

THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tennessee Summer/Fall 2015

Speaker to Discuss Parks' "Go Green with Us" Program

Next Meeting:

**Monday, October 26, 2015, 7 p m.
Courtroom, Second Floor
Rutherford County Courthouse**

Have you ever been on an outing or trip and needed to responsibly dispose of a beverage container or a water bottle but all you could find was a garbage can? If you are in a Tennessee State Park, you won't have that problem, thanks to a new program called "Go Green with Us."

Leila Donn, environmental specialist with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) Office of Sustainable Practices, will describe this "green" initiative, specifically focusing on the recycling portion of the program that makes it possible for visitors to recycle most of their wastes. This adds a valuable dimension to the conservation and preservation of resources.

A graduate of The University of the South, Sewanee, Donn has a B.S. in geology. Her professional experience includes work as a geologist with Arcadis, a Houston, Texas, design and consulting firm; as a surface logging systems field engineer with Baker Hughes; and as a geologist with Alaska Earth Sciences. Donn had an archaeology internship in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Learn about recycling opportunities in Tennessee's state parks and see the winners of our postcard contest

At TDEC, she works with state facilities on sustainability initiatives, including statewide recycling, materials management, sustainable development, and environmental education. She also organizes the Sustainable Transportation Forum which highlights alternative fuels, manages and publishes a bimonthly newsletter on sustainable practices, and writes for the *Tennessee Conservationist* and other national magazines.

Postcard Contest: A New Endeavor

Recycle Rutherford, in partnership with Rutherford County's Solid Waste Department, is conducting a postcard contest open to all K-12 schools located in Rutherford County. Winners in the competition will be recognized at the October 26 meeting.

The contest encourages students to think about the benefits of recycling and includes a total of \$850 in prize money as well as the chance to see their work featured in Recycle Rutherford media. The theme inspiring the postcard design is "What does recycling mean to me?"

Come to Recycle Rutherford's annual fall meeting on Monday, October 26, to learn more about recycling opportunities in Tennessee's State Parks and to recognize participating students and teachers. Come and bring a friend!

Recycle Through Composting: April Speaker Describes Business

Edward Wansing, founder and owner of The Compost Company, outlined advantages of transforming raw organic materials into a bio-stable, humus-rich substance suitable for growing plants when he spoke at Recycle Rutherford's annual meeting in April.

Although he studied to be an architect and is licensed in Tennessee, Wansing loves working outside, perhaps partly because he grew up on a farm in Missouri. To offset some of his frustration as an architect, he began designing sustainable green buildings and is recognized as a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accredited professional. He is involved in the Green Building Council and serves as an advocate for the Middle Tennessee Chapter of Green Schools.

In spite of being recognized in his profession, he decided to start a company in Ashland City and put his knowledge to work to produce a superior product while significantly reducing the volume of

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Unexpected Ways Coffee Grounds Can Make Your Life Better

The best bean in the world is even better than you thought. Here are 25 possibilities:

1. **Blue Your Blooms:** Some flowering plants, like hydrangeas, change color depending on the pH level of the soil. Adding coffee grounds will reduce the pH level and give you bright blue flowers.
2. **Keep the Slugs Away:** Unlike worms, slugs, snails, and other bugs don't like the acidity of coffee and will not cross the ground if it's sprinkled with java.
3. **Grow Your Own Mushrooms:** You can grow the funniest fungi around with just some coffee grounds and mushroom spores.
4. **Increase Your Carrot and Radish Harvest:** Mixing coffee grounds with the seeds before you plant carrots and radishes will keep pests and bugs away and increase your harvest.
5. **Bring on the Worms:** Worms might not be the best pets, but they are great for your garden; they turn the soil and fertilize it with their own body processes. Worms are attracted to coffee grounds, so adding them to your garden beds will attract more of these helpful creatures.
6. **Enhance Your Compost Pile:** Coffee grounds will add much-needed nitrogen to your compost bin. Just pour them in to aid decomposing.
7. **Keep Cats Out:** Tired of your neighbors' cats traipsing through your flowers? Just sprinkle some coffee grounds and orange peel where you don't want them to walk.
8. **Freshen Your Flower Vases:** Using a coffee-soil mix for your flower vase not only looks cool and lengthens your cut flowers' life, but it also acts as an air freshener in the room.
9. **Build a Better Pin Cushion:** Filling your pin cushion with coffee grounds will prevent your pins from rusting. Plus, it's like a sachet of good smells every time you use it. Pro tip: Make sure to dry them thoroughly first by spreading them on a cookie sheet and placing them in the freezer for an hour or two.
10. **Make a Roach Trap:** All you need are coffee grounds, a can, and some double-sided tape.
11. **Scour Your Pans:** A few coffee grounds on a rag can help scrape away caked-on dirt. Just make sure not to use on ceramic or other dishes that stain easily.
12. **Clean Your Fireplace:** If you want to sweep up the ashes from your fireplace, add some damp coffee grounds to the pile and sweep away. It will eliminate that dusty cloud.
13. **Clean Your Hands after Chopping Garlic:** Keep a little cup of coffee grounds near or under your sink, and rub a handful of them on your hands after chopping garlic or onions or other smelly things. The grounds will absorb the odor.
14. **Unclog Your Drain:** With coffee grounds, boiling water and a little dish soap, you can unclog your bathroom and kitchen drains.
15. **Get Odors Out of Your Fridge and Freezer:** Instead of baking soda, use a box of used coffee grounds to absorb smells in your fridge.
16. **Get Scratches Out of Furniture:** Use oil and coffee grounds or instant coffee to mask scratches in many shades of wood.
17. **Make Wood Look Weathered:** This technique makes new wood look antique.
18. **Tenderize Your Meat:** Using coffee as a spice for a meat rub will tenderize it and add a smoky flavor.
19. **Make a Coffee Candle:** All you need is a coffee cup with grounds, and some leftover wax ends from other candles.
20. **Make an Air Freshener:** Perfect for your house or car. All you need is some coffee grounds and panty hose.
21. **Make Your Own Fossils:** Don't wait millions of years for your seashells to fossilize. Make your own instant fossils with coffee grounds and flour.
22. **Paint a Picture:** Coffee grounds and water (aka second-round coffee) make an excellent nontoxic paint.
23. **Make a Flea Bath:** Add some coffee grounds to your dog's shampoo to create a natural flea repellent.
24. **Strip Buildup from Your Hair:** The abrasive texture of coffee grounds will help strip oils and buildup from your hair. Pile them on in the shower or, for a much less messy strategy, just add some grounds to your shampoo or conditioner. (Best for brunettes as coffee can also darken hair.)
25. **Make a Deodorizing Soap:** You can create a masculine (aka non-floral) soap out of recycled hotel soaps and coffee. It's a great (and nearly free) homemade gift for anyone on your list.

Want to take advantage of the java bean's benefits but don't like coffee yourself? No problem! Most coffee shops (including most Starbucks) will give you bags of used grounds for free!

Thanks to Rick Racker for finding these unique hints on the Internet and sharing them.

Recycling by Composting

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materials going into the landfill. "We closed the loop," Wansing said. "The wastes sent can be processed and returned to the site" where they originated.

Among the benefits of using product from The Compost Company is suppression of diseases and pests. Wansing pointed out that growers amending their soil with compost can use fewer products, have less plant loss, decrease the amount of fertilizer used, and enjoy lower water bills.

He described also the use of "compost teas," telling us that he worked with Avalon Gardens of Nashville to develop a blend that included not only nutrients plants need but also desirable organisms and fungi. He works with several golf courses and used his experience with one to illustrate that everything can affect the outcome. After getting a lush green stock of grass on a golf course using a compost tea, Wansing said the owners decided to use water from a nearby creek. However, the polluted creek water killed the beneficial organisms, and the grass changed from healthy green to anemic brown.

Wansing explained that the composting process cannot be hurried and that it is sometimes tricky to maintain the correct temperature range. A consistent heat produces a better end product. "Most piles are about a year old by the time we sell them," he said.

The company starts with waste from grocery stores, food banks, restaurants, tree trimmers, and similar businesses. They produce several products by mixing compost with mulch and screening to create uniform particle sizes. His "secret blend" is very fine. Most of his customer are commercial operations such as Gardens of Avalon, but he sells a considerable amount to organic farmers. He does sell compost bagged in burlap for individual use, but not many stores carry.

For information, call 615-427-5956 or go online to www.compostcompany.com.

--Suma Clark

Get Ready for Spring Gardens: Build Raised Beds Now!

According to an article by Mark Murphy in the September 12, 2015, issue of the *Daily News Journal*, fall is an excellent time to prepare garden beds for next year. You will be ready to plant as soon as the growing season starts.

"Making raised beds is a popular gardening method that lets you incorporate organic practices such as no-till techniques and recycling compostable materials," writes Murphy. He goes on to describe different ways of making raised beds:

- Mound soil and organic matter in the desired location.
- Use stakes and strings to mark the space, then fill with grass clippings, leaves, compost, etc.
- Use wood, blocks, or stone to define the space.
- Make a "lasagna garden" by layering materials.

Popular sizes for beds are 4- by 4-foot squares or 4- by 8-foot rectangles, but the size and shape can vary according to individual choice. Murphy reminded that one should not use chemically treated lumber for vegetable gardens (no pressure-treated wood or railroad ties).

"Making "lasagna garden" beds can be a really easy no-till approach to making raised beds. The name comes from the layers of materials that are used to build up the garden bed, sort of like layering lasagna in a pan," Murphy says. After mowing the grass as short as possible, the entire area should be covered with a thick layer of cardboard and/or newspaper to smother the vegetation. Then the bed is filled with layers of compost, grass, leaves, soil, manure, peat moss, sand, and the like. During the winter, the materials decompose, creating a rich media for spring planting.

Thanks to the DNJ for the workable suggestions for successful gardening next spring!

Recycle Rutherford Membership Form

I enclose my annual dues to support Recycle Rutherford and receive the newsletter.

\$25.00 supporter \$15.00 student \$100.00 patron

I am contributing \$_____ in addition to my dues.

PLEASE PRINT:

name _____ amount enclosed _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

telephone: day _____; evening _____

e-mail _____; volunteer interest _____

Please make check payable and mail to Recycle Rutherford, P.O. Box 1804, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804

**County Launches New Plan:
'Operation: Rutherford Recycles'**

In an effort to change the way citizens of Rutherford County think about solid waste, Rutherford County has changed the name of the county's 14 convenience centers to Recycling Centers. Residents can dispose of both trash and recyclables at these different locations throughout the county.

Bins have been relabeled to help users better understand what can be recycled. This is part of the ongoing effort to educate and encourage citizens to recycle and therefore decrease the amount of trash going into Middle Point Landfill. The landfill is expected to close by 2028 or sooner.

Mayor Ernest Burgess was quoted in a July 8 *Daily News Journal* article: "What we are trying to do short term is minimize and reduce the amount of waste that is going into the landfill, so we can extend the life expectancy of it. As we move forward, we will also try to identify other means of waste disposal . . . available through technology improvements that might be determined to be viable alternatives to waste disposal."

Representatives from the county and the municipalities within met in June to discuss solid waste issues facing our county. This was the first step in forming a strategic plan to address the issue.

As someone who understands the importance of recycling, **do your part by contacting your county commissioner and city officials in your area** to express your support of proactively recycling and developing sustainable solid waste practices.

**Reminder: To renew your membership,
please see the form on page 3.
Dues are only \$25 per year.
We don't want to lose you!**

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

2014-16 Officers and Board

Recycle Rutherford holds elections each April at the annual meeting; in general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms.

The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the term of each ends. The board meets monthly on first Mondays at 6:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. Spring Street.

Glenn Himebaugh, president
Linda Hardymon, vice president
Rachel Cornett, secretary
Rick Racker, treasurer

Board Members:

Gib Backlund, 2016 Suma Clark, 2016
Bonnie Black, 2016 Crystal Mallery, 2016

Dates to Remember

TennGreen Kick-off to Save Grassy Cove

Friday, October 23, 2015, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Grassy Cove Community Center
643 Kemmer Rd., Crossville, TN 38555

For information: www.tenngreen.org

Fall Meeting—Recycle Rutherford:

Monday, October 26, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

Rutherford County Courthouse, Room 205
Speaker: Leila Donn, Office of Sustainable Practices, TDEC

**For more information, go to
www.recyclerutherford.org
Like us on Facebook!**