



The Ecology Action Center News

Summer 2011

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Save the Date: Sustainable Gourmet

Ecology Action Center

202 W. College Avenue

Normal Illinois 61761

Phone: (309) 454-3169

Fax: (309) 454-7508

www.ecologyactioncenter.org

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday—Friday

The Trouble with HHW

By Carl Roberts, EAC Volunteer

Household hazardous waste's effect on the environment

The proper disposal of household hazardous waste (HHW) is critical for the protection of the environment from the dangers HHW causes. The website Environment-Green¹ explains some of the effects of hazardous waste:

Acid rain – "When airborne acidic pollutants are in the air and then it rains, the pollutants bond with the rain and are brought back down to the Earth."

Air pollutants – "Studies conducted on air pollution have estimated that the US alone will experience close to 50,000 deaths annually due to air pollution. Air pollution is not just a danger to humans; it can cause damage to ecosystems as well."

Water pollution – "Pollutants such as sludge, sewage, garbage and toxic wastes such as oil spills have damaged our water supplies. The water on earth, much like the air, is shared by all and when these are polluted, it affects the entire planet."

The Village of Hanover Park, IL lists on its website some examples of HHW items that need proper disposal: "paint, turpentine, wood preservatives, stains, pesticides, herbicides, ant killers, drain cleaners, rug cleaners, toilet cleaners, household batteries, oven cleaners, pool chemicals, ammonia-based cleaners, and automotive products such as antifreeze, transmission fluid, brake fluid, used oil, and batteries."²

A primary reason why so many household products are hazardous is that the development of non-hazardous products requires significant capital investments. GreenBiz.com lists some obstacles that need to be overcome for more environmental friendliness in the printing industry. These obstacles apply to other industries as well.³

Financial – Profits "may take too long to materialize to justify the investment" in new technologies.

Local environmental regulations – "Stringent laws may not recognize new technologies."

Information needed – The information currently available on more environmentally friendly technologies "is often inconsistent, inaccurate, incomplete, or obsolete."

What's happening with hazardous household waste collection in Illinois

Disposing of HHW used to be as simple as dropping off hazardous items for free at an annual HHW collection in communities throughout Illinois. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) coordinated collection events from 1989-2009 where more than 78,100 drums of hazardous waste from 401,350 households were collected, properly containerized and safely transported to facilities for destruction.⁴

On July 15, 2009, the funding for collection events was removed by Illinois Public Act 96-0044, thus halting the collection events. The Ecology Action Center (EAC) has been carefully monitoring the situation, and the EAC has an ongoing application on file with the Illinois EPA to schedule an HHW collection event for McLean County as soon as possible after funding is restored.⁵

In the meantime, four permanent HHW collection sites are available in Illinois, located in Naperville, Rockford, Chicago and Gurnee. Contact information for each of these sites is available on the Illinois EPA website.⁶

Other alternatives for disposing of HHW

The permanent collection sites do an effective job of handling HHW, but they are not conveniently located for residents of McLean County. Other than waiting for funding to become available for community HHW collections, there are some helpful alternatives available for proper HHW disposal. Some of these alternatives are listed below:

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Recycling: A Refreshing Refresher

Kurt Erbach, EAC Intern

Though most of us like to envision the summer as a chance to relax and enjoy the simple pleasures in life, it often becomes one of the busiest times of year. Between sporting events, parties, vacations, and running errands to make sure we have everything we need, it is easy to forget about the importance of recycling and reducing the amount of waste we generate. Just in case you haven't thought about recycling in a while, here's a few things we all need a refresher on from time to time.

In a lifetime, the average American will produce an amount of garbage equal to 600 times his or her adult weight. This means that each adult will leave about 90,000 pounds of trash for future generations to deal with. Of course, reading this newsletter means you're already on track to reducing that amount. It's a great start, but there's certainly more that can be done.

The majority of McLean county communities have a drop-off or curbside pick-up recycling program. Taking advantage of these services is one of the easiest ways to reduce that 90,000 pound trash heap. If you're not sure of which sort of service your town provides or you need to find a nearby town with a drop-off service, check out the Ecology Action Center website for a list of recycling communities.

The Town of Normal alone has 14 drop-off locations which can be used by residents of the City of Bloomington as well. Neither town provides recycling bins so use an old box, or label a large plastic container, "recycling," to help you sort through your waste. Accepted materials and drop-off locations for the Town of Normal as well as City of Bloomington are all listed on the EAC website as well.

Because the list of acceptable recyclables may seem to be a large limiter on waste reduction, keep in mind that there are numerous resources for disposing of unwanted items around town. Lots of people love garages sales, and if you have the time, not only is this a great way to recycle some of your unwanted items, but it ensures they get a great new home and can be quite profitable as well.

Since we're busy enough as it is without organizing a garage sale, consider donating items such as clothing and old appliances instead of just throwing them away. The EAC website has a large list of resale shops that will take almost anything off of your hands that is in gently used or like-new condition. Places like Habitat for Humanity's ReStore will take everything from closet doors to refrigerators, and others like Goodwill can take items like those old shoes that you haven't worn in years.

For hard to sell and unable-to-be-donated items, consider joining Freecycle: The

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Don't miss the Autumn Celebration at Sugar Grove Nature Center Saturday, October 22, 2011 from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

A day full of old-fashioned autumn fun including fall color walks, historical reenactors, blacksmith and woodturning demonstrations, a scarecrow factory, pumpkin patch and salon, pumpkin bowling, and more! Enjoy on-stage entertainment with The Indras from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and The Emerald Underground from 2-5 p.m. More information available at www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org or by calling (309) 874-2174.



Care for your yard without chemicals— www.yardsmart.info

The Trouble with HHW continued from page 1

Use less hazardous materials – The United States EPA recommends: “One way to reduce problems from household hazardous waste is to use nonhazardous or less hazardous compounds. People can do this by learning about alternative products that are available and choosing those that are less toxic.”⁷

Give away leftover materials – The EPA also suggests: “Leftover products can be shared with neighbors; donated to a business, charity or government agent.”⁷

Care for your yard without chemicals – The EAC’s Yard Smart program provides instructions for lawn care that include feeding the soil with organic compost, enriching the soil with slow-acting organic fertilizer, and using commercial lawn products that are organic.⁸

Recycle electronic devices – WJBC radio recently reported that Illinois now has a stricter law for disposing of electronics. “The current law requires computer monitors, TVs and printers to be recycled. Now the list has been expanded to include items such as keyboards, portable music devices, scanners, and video game consoles.”⁹ Electronics may be recycled at the Normal Public Works Garage Electronics Drop-off at 1301 Warriner (off Adelaide), Monday-Friday from 7am to 2pm.

Other HHW recycling or disposal opportunities currently available – The EAC website lists locations in McLean County that will accept certain HHW items for recycling or proper disposal. These items include fluorescent bulbs (compact or tube), household batteries, used motor oil or anti-freeze, and unused or expired medications.¹⁰

McLean County residents may call the Ecology Action Center at (309) 454-3169 for more information or to be added to a list of people who will be notified when the next community HHW collection is scheduled. Alternately, sign yourself up for the notification email list using the red box on the left side of EAC’s website at www.ecologyactioncenter.org.

Footnotes

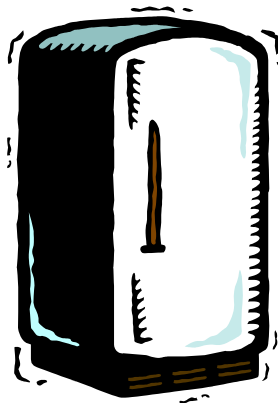
1. http://www.environment-green.com/Hazardous_Waste.html
2. <http://www.hanoverparkillinois.org/Services/Solid-Waste-Services/Household-Hazardous-Waste.aspx>
3. <http://www.greenbiz.com/business/research/report/2004/08/09/how-press-printers-reduce-waste-emissions-and-costs>
4. <http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste/>
5. www.ecologyactioncenter.org/events/HHW.shtml
6. www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste/hhwc-schedule
7. http://www.epa.gov/superfund/students/class_act/haz-ed/ff07.pdf
8. <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/yard-smart/FactSheets/Factsheet4OrganicProducts.pdf>
9. <http://wjbc.com/new-law-aims-to-reduce-electronics-in-landfills/>
10. <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/events/HHW.shtml>

What’s the big picture, long term solution to hazardous waste? That’s easy—don’t generate it!



For hard to sell items, consider joining McLean County Freecycle

\$50 From Ameren For Recycling Inefficient Appliances!



So you have an older fridge or freezer; you know it's an energy hog, but you don't have much reason to get rid of it as it is still working fine. Alas, no more! Ameren is giving you the incentive to let it go—namely, \$50! Any residential Ameren customer can call them up and schedule a pickup for a working full size refrigerator or freezer. Ameren's people will come pick it up, recycle it, and send a you \$50 reward. What's more, if you tell them the Ecology Action Center referred you, we get \$10 from Ameren too! Call them today at 1.866.899.9088 and tell them the Ecology Action Center referred you; our referral number is RR11-949. For more information download the flyer from the EAC website.

Recycling Refresher continued from page 2

Free Exchange. The online network is a quick and easy way for you to advertise unwanted items that you're willing to give away. This can even be a great resource for recycling cans of old paint, or those boxes of old and unused cleaning supplies.

But perhaps you've gotten through these tips and you can still think of some unwanted items you have lying around that you're positive can't be recycled, sold, or even given away. For those items that require special disposal, we list options for everything from motor oil to prescription drugs on our website in the Recycling and Waste Reduction section under Special Disposal. For appliances and other electronic or mechanical items that no longer work, check out Morris Tick Recycling at 501 E Stewart in Bloomington; their list of accepted items is probably as long as your list of unwanted items! If you're not sure if your item can be taken by one of the businesses listed, please call them ahead of time to save yourself the trip.

Thanks for recycling!

Go Green—Get Outside for the Worldwide Day of Play Saturday, Sept. 26

Take part in the 3rd annual, officially tons of fun, **Bloomington-Normal Worldwide Day of Play!** Visit one or all five locations and participate in a ton of FUNtastic activities for the entire family! The participating locations are McGraw Park in Bloomington, Anderson Park in Normal, the Children's Discovery Museum, the YWCA McLean County, and the Reggie Fun Zone.

11:00 am - 2:00 pm for all except the Reggie Fun Zone

4:00 - 7:00 pm - Reggie's Fun Zone @ ISU

FREE (except \$1 admission at the museum)



Sign up today for our ever-popular workshops

Worms, Rainwater, and Compost, Oh My: Upcoming Workshops from the EAC

Wanting to get started composting but don't know how? Curious about the possibility of indoor, year round composting with worms? Looking to save money on your water bill and harvest free water for your garden as it literally falls from the sky? The EAC is here to help you out with all of the above with our popular yet economical hands-on workshops.

Learn all the ins and out of basic composting and make your own take home composters in our **Composting Workshop**, scheduled for Monday, September 26, 2011 5:30PM for \$28 per person or \$20 for EAC members.

Learn all about vermicomposting, or composting with worms, in our **Vermicomposting Workshop**, to be held Tuesday, October 4, 2011 5:30PM for \$45 per person or \$40 for EAC members.

You won't find a better deal on a high quality rain barrel than the one you build yourself in our **Build-Your-Own-Rain Barrel Workshop**, to be held scheduled for Tuesday, September 20, 2011 5:30PM for \$38 or only \$28 for EAC members. Our current design includes a durable 6" screen to prevent entry of debris or mosquitos and an easier construction process than in the past which also results in a much more tightly sealed rain barrel to prevent spreading West Nile Virus.

Finally, this fall we are launching a brand-new workshop: **Retrofit Your Rain Barrel**. So maybe you have a rain barrel, but it's seen better days. Perhaps it is one of our earlier designs or one you made yourself. In any case, it could use a little repair or the addition of some of our newer design features such as a heavy duty screen with a fine mesh to prevent mosquito entry, an overflow hose complete with mosquito barrier, a new spigot, or reattachment of your lid. This retrofitting workshop will allow you to bring your (empty) rain barrel in for upgrades or improvements. If your rain barrel has any gaps or openings at all, you may be harboring mosquitos and allowing the spread of West Nile Virus or other vector diseases. Please bring in your rain barrel for a check up if you have any questions about the condition of your rain barrel. Watch for more details on this workshop on our website calendar or in the EAC Action News email newsletter.

These workshops all fill quickly; to register, sign up online using the links from the BN Green Events Calendar at www.bn-green.org. Or download registration forms to mail in or hand deliver from the same site. Payment is due upon registration. Call or stop by for more information.

Save the Date for the Sixth Annual Sustainable Gourmet

Join us at this popular fall event featuring a tasting of organic wines, hors d'oeuvres from local foods, a silent auction of great prizes, and more, to take place Thursday, November 3 at Medici in Normal at 5:30 p.m. All proceeds benefit the Ecology Action Center and further enable us to follow our mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.

Tickets available soon at www.ecologyactioncenter.org. Call (309) 454-3169 for more information.



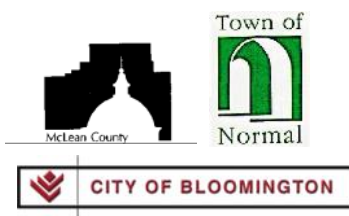
Recycle the Ecology Action Center Newsletter by passing it on to someone else after you have read it.



Ecology Action Center
202 W. College Ave.
Normal, IL 61761
www.ecologyactioncenter.org

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Calendar of Upcoming EAC Events

September 17, 9 a.m. : McLean County Freecycle Free For All, Anderson Park

September 20, 5:30 p.m.: Rain Barrel Workshop—register on EAC website

September 26, 5:30 p.m.: Composting Workshop—register on EAC website

October 4, 5:30 p.m.: Vermicomposting Workshop—register on EAC website

October 4, 5:30 p.m.: Green Drinks, Medici in Uptown Normal

October 11, 5:30 p.m.: Retrofit Your Rain Barrel—more details TBA

November 1, 5:30 p.m.: Green Drinks, Medici in Uptown Normal

November 3, 5:30 p.m.: Sustainable Gourmet Wine Tasting Fundraiser

November 19: America Recycles Day Mega Recycling Event, IWU Shirk

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