: \$40

Ticket sales deadline is October 20 or until tickets sell out.

Purchase tickets at ecologyactioncenter.org

For more information, call **309-454-3169**

*If you are unable to attend the Sustainable Gourmet, please consider making a donation.
Select "Sustainable Gourmet" on the EAC website.*

Sponsored by

Invenergy

Dr. Matt Fraker and
Dr. Sherri Thornton



Marriott.
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER





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