



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

Volume 23, Issue 3

Fall 2023



Finishing off Flower Season Sustainably

As gardening season nears an end, with the first frost date approaching, it is time to clean up all the pots left over from your porch plants, vegetable garden, and recent chrysanthemum purchases.

Do not throw all those plastic pots in the garbage! Drop them off for recycling with the City of Bloomington Township's Promoting Others to Succeed (POTS) program. The POTS program collects any pot that garden plants/flowers come in. These pots can NOT be recycled in regular curbside recycling but can be dropped off at one of the various drop off locations:

- 🌸 A.B. Hatchery and Garden Center, 916 E. Grove Street, Bloomington (east side of building)
- 🌻 Casey's Garden Shop and Florist, 1505 N. Main Street, Normal (behind the garden center)
- 🌸 Growing Grounds, 1610 S. Main Street, Bloomington (near north entrance)
- 🌻 Jeffery Alans, 701 Towanda Avenue, Normal (north side of building)
- 🌲 Owens Nursery and Florist, 1700 Morrissey, Bloomington (east side of entrance)
- 🌻 The City of Bloomington Township Office, 607 S. Gridley Street, Bloomington (front of building)



Heating Season is almost here!

It might be difficult to imagine, since we were in a heatwave just a few weeks ago, but heating season is right around the corner (typically Oct 1 - March 31). As the U.S. Energy Information Administration recently reported, "homes in the Midwest consumed 34% more natural gas than the national average—76.1 million British thermal units (MMBtu) per household compared with 56.6 MMBtu nationally. The newest Midwestern homes, those built since 2010, consumed an average of 48.9 MMBtu of natural gas for space heating, and homes built before 1950 consumed an average of 74.8 MMBtu". With space heating accounting for over 53% of energy use in Midwestern homes.

Natural gas consumption for space heating, U.S. Midwest (2020)



Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2020 Residential Energy Consumption Survey
Note: Average consumption for homes that use natural gas for space heating. Btu=British Thermal units.

Heating Season Cont...

With all that in mind, the Ecology Action Center is offering some tips to help you reduce your heating costs and prepare your home for winter.

Tip 1: Ensure your attic and crawlspace are properly insulated and air sealed!

You might be saying, "There's some insulation up there. How am I supposed to know if it's enough?" Easy! Have the EAC conduct a home energy audit (register at bnenergybright.org) and our professional staff can tell you!

R-49 is the desired insulation level for attics in our area. Each type of insulation has a different R-value per inch. This chart shows you general values per inch (which is great for assessing existing insulation levels). When purchasing insulation it will also list it's R-value per inch so you know exactly how much you need to reach the desired insulation levels.

Typical Insulation R-values

Insulation Type	R-value per inch	Typical Applications
Cellulose, loose fill	3.7	Attic Floor
Cellulose, high density	3.2	Walls, Enclosed Cavities, Framing Transitions
Fiberglass, batts	3.0*	Basement Ceiling, Open Stud Walls, Attic Floor*
Fiberglass, loose fill	2.8	Attic Floor, Walls (existing)
Fiberglass, loose fill, fluffed below manufacturer's standards	uncertain	Do not install, or correct by blowing over with higher density
Rockwool	3.0	Attic Floor, Walls, Basement Ceiling (may be loose or batts)
Vermiculite	2.7	Attic Floor
Poly-isocyanurate, rigid board	7.0	Foundation Walls, Attic Access Doors
Polystyrene, expanded rigid board	4.0	Foundation Walls, Sill Plate
Polystyrene, extruded rigid board	5.0	Foundation Walls, Sub-Slab, Sill Plate
Low Density Urethane, sprayed foam	3.7	Attics, Walls (new construction); Sill Plate, Band Joist, Framing Transitions
Urethane, sprayed foam	6.0	Attics, Walls (new construction); Sill Plate, Band Joist, Framing Transitions
Urea Formaldehyde Foam	4.0	Attics, Walls (existing)

Tip 2: Have your furnace serviced!

Annual maintenance, including a thorough examination and cleaning of the parts that commonly malfunction, like the air filter, the fan, the pilot light, and the heat exchanger, can prevent problems and keep your HVAC functioning at peak efficiency. Most HVAC companies offer annual service plans to service your furnace/boiler in the fall and your air conditioner in the spring.

Tip 3: Clean and inspect your gutters!

After all the leaves have fallen, make sure you scoop them out of your gutters, ensure your gutters are securely attached to your house, and have kick-outs that drain far away from your home's foundation. Clogged gutters can cause water to back up and then freeze once temperatures drop. This can cause damage and leaking at your roof. Gutters that drain too closely to the foundation can lead to basement flooding.

Keeping gutters clear and properly connected to ensure that melting snow runs off your roof and through downspouts will prevent damage and flooding.

Tip 4: Check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors! All homes should have smoke detectors in every room and carbon monoxide detectors outside sleeping spaces and near areas with combustion appliances. Test them monthly and replace batteries twice a year. Keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher in multiple spaces in your home, and near any open flame fireplaces or stoves.

All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside.

If you have questions about any of these tips or need other energy efficiency advice for your home, contact Larissa at the EAC at larmstrong@ecologyactioncenter.org or 309-454-3169 x15.

The Ecology Action Center is looking ahead to the future!

Legacy Giving is contributing to the future with the knowledge one is making a lasting impact and leaving a gift for generations to come

As most EAC members know, the dollars that fund our work come primarily from our contractual work with the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, the County Board and the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District. Membership dues, personal/business donations, and awarded grants provide some additional income.

In June of 2022, the EAC Board of Directors established the 2071 ENDOWMENT FUND to provide a long-term income source to secure the Ecology Action Center's ability to remain McLean County's primary sustainability and environmental services agency well into the future. 2071 will be the Ecology Action Center's 100th year of service to our community. This fund's objective is to generate annual interest from investments, and to use that income where needed to supplement other funding sources. The 2071 Endowment Fund aims to provide long-term stability and financial viability, reduce dependence on public funding, and serve as a safety net for unanticipated economic downturns.

Members interested in learning more about the 2071 Fund should contact our Development Coordinator, Deborah Pitcher at dpitcher@ecologyactioncenter.org or 309-454-3169 x 17. Contributions can also be made online at ecologyactioncenter.org-eac/2071-fund. EAC's Financial Resources Committee practices prudent financial management of all donated funds with attention to environmental, social and ethical investment platforms. As the EAC is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law. The 2071 Endowment Fund also accepts donations in the form of IRA required minimum distributions, stocks and charitable gift annuities.



Disposal of Latex Paint is Easy!

When you were sorting through your items for this year's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event, did you find materials you were not sure how to dispose of? Fret not! Visit RecycleBN.org, download the Recycle Coach App, or call 309-454-3169 to get answers to all your recycling/waste disposal questions.

The Ecology Action Center staff receive a lot of questions on how to dispose of latex paint. Latex based paint is not a hazardous material and can legally and safely be disposed of in the trash once completely dried out. In order to dry out latex paint, pour it out in thin layers on a disposable material, such as old newspapers or cardboard. Allow each layer to dry completely and repeat the process until you have poured and dried all of the paint. Then roll up the newspaper and rubbery paint, and throw it in the trash. Watch the video at ecologyactioncenter.org/hhw/latex-paint-disposal/ to learn more about proper disposal.



In our July newsletter, mentioned possible future legislation that could make latex paint disposal easier. That legislation has passed in Illinois! On Friday, July 28 Governor Pritzker passed the Paint Stewardship Act which will require manufacturers pay a fee to the Illinois EPA. These funds will help establish permanent paint collection sites or events where residents will be able to drop off unused latex paint free of charge. The Paint Stewardship Act requires these collection sites or events exist within a 15-mile radius for 90 percent of Illinois Residents. The latex paint collected will be recycled into 'new' latex paint. Drop off sites and collection events are projected to launch in 2025.



PO Box 97
 Normal, IL 61761-0097
 ecologyactioncenter.org
 309-454-3169



Printed on Recycled, Chlorine-Free Paper, Of Course!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Ecology Action Center will make reasonable accommodations for participation in public programs and services. To request accommodation, please call 309-454-3169x11 or go to ecologyactioncenter.org/accommodation. Please provide two weeks advance notice if possible.

Staff **Board of Directors 2022–2023**

Michael Brown
 Executive Director

Larissa Armstrong
 Assistant Director

Katie Vogler
 Education Coordinator

Kelsey Bremner
 Program Assistant

Jake Mehalic
 Tree Coordinator

Deborah Pitcher
 Development Coordinator

Peg Mercer
 Administrative Assistant

Nathan Bair
 Stewardship Coordinator

Eric Marshall
 Program Assistant

Mike O’Grady
 President and Ex-officio
 McLean County

Carl Teichman
 Past President

Jay Ivers
 Vice President

Nancy Armstrong
 Treasurer

Charles Bristow
 Secretary

Kevin Kothe
 Ex-officio Bloomington

Jason Comfort
 Ex-officio Normal

Hannah Eisner

Myra Gordon

Steve Kowalski

Joan Brehm

Kari Sandhaas

Vince Allen

Elisabeth Reed

Ben Ryburn

George Gordon

Wayne Aldrich

Goverdhan Galpalli

Laurie Wollrab

Kevin Callis



**Bloomington
 Normal Water
 Reclamation District**