

# Trash Talk!



THURSTON COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

Public Works

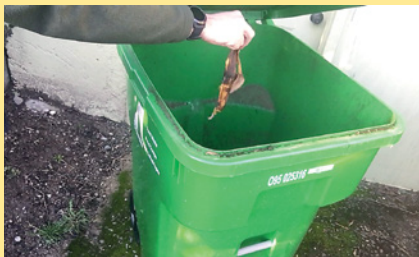
Spring 2023



## Keep Food Out of the Garbage

You might think that only leaves, grass clippings, and other yard waste go into the green (or sometimes blue) curbside carts. But that isn't all you can drop into those carts! Food scraps and plate scrapings can go into these carts, too. This service has to be requested, so have an adult at your house contact your garbage company to sign up.

Some people may like to compost and would rather take care of their own food scraps at home. Does that sound like your family? The Master Recycler Composter program of Thurston County offers tips and instructions for building and taking care of a compost pile in your backyard. Visit [Extension.wsu.edu/thurston/gardening/mc](https://Extension.wsu.edu/thurston/gardening/mc) to learn more.



Recently, we discussed curbside food and yard waste collection on our "Talkin' Trash" video series (episode 14). We mention that only loose food, food-soiled paper, and yard waste should go into the Food & Yard Waste cart. NO bags of any kind should be included! Just remember: "Keep all materials loose. Do not bag."

## Don't Get Carried Away!

### Be a smart recycler.

"Getting carried away" is a term we use for losing control and taking something too far — even if it's a good thing. We all have learned that recycling is good for the planet. But did you know that some people get carried away when they recycle?

They want to do the right thing and recycle, so sometimes they toss things into the recycling bin that cannot be recycled, hoping that they will get recycled. They won't! Other times, people leave a lot of food or liquid in the recyclable bottles or cans that they place into the bin. This makes a big mess! In both cases, the icky mix of recycling and garbage takes hard work, time, and money to separate. Sometimes the mess is impossible to sort out. Then the recyclables are ruined and may have to be sent to a landfill.

This is why it is important to know what to recycle and how to prepare it before placing anything into the

recycling bins at your home, in your school, and at a drop-off center.

Be a smart recycler. Don't get carried away by tossing everything into the recycling bin, whether it is recyclable or not. While you are at it, help your family members, classmates, and friends learn to be smart recyclers, too!

#### What should I recycle?

- Take a look at the recycling guide on this page.
- Not all plastics are recyclable. Ignore symbols or writing on the package. Instead check to see whether the shape of the container matches what's shown on the recycling guide.
- Check [WhereDoITakeMy.org](https://WhereDoITakeMy.org).

#### How should I prepare my recycling?

- Empty and rinse food and drink containers. Turn containers upside down and let them drip-dry.
- Flatten boxes.
- Recycle only clean paper products.



## FOOD & YARD WASTE

PREPARATION: Keep all materials loose. Do not bag.



## RECYCLING

Recycle plastics by shape. Ignore numbers/symbols on packaging.

PREPARATION: Empty • clean (quick rinse) • dry • no lids • do not bag



Remember — paper and boxes soaked with grease or covered in sticky, spilled food should go into the garbage.

- Don't bag your recycling. Even using a paper bag causes problems. Put clean recyclables loose into the cart or bin.

#### Why should I recycle?

- Recycling keeps usable resources out of landfills.
- Making new products from recyclables uses less energy and creates less pollution.
- Recycling helps create jobs.

#### Where should I recycle?

Thurston County offers three sites for people to drop off mixed recyclables, cardboard, and glass.

- Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) in Lacey
- Rainier Drop-Box Facility
- Rochester Drop-Box Facility

Additional drop-off locations managed by private companies can be found by searching the [WhereDoITakeMy.org](https://WhereDoITakeMy.org) directory for a specific material.

Curbside recycling is available to all residents of Thurston County. A law passed in 1991 required that the bill residents pay for garbage collection at home must include recycling collection. This means that all people who live in Thurston County receive a recycling bin to help keep valuable resources out of the garbage.



# Make a Difference This Earth Day



Credit: FG Trade Latin | E+ | Getty Images

This April, people of all ages in countries around the world will join together to celebrate Earth Day’s 53rd anniversary! Although people may come from different backgrounds and have different beliefs, we all share the same planet. It makes sense to celebrate everything it provides for us and care for it together.

Back in 1970, a United States Senator from Wisconsin named Gaylord Nelson saw that pollution of our air, land, and water was growing and becoming a big problem. He wanted people to understand why we need to take better care of our planet. To help raise awareness, he created the first Earth Day. He made a difference in a big way. Now we celebrate

Earth Day all over the world each April 22. Communities do things like plant trees and gardens and have community cleanups to show respect for the planet we all share.

You, too, can care for our planet. Sometimes you might think you are too small or too young to help, but there are plenty of things you can do yourself, with your families, and even in your school and community to make a difference. Remember that small changes made by small people can make a big difference! Here are some ideas:

**You can:**

- Turn off the lights when you leave a room empty.
- Unplug items that are not in use.
- Make posters for your school or home about where and when to recycle.
- Save water by taking shorter showers and turning off the water while you brush your teeth.
- Ride your bike or walk whenever possible.
- Write a play, poem, or song about our planet and perform it on Earth Day.
- Make cards from reused supplies to wish your friends and family members a happy and healthy Earth Day.

**You can encourage your family to:**

- Start composting.
- Take reusable bags to the store.
- Carpool to school and activities.
- Avoid bottled water and, instead, use washable, refillable bottles. You can use a cup or glass when you are at home.
- When shopping, buy recycled-content products, like notebook and printer paper.
- Plant a garden.
- Replace burned-out light bulbs with energy-saving bulbs, such as LEDs.

**You can improve your community:**

- Ask your teacher about vermicomposting (worm composting) in your classroom.
- Learn about local trees, plants, and wildlife, and lead nature hikes.
- Help plant and care for school or community gardens.
- Take part in community cleanup days.

## Local Students Make a Difference!

Students at Pleasant Glade Elementary in Lacey started collecting food scraps from 4th and 5th grade lunches in December 2022. Since then, Mr. Landers (5th grade) and students in the leadership program have been showing other students how to sort their lunch waste properly. They also track the amount of waste kept out of the landfill by measuring how much food and recyclables are kept separate from garbage. Food scraps get composted and turned into soil, and the recyclables are turned into new products.

Pleasant Glade Elementary is also working hard to avoid creating waste in the first place by using durable lunch trays and utensils. This means they can be washed and reused each day. This keeps a lot of stuff from being buried in the landfill and reduces the greenhouse gases created by the school! In the next issue of *Trash Talk!*, we will find out how much material these students were able to reduce, compost, and recycle. Now go out and celebrate Earth Day by making a difference, too!



## Where in the World?

**Instructions:** Steel is one of the most recycled materials around the world, yet crude steel, or steel that is not made from recycled materials, is still made every year. Using the clues below, figure out which country produced the most crude steel in 2021 at 1 billion metric tons and then circle it on this map.

1. Though not an island, I touch the Pacific Ocean.
2. In land area, I am one of the largest countries in all of Asia.
3. You might recognize my flag, which is red and has one large and four small gold stars.
4. I am south of Mongolia and east of Afghanistan.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



Credit: CC-BY 4.0, © 2022 by Stefan Fischerlaender | Mapswire.com



# Lose the Litter



Have you ever noticed one small piece of litter on the ground? While it may not seem like much, that one small piece can lead to a big problem. According to Keep America Beautiful, people are much more likely to litter if they see other trash on the ground. So once an area has a little bit of litter, more and more litter piles up until there is a nasty mess.

Litter doesn't just look messy; it can actually harm animals, people, and our planet. Too much litter leads to flooding and water pollution and costs a lot of money to clean up. So that one candy wrapper on the playground can become one big problem!

### Here are some ways to prevent litter:

- Don't litter! Avoid throwing gum, candy wrappers, drink cups, plastic bottles, and other items onto the ground. Look for trash and recycling bins. If you don't see them, carry your trash and recycling with you. When you get home, you can put it in the right place — the trash can or recycling bin.
- Pick up litter. If your friends are playing basketball in the driveway, be sure that all trash and recyclables end up where they belong. Pick up litter that others drop on your lawn. At parks and sporting events, be sure that your sports teams and friends leave the area at least as clean as you found it — if not cleaner.
- When you take your trash or recyclables to the curb, make sure the lids are closed on the containers or carts.
- Organize a litter cleanup at school, at a park, or in your neighborhood. Ask an adult to help you plan and run the cleanup. Pick a day and invite your friends, classmates, teammates, and relatives. Remind everyone to bring gloves so their hands don't get cut or dirty. If you'll be near a road or parking lot, make sure adults are nearby, and wear bright or light colors or safety vests so drivers will be able to see and avoid you. Provide bags for

trash and recyclables. Remember to properly recycle or dispose of everything when you are done. And thank everyone for helping!

Thurston County provides support to anyone who wants to organize their own litter cleanup. Whether your sports team is looking to clean up a park or your family and neighbors want to remove litter near home, you can borrow safety equipment and receive free garbage bags. Ask an adult to call 360-867-2491 or email [ThurstonSolidWaste@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:ThurstonSolidWaste@co.thurston.wa.us) for more information.

# Sign Sense

**Instructions:** The new signs for the recycling center make no sense! All of the vowels are wrong. Read each line carefully to figure out what the sign should say. Then, in the box below, print the corrected sign message. Be prepared — the vowel mistakes are different on each sign. We've done the first one for you.

1

Ipun  
Sondey-Setordey  
8-4:45

Open  
Sunday-Saturday  
8-4:45

2

Enlaidung  
Zano

3

Cerdbuerd  
Unly

4

Maxid  
Pupir

5

Bittlos,  
Jers, Cens

6

Thanks  
fur  
Rocyclang

7

Dravu  
Cerufolly

# Dare to Compare

**Instructions:** Use the clues to find the correct answers. Show your work.

The letter **L** stands for the number of old light bulbs that Amy's family replaced with energy-efficient LED bulbs.

- Clues:
- A.  $L < 70$

C. L is an even number.
- B.  $L + L > 120$

D. 8 is a factor of L.

1. Based on the first two clues, list all possible answers. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Using the third clue, list the possible answers. \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is L? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you need to use all four clues? \_\_\_\_\_

The letter **T** stands for the number of trees that Anthony and his garden club planted to celebrate Arbor Day and Earth Day.

- Clues:
- A.  $T > 7 \times 6$

D. 5 is not a factor of T.
- B.  $T \neq 21$

E. 14 is a factor of T.
- C.  $T + T < 115$



Credit: Zinkevych | iStock | Getty Images Plus

1. To find T, which clue would you use first? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which clue would you use second? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is T? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you need to use all of the clues to find the answer? \_\_\_\_\_

# Get Involved

- **Celebrate Reclaimed Water with the WET Science Center: Saturday, April 8, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Celebrate the seasonal opening of the East Bay Public Plaza stream! Attend a 1 p.m. presentation, followed by a tour of the Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Thurston County (LOTT) wastewater treatment plant, to learn how LOTT reclaims water, a valuable community resource. Tour participants must be 10 or older and wear closed shoes. Water-themed activities will be offered all day. Learn more at [Wetsciencecenter.org/events](http://Wetsciencecenter.org/events).

- **Rise Above Plastics with the WET Science Center: Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Earth Day is here! Are you ready to help the planet? Our lives are full of plastic products

and now our oceans are full of plastics, too. Discover how to decrease plastics pollution through hands-on activities and crafts. Learn more at [Wetsciencecenter.org/events](http://Wetsciencecenter.org/events).

- **Stream Team of Thurston County**

Join us for year-round free family fun activities! Are you a Nature Sleuth adventurer, interested in hands-on science? Do you want to learn how you can help protect our rivers, streams, lakes and Puget Sound? We've got it all! To learn more visit [Streamteam.info](http://Streamteam.info).

- **The “Plastics in the Ocean” loaner kit** for educators shows students how plastics pollution in the ocean impacts birds and other ocean life. Students discuss local solutions that reduce the amount of plastics ending up in the ocean. The kit is available at no cost for



up to two weeks at a time. Your teacher can reserve this kit by emailing [SolidWasteYouth@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:SolidWasteYouth@co.thurston.wa.us).

## What’s Wrong?

*Sasha’s class has been studying how natural resources are used to create the products that we use every day. She studied for this quiz, but she forgot to check her work. Now five of the natural resources don’t match up with the right products!*

**Instructions:** Look at each line. If the natural resource is not listed with the correct products, cross it out and write the correct term. (Hint: You will use each term only once.)

Manufactured Products	Natural Resource
1. plastics, fuel	<u>iron ore</u>
2. clothing, such as T-shirts or jeans	<u>cotton plant</u>
3. steel cans, cars, bridges	<u>trees</u>
4. aluminum cans, airplanes	<u>bauxite ore</u>
5. wires, pipes	<u>petroleum</u>
6. jewelry, electronics	<u>gold</u>
7. stainless steel	<u>chromium</u>
8. jewelry, cutting tools	<u>diamonds</u>
9. paper, boxes, furniture	<u>sand (silica)</u>
10. glass bottles and jars	<u>copper</u>



### Bonus:

1. Name the five countries which mine the most bauxite ore.

2. Name five products made from plastics.

Funded by Thurston County Public Works, Solid Waste Division

### Thurston County Public Works Solid Waste Division

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