

BLUE BIN NEWS

OCTOBER 2012



PREPARE FOR GREEN
HOLIDAYS IN FALL!



Take Reusable Bags When You Shop:

Why: Single-use bags are a waste of trees (paper) or fossil fuels (plastic). They contribute to water pollution during production and landfill overload at disposal. Re-usable cloth or paper bags reduce these problems.

How: Purchase sturdy, light-weight, re-usable cloth bags and remember to carry them with you in the grocery store or shopping. One way to remember your bags is to keep your shopping list in them, hung by the door, or keep spares in your vehicle, purse or case. Many Europeans shop this way and we can, too. (Courtesy of Dept. of Ecology, State of Washington)

In Fall Cleaning, Use the Least Hazardous Products To Do the Job:



Why: Especially in cooler months, your house is closed more airtight. Toxic products can concentrate fumes in the air you breathe and harm your health. Young children can be especially vulnerable to these effects. Water down your drain also carries residues from your home, and many harsh household chemicals are not removed by sewage-treatment or septic systems.

How: Conventional oven cleaner and other degreasers are among the most toxic household products around. Mix 2 cups baking soda, 1 cup washing soda (found in laundry aisles), 1 teaspoon dish soap, and 1 tablespoon white vinegar. Apply thickly to all sides of the oven and leave overnight. Wipe out with wet cloth. (Courtesy of *Martha Stewart Living*, October 2012)

Fall--A Great Time to Re-evaluate the Eco-Consciousness of Your Living Space

If you are like many people, spring and fall cleaning is a time to deep-clean and organize used and unused items around your home. It is also a good opportunity to rethink your energy usage:



Q: Is it better to shut my computer down or put it in sleep mode overnight?

A: While sleep mode reduces energy drain by 70 percent, using none is even better -- and so the U.S. Department of Energy advises turning your computer off if you're not going to be using it for 2 hours or more. Do make sure it's plugged into a power strip and switch this off to prevent phantom energy drain from the socket.

Q: What's the most eco-friendly way to get rid of a mattress?

A: You could try donating it to a local charity, but often health departments won't allow it. Try giving it away on Craigslist.org or Freecycle.org. Or search Earth911.org to see if there's a center near you that can recycle the steel and the fiber inside the mattress.

Q: Can I recycle my old sneakers somewhere?

A: You can extend the life of wearable old shoes by donating them to non-profits that give footwear to the needy all over the world. See a list of organizations at eco-officiency.com.

If your sneakers have plumb run out of juice, Nike's Reuse-a-Shoe program accepts all brands of athletic shoes and has repurposed millions of pairs into sports surfaces for playgrounds, running tracks, and basketball courts. (Courtesy *Martha Stewart Living*, October 2012)



**A City of St. Louis Refuse Division--Recycling Program Publication
Reader Submissions Welcomed!**

Share your waste management questions, activities, "how to" tips, calendar items, etc.

Email Blue Bin News at recycle@stlouis-mo.gov