

A Word about Recycling from your Rougemont Extension and Community Association (RECA)

You, know, folks, that recycling and our ecology are inexhaustible subjects.

We have spoken in the past a bit about how ECA came into being. Now, we'd like to share more information about recycling and saving \$\$\$ at the same time. We are all likely familiar with the expression "one man's trash is another man's treasure."

The topic this time is ways to not make trash (so it has no need to be cleaned up) based very loosely on "42 Ways to Not Make Trash" by "No Impact Man" Colin Beavan who spent a year (recently) trying to live a 0 impact life in New York City for a year.

Some of these, I personally do not agree with, but all are food for thought:

- **No soda in cans** (no need to recycle)(maybe less likely to get cancer from aspartame.) This should likely include soda in bottles as well, since it is unlikely all soft-drink manufacturers have examined or implemented plastic bottles made without chemicals which can leach into the contents in heat during shipping—Ever taken that soda bottle out of the back seat after a week and poured the contents over ice? Ever noticed a strange taste? Think about it.
- **No water in plastic bottles**—which means we may have to drink the water from our own taps.
- **No coffee in disposable cups**—which means fewer Styrofoam pellets in our stomachs and intestines at autopsy. We won't care then, but not having Styrofoam in our systems may mean we may live a little longer and put off the required autopsy should we keel over anywhere other than a hospital or Hospice bed.
- **No take out food in throwaway containers**—eat in, use the restaurant's plates, let someone else do the dishes, and save all that **trash** from entering a landfill, OR take our own containers to take out at restaurants—recognize that most fast food restaurant drive-throughs are unable to fill your own container by law.
- **Buying milk in returnable, reusable bottles** instead of wax or plastic containers that must be dealt with—again saving space in the landfills. (Ask any RECA member about uses for these containers other than throwing them into the landfill.)
- **Shopping for honey and pickled veggies and other goods in jars** only from merchants who will take back the jars and reuse them. Hey, here's an idea. Reuse those glass jars yourself. They make great storage for refrigerating left-overs or parceling raw veggies (carrots, celery, etc.) purchased in large quantities and then divided so the kids can take a portion of their own without ruining the full batch. These jars make wonderful water containers for that work outside or walk in nature. Plastic jars work as well, but are better for buttons or loose nails and similar items. You can also see through glass jars, labeled or not, and see (1) what is in the jar and (2) if it is still good or needs to be tossed.
- **Return egg and berry cartons to the vendors** at the farmers' markets or those who sell from their homes for reuse.
- **Use neither paper nor plastic bags for shopping**, but bring your own reusable bags when shopping, and not just for groceries. Some stores now offer a small discount if you use your own bags.
- **Cancel hard copy magazine and newspaper subscriptions** where possible to read them online. You will likely pay a fee at less than half a paper subscription. Then resist the temptation to print everything you read. I have been putting junk mail and magazines (minus name and address) out for Durham County's bi-weekly recycling pick-up ever since I ran out of places to use them in lasagna gardening.

Newspaper still makes a great mulch and moisture retention medium both in the garden and in containers. You can always cover it in mulch if you find it to be unsightly. The newspaper is biodegradable and will eventually compost along with that mulch you remove and replace periodically.

Reminder: every 10 pounds of junk mail reused (or returned to sender) is a tree that may not get cut down.

These are basically common sense. We all have to choose what we can and are willing to do. Happy recycling

Patricia Russell