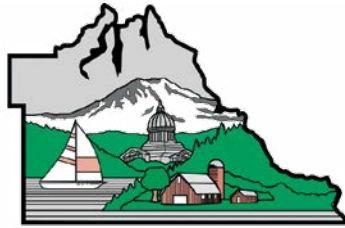


Trash Talk!



THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON

Public Works

Spring 2024



Who's the Expert Now

You probably know a lot about recycling. Are you the recycling expert in your family? Would you like to be? Read on to learn more. First, you should know why recycling is important. Here are our top five reasons to recycle:

1. Recycling saves energy.
2. Recycling conserves natural resources.
3. Recycling reduces air and water pollution.
4. Recycling helps create manufacturing jobs.
5. Recycling is EASY!

Second, know what materials we accept locally. Recycle these items:

- Plastic bottles, jugs, dairy tubs, and buckets (no lids and no handles)
- Mixed paper, empty paper bags, and flattened boxes
- Metal cans
- Glass bottles and jars (LeMay customers must place glass in a separate bin. City of Olympia customers must take glass to a drop-off location.)

Third, prepare your recyclables correctly. Food and drink containers should be emptied and rinsed. Make sure that paper products are clean and dry. Flatten boxes before recycling to save space in bins and carts. Caps and lids should be removed and tossed into the trash. Do not bag your recyclables.

Fourth, you need to know what does NOT belong with your recycling. Contaminating your recycling can cause lots of problems. Sometimes, unacceptable materials can even ruin an entire batch of recyclables at the processing center. Please don't put these items into curbside carts or drop-off recycling bins: plastic bags, plastic toys, refrigerated or frozen food boxes, furniture, tires, hazardous chemicals, light bulbs, batteries, and Styrofoam.

Finally, know where to recycle. 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.

Thurston County also 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 directory at WhereDoITakeMy.org.

If you aren't sure where, when, or how to recycle, visit our website, WhereDoITakeMy.org. Working together, we can help take care of the only planet we have. Now who is the recycling expert? You? Yes, you!



RECYCLING

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

PREPARATION empty · clean (quick rinse) · dry · no lids · do not bag

PLASTIC



bottles
(non-prescription ok)



jugs



buckets
(no handles)



dairy tubs

METAL



metal cans

PAPER



mixed paper and
empty paper bags



boxes
(flattened,
nothing refrigerated)



corrugated
cardboard
(flattened)

GLASS

Put glass bottles and jars
in a separate recycling
bin. **Keep out of mixed
recycling.**

Olympia customers:
take glass to drop-off
sites only.





GARBAGE

Still not sure? Look it up!
WhereDoITakeMy.org



clear food
containers



plastic bags
and wrap



pouches and
chip bags



foam trays
and containers



aluminum foil,
pans, and plates



paper and
plastic plates



shredded
paper



paper and
plastic cups



prescription
bottles



utensils
and straws



coffee pods



all lids



pizza boxes



all cartons and
refrigerated food
boxes



WhereDoITakeMy.org
(360) 867-2491



Revised 5/22

Do Not Bag!

Did you know recyclables and food and yard waste should NOT be bagged? Your recyclables should be LOOSE when you place them into recycling bins. Food and yard waste should also be LOOSE when placed into the food and yard waste cart. When items are bagged, the entire bag is handled as trash and thrown away. Plus, the bags themselves contaminate other items and get caught in equipment.

Celebrating Earth Day

On Monday, April 22, we will celebrate the 54th Earth Day. Americans have been celebrating our special planet and Earth Day since 1970. Each year, Earth Day reminds us to work together to help repair and restore our environment.



Credit: Wavebreakmedia | iStock | Getty Images Plus

While Earth Day is a great time to do something extra for our planet, we need to remember that we should take care of our amazing planet every day. It's like your sibling — you celebrate their birthday, but it's good to be nice to them all year! The Earth is our home, and it's the only one we've got, so we should treat it well. Here are some things you can do year-round to take care of our home planet:

- **Save energy:** Turn off computer monitors or laptops when you aren't using them. Unplug power adapters for cell phones, tablets, and laptops when you aren't charging or using the devices. Turn off lights when you leave the room. Encourage your parents to buy energy-efficient light bulbs, like LEDs, to replace burned-out incandescent bulbs. Oh, and don't stand with the refrigerator door open! Peek inside and think about what you want with the door shut.
- **Conserve water:** Turn off the water while you brush your teeth. Run the washing machine and dishwasher only with full loads. In the shower, save water by getting clean and getting out.
- **Reduce your waste:** There are lots of small ways to do this. Use both the front and back of your papers. If you take lunch to school, use washable and reusable containers and a reusable lunch bag or box. Before you buy something new, think about whether you really need it or look for something used. (A used hoodie will keep you just as warm!)
- **Recycle:** Recycling is for more than just bottles, jugs, cans, jars, papers, and cardboard. Make sure you're also recycling rechargeable batteries, computers, appliances, tires, and more. Not sure how? Visit WhereDoITakeMy.org or call our office.
- **Spread the word:** Just because you know about all this stuff doesn't mean that your siblings, cousins, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, or neighbors do! Be the teacher and explain to them why it's important to help our planet. Share your ideas about how they can help.

When we keep our planet clean, we keep everyone's home clean.

Mark Your Calendar for These Earth Day Events

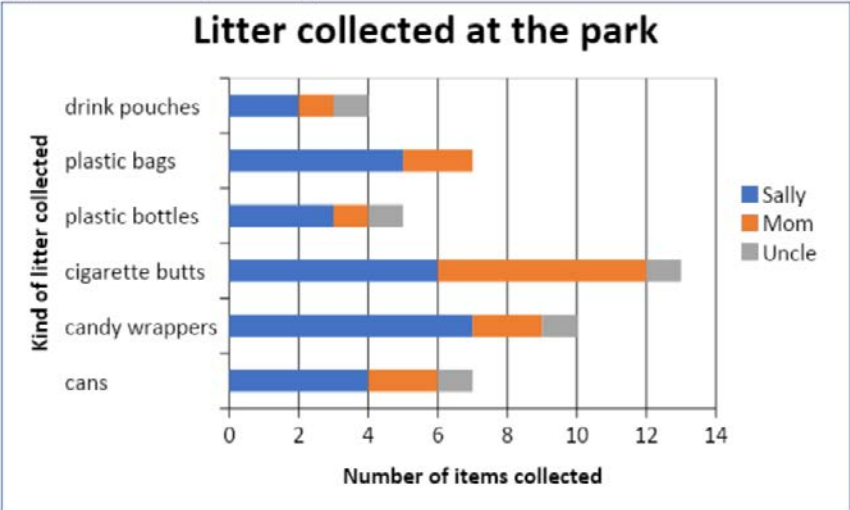
- **Arbor Day Tree Giveaway:** Saturday, April 6, 9 to 11 a.m., at Huntamer Park, 618 Woodland Square Loop SE, Lacey. This is hosted by the City of Lacey. Learn more and register at streamteam.info/events.
- **Water Heroes at the WET Science Center:** Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. How can you help the Earth for Earth Day? Become a water superhero! Create your own hero identity, make crafts, and play games to learn ways to save water and protect the planet. Visit wetsciencecenter.org/events-calendar.
- **Earth Day Work Party:** Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Wonderwood Park, 5304 32nd Ave. SE, Lacey. This is hosted by the City of Lacey and the PARC Foundation. Learn more and register at streamteam.info/events.
- **Sound Science Stewards (SSS) Sticker Program by Pacific Shellfish Institute:** The SSS Sticker Program supports a clean and healthy Puget Sound. Earn your Octopus Genius sticker by completing three scientific surveys, three action items, and the final report form. Get started at pacshell.org/outreach.asp.
- **Procession of the Species:** Saturday, April 27. The procession is a community-run parade that snakes through downtown Olympia featuring floats that highlight different species of animals across the globe in honor of Earth Day. Learn more at oly-wa.us/procession.

Grasping Graphs



Credit: Africimages | E+ | Getty Images Plus

Instructions: Graphs are a really easy way to look at data (information). A **stacked bar graph** uses bars of different lengths stacked together to compare parts of a whole. To celebrate Earth Day, Sally's family picked up litter at their favorite park. Sally created the stacked bar graph below to compare the types of litter collected.



Use the information from the bar graph to answer these questions:

1. What color is used to show how many items Sally picked up?

2. How many total drink pouches were collected? _____
3. Who collected the most litter? How did you figure that out? _____
4. How many plastic bottles did Sally's uncle pick up? _____
5. Sally and her mother collected the same amount of what kind of litter? _____
6. Which item was the most littered? _____
7. Which were littered more, drink pouches or cans? _____

Bonus:

Why do you think small items like cigarette butts and candy wrappers were littered so much?

Litter in the Can, Not on the Ground



Credit: Antonio_Diaz | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Walking down the street or school hallways, you may notice small pieces of litter lying around. While one piece of litter may not seem like a big deal, it can lead to big problems.

According to Keep America Beautiful, people are more likely to drop litter where they see other litter on the ground. Once an area becomes littered, more and more litter is likely to pile up until it becomes a nasty mess. Litter doesn't just make an area look messy — it can be harmful to people and animals. Litter can clog storm drains and pollute streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans. Animals can mistake litter for food and eat something harmful to them. So, that one candy wrapper that you drop on the playground may cause serious problems!

Here are some tips to prevent and reduce litter:

- Don't litter!
- Make sure the lids are closed on curbside trash and recycling containers.
- Pick up litter. Ask a parent or teacher how to do this safely.
- Organize a litter cleanup at school, at a park, or in your neighborhood. Consider using tongs, gloves, or garbage grabbers to pick up litter safely.

The Thurston County Litter Control Program loans out cleanup supplies to allow residents to easily participate in beautifying county roads. Once the cleanup is complete, Thurston County will pick up and dispose of the trash that was collected. Contact Thurston County Solid Waste at 360-867-2491 for more information on this program.

Plastics in the Ocean

The "Plastics in the Ocean" loaner kit shows you and your classmates how plastic pollution in the ocean impacts birds and other ocean life. You will discuss local solutions that reduce the amount of plastics ending up in the ocean. The kit is available to classrooms at no cost for up to two weeks at a time. Your teacher can reserve this kit by emailing SolidWasteYouth@co.thurston.wa.us.



Inspect to Detect



Credit: selimmaksan | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Reading can be a mystery. Some words are spelled the same but mean different things. You need to think like a detective looking for clues and read the entire sentence to figure out the correct meanings for these words.

Instructions: Some homonyms, like the ones shown below, include words that are spelled and pronounced the same but have different meanings. Fill in the blanks with the correct homonym pair for each sentence. The first sentence has been done for you as an example.

left
crane

play
pitcher

back
fall

~~tire~~
park

1. I tire of seeing the discarded tire that litters the field where I play.
2. A white _____ flew above the _____ used for moving heavy items at the landfill.
3. In the _____ after the leaves _____ to the ground, they can be placed in a compost pile.
4. My sister will dance in the Earth Day _____ while I _____ the guitar.
5. My parents _____ their e-waste in the electronics bin located on the _____ in the collection area.
6. Mr. Goldstein is happy to be _____ at school after he was out with a _____ injury.
7. The baseball _____ asked for a _____ of water so he wouldn't have to use bottled water.
8. Dad will _____ the car near the _____ where we will pick up litter.

Bonus:

Write a sentence using the homonyms **rose** (a type of flower) and **rose** (the past tense of rise).

Taking Out the Trash

Have you ever been asked by your parents to take out the trash but you didn't want to? In Shel Silverstein's poem, "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out," Sarah Cynthia Sylvia refuses to take out her family's trash. The problem gets so bad that the garbage ends up reaching "across the state, / From New York to the Golden Gate"! Eventually, Sarah's "garbage reached so high / That it finally touched the sky."



Credit: Dimensions | E+ | Getty Images

While the poem is fun to read, you probably know that one family's trash couldn't cover the entire country or reach the sky. But think about the garbage truck that goes through your neighborhood every week. Together, we and our neighbors do create a lot of trash.

Before you take the garbage out, look in your family's trash. Do you see bottles, cans, jars, cardboard, or paper that could have been recycled? What about carrot peels, old bread, or eggshells that might have gone into the food and yard waste cart? Are there grass clippings or leaves that might have gone into a backyard compost bin? Don't be like Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout! Help your family put trash and recycling in the right place.

To learn more about recycling, visit WhereDoITakeMy.org. And, please, take the garbage out!

Grasscycle Those Clippings

Do you make new plans during the spring? Maybe you start walking the dog, going to the park, kicking around the soccer ball, or planting flowers. Spring also means it's time to start mowing the lawn.



Credit: JasonDoily | E+ | Getty Images

It's the time of year when the mower is pulled from its place in the garage and put back to work on the growing grass. That means it's also a good time of year to talk to your family about grasscycling your lawn clippings.

Grasscycling is less work. Instead of stopping to empty the bag of the mower, leave the clippings on your lawn and let nature do the rest. The clippings are small and will break down quickly. This gives your lawn food that it needs (called nitrogen), as well as moisture. So not only is grasscycling easier for your family, but it is also better for your lawn. That's what your parents would call a win-win situation!

It's easy to grasscycle. All you need is the mower you have at home. Simply have an adult remove the bagging attachment and, if needed, insert a safety device over the grass chute. If there isn't a bag attached to your mower, you're already set to grasscycle. Mow as usual, letting the grass fall back onto your lawn.

Talk to your family now about grasscycling! If your parents or grandparents want more information, have them contact us at 360-867-2491. We would be glad to answer any questions!

What Would You Do?



Credit: Peopleimages | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Instructions: Read each problem and then select the two best suggestions. Label one "good" and the other "better." (Hint: One idea on each list is not a very good idea, so leave that one blank.)

- Even after she explained to her father how grass clippings could be left on the lawn after being cut, Natalie still sees the grass clippings sitting at the curb in trash bags every week. What should she do?
 - _____ Nothing. She tried, but there's no reason to force him into doing something he doesn't want to do.
 - _____ Learn more about grasscycling and then offer to help with the mowing chores.
 - _____ Approach her father in a different way by explaining to him how scattering the bagged clippings on the garden will help the plants grow.
- While walking home, Julian passes a pile of litter near the school playground that seems to grow every day. What should he do?
 - _____ Ask the school if it's possible to add extra trash and recycling bins where the pile of litter is, and then organize a cleanup with his class.
 - _____ Bring a trash bag and gloves and collect the litter that's there himself.
 - _____ Ignore it. Someone else will come along and clean it up some day.
- Mia constantly sees her older brother throwing away recyclables. When she asked him about it, he said that recycling was "too hard." What should Mia do?
 - _____ Stick an article about how easy it is to recycle under her brother's bedroom door and hope he reads it.
 - _____ Point out recycling bins to her brother in public and at their home, and then show him how to use them.
 - _____ Post an instruction sheet with pictures above the family recycling bin.

Funded by Thurston County Public Works, Solid Waste Division

Thurston County Public Works Solid Waste Division

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