



Cook up some compost!

On Saturday, June 6, Olmsted County Public Works is sponsoring a one-day-only backyard compost bin truck-load sale. Your family will be able to purchase an Earth Machine compost bin for only \$40. (That's \$60 less than the normal price!

What a deal!)

The Earth Machine, which is made from recycled plastic, can hold up to 80 gallons of yard and garden debris.

Composting is often called "nature's recycling system." Organic

materials rot in nature. For example, when leaves and other organic debris fall onto a forest floor, the materials begin a natural process of decay, thanks to air, water, warmth, worms, insects, bacteria, and fungi. Eventually, these organic materials become nutrient-rich humus, which is a necessary part of healthy soil. A composter like the Earth Machine helps speed up this process in your backyard.

When you mix "brown" and "green" organic waste in a bin, you provide the ingredients that are needed to get the process started. Browns include dying leaves, brush trimmings, chipped



woody waste, and shredded paper products. Greens include fresh grass clippings, vegetable and fruit scraps, rotting fruits or garden vegetables, fresh plant trimmings, and cut flowers. Finished compost can be mixed into your garden soil, improving soil health and retaining moisture near your plants' roots. Composting will allow you to reduce your waste and your water bill.

The sale will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., while supplies last. In addition to Earth Machine composters, your family will also be able to purchase kitchen scrap pails and compost turners at a reasonable price. Look for the trailer in the south parking lot across from Macy's at Apache Mall, 333 Apache Mall in Rochester.

Toxic trade-offs

When it comes to hazardous household products, less is better. Here are some easy "trade-offs" to trim the toxics in your home:

- Whenever possible, use "elbow grease" instead of chemicals. Rather than a toxic and smelly "no-scrub" bathtub cleaner, use a milder soap and a scrub brush—and your muscles, of course!
- Choose water-based products when available, such as latex paint. Not only is latex paint non-toxic, but you can also clean up your brushes and trays with water. This means that you won't need toxic paint thinners, either.
- Use up what you already have. Don't buy more chemicals when what you have at home can do the job. Check the cupboards and shelves before you head to the store.
- Purchase only the amount you need. If you will be painting the edge of a bulletin board, you won't need a gallon of paint! Choose the right size container for the job you need to do.
- Give away or trade stuff your family won't be able to use up. Maybe your neighbors could use up plant food or bug killers that your family doesn't need. Ask around.
- Dispose of unneeded hazardous chemicals safely.

Household hazardous waste is accepted year-round at the Olmsted Hazardous Waste Facility, which is open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. During the spring and summer, we also offer mobile collections, which will be held in Oronoco on May 5, in Stewartville on June 11, in Eyota on August 4, in Byron on September 8, and in Chatfield on September 15. For more information, including a list of materials accepted, call 328-7070 or visit www.olmstedwaste.com.

GOOD WORK

Instructions: Unscramble the mixed-up words that are underlined to learn more about jobs that help improve our environment. We've done the first one for you. (Hint: Each scrambled word begins with the correct first letter.)

1. A ntiurlasat helps students learn what resources are, how we use them now, and how we could improve our efforts. naturalist
2. A slido wats eigrnene designs systems for reducing, reusing, recycling, and properly disposing of trash.
3. A fotsrere takes care of trees in forests.
4. A sarlo catrnorcot installs sun-based electricity systems on houses.
5. A jnoirlutas writes articles to explain the relationship between science and the environment, describe how to reduce, reuse, and recycle, and much more.
6. A regncliy tchecnanii sorts recyclables and sends them to factories for reuse.
7. A lfinaldl oeptrora buries trash and covers it with soil.
8. A ctoeptoms takes organic waste, such as grass and leaves, and turns it into nutrient-rich compost.
9. A rhecsare secsititn works in a lab and in the field to explore how chemicals, processes, and people impact our environment.
10. A decirort oversees government or non-profit programs, such as recycling centers, conservation efforts, government offices, or education centers.

as simple as a simile

Use this simile starter to create three similes. Remember to be creative! We've given you an example to help you get started.

as wasteful as...
watering the grass during a rainstorm

Write a sentence that includes one of the similes you created:

Instructions: To find the answers to these questions, you'll need to find the answers to a series of math problems. Write the solution to each number sentence in the proper blank and also in the first blank of the next number sentence. The solution to the last number sentence will be the answer to the question!

1. What percentage of Americans have cell phones?

$$375 + 400 = \underline{775}$$

$$\underline{775} - 96 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$355 + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} \times 7 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$7,322 - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

Answer: _____ % of Americans have cell phones.

2. On average, how often do Americans replace their cell phones?

$$135 - 90 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} \div 3 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} - 9 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$6 \times \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} + 2 = \underline{\quad}$$

Answer: On average, Americans replace their phones every _____ months.

3. In June of 2008, how many text messages were sent?

$$878 + 172 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} - 550 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} \times 1,000 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$20 \times \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$7,500 \times \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

Answer: During June 2008, _____ text messages were sent.

4. During what year did wireless subscriptions in America top 100 million?

$$8 \times 9 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} \div 12 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$199 \times \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$2,836 - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} + 358 = \underline{\quad}$$

Answer: In _____, cell phone subscriptions topped 100 million in the U.S.

5. Recycling 100 million cell phones would save enough energy to provide the electricity to how many American homes for one year?

$$109 + 59 = \underline{\quad}$$

$$596 - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$2 \times \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$9,245 - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$\underline{\quad} + 11,111 = \underline{\quad}$$

Answer: Recycling 100 million cell phones would save enough electricity to power _____ homes each year.

Learn more about cell phones at these websites:
www.epa.gov/cellphones
www.secret-life.org/cellphones
www.ctia.org

ON AVERAGE

At the hazardous waste drop-off event, 214 families delivered a total of 1,605 partially full containers of hazardous household chemicals for safe disposal. On average, how many containers of hazardous waste did each family drop off?

Logically Speaking

At the drop-off event, there were separate areas for electronics, appliances, and tires. The electronics area was to the right of the area for tires. The appliance area was to the left of the tire area. What area was just left of the electronics area?

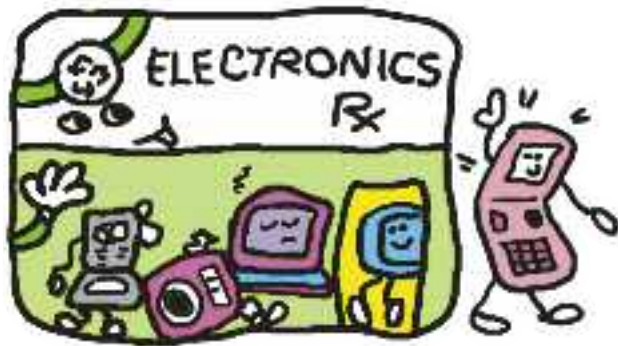
HANDLE WITH CARE

Instructions: Some of the situations listed here are potentially hazardous and others are relatively safe. Put an "H" next to the hazardous situations and an "S" next to the safe situations.

- _____ The Crispins leave tub-and-tile cleaner sitting next to a bottle of bubble bath on the edge of the tub.
- _____ Grandpa Rivers left his blood pressure medicine bottle open on the coffee table.
- _____ Michael shares a room with his little brother. He keeps the paint and glue that he uses to make model cars on a high shelf.
- _____ The girls played soccer right after the weed killer was put on the lawn.
- _____ Ryan's family had spray paint on a shelf right next to the furnace.
- _____ Mrs. Jones opened the window while she was painting Emma's room.
- _____ After Jimarcus and his mom read the warning label on drain cleaner at the store, they decided to use baking soda, vinegar, and boiling water to fix the slow kitchen drain.

Three R's for e-waste

Each year, Americans replace hundreds of thousands of computers, televisions, cell phones, and various other pieces of equipment with electronic components. The old items, most of which still work, are often no longer wanted or needed, becoming "e-waste" (electronic waste). So, what are we to do with this growing pile of e-waste?



First, of course, think REDUCE. As we mentioned, many of the items being replaced still work just fine. Think before you buy. Does your old iPod or MP3 player work? Why get a new one then? How about your family's computer? If it is working, maybe it doesn't need to be replaced just yet.

Second, consider REUSE. A lot of working electronics can be used by someone else in your family. Or, maybe you could sell the item at a garage sale or resale shop. Perhaps you could donate your old and working television, computer, or cell phone to a charitable organization.

Third, plan to RECYCLE. Broken and outdated electronics can be recycled. During recycling, electronics are taken apart so that their parts, metals, and chemicals can be reused to make new equipment.

To make it easier to recycle your old electronics, we accept cell phones at the Hazardous Waste Facility at no charge, and other electronics, including computers and TVs, at the Recycling Center Plus for 30¢ per pound. Both facilities, located at 305 Silver Creek Road NE in Rochester, are open Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Funded by Olmsted County Public Works



The trouble with tires

Old tires can be a lot of trouble, especially if they are sitting outside in piles with other tires.

To begin with, water collects in the cool, dark space inside the tires. This water gets stale. Then, mosquitoes, which seem to love stale water, move in and breed. These mosquitoes may carry germs that can make people very sick, such as West Nile Virus, or heartworms that can attack dogs.



The next problem comes if scrap tire piles catch fire. Tire fires are hard to put out and burn for a long time, creating heavy, black smoke that makes it difficult for people nearby to see and breathe. Once the fire is finally out, an oily layer sits on top of the soil, polluting the soil, as well as the run-off water after storms.

These troubles with tires are easy to avoid. Plan to recycle your tires. When your family gets new tires, trade in the old tires. There will probably be a slight fee. Or, drop off tires at the Recycling Center Plus for a fee.

Did you know?

The Recycling Center Plus accepts these and similar materials for a fee: brush, garbage, appliances, bikes, carpeting, computer systems and electronics, construction materials, drywall, furniture, grills, lawn mowers (empty of fluids), mattresses, TVs, and tires.



These recyclable materials are accepted at the Recycling Center Plus at no cost:

- ▲ Aluminum cans (buy-back)
- ▲ Clear glass bottles and jars (no window glass, dishware, or ceramics)
- ▲ Green, brown, and other colored glass bottles and jars
- ▲ Corrugated cardboard (clean only)
- ▲ Boxboard (such as cereal, cake, and cracker boxes)
- ▲ Office paper (white and pastel-colored paper, including copier paper)
- ▲ Newspaper
- ▲ Magazines
- ▲ Telephone books
- ▲ Plastic bottles with necks (only #1 and #2 – no oil containers)
- ▲ Tin food cans and EMPTY aerosol and paint cans
- ▲ Clean scrap iron, aluminum, copper, brass, and stainless steel

Dex has a guide to help!

See the Olmsted County Recycling & Garbage Guide to help answer questions like:

- Where can we recycle bottles and cans?
- Which paper products can we recycle at home?
- What do we do with pesticides we no longer need?
- What should we do with an old couch?

Find the answers in your Dex directory!

