

A Quarterly Newsletter of



Buncombe County Solid Waste Department

828-250-5460

www.buncombecounty.org/green
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Where do our recyclables go?

We hear this question so often that we thought we'd answer it here. In Buncombe



County, our recyclables are collected and processed by several companies. Once your recyclables are picked up at the curb or from the convenience centers, they are sorted by type, baled into large cubes, and then shipped to manufacturing plants to be turned into new products. Paper, plastic, and metal are baled to save space during shipping.

Transporting recyclables to market can be expensive, especially with the heavier materials like paper and glass. That's why a successful recycling program depends on

having nearby markets. Most of Buncombe County's recyclables travel no more than five hours to a manufacturing plant, with the closest only 90 miles away. This keeps the cost of recycling down and allows us to collect a broad range of materials.

Here's what our recyclables are becoming:

- ◆ Plastic drink bottles and 2-liter jugs become carpet and new plastic bottles.
- ◆ Milk jugs are turned into plastic lumber and curbside recycling bins.
- ◆ Newspaper is turned into new paper.
- ◆ Shredded paper becomes paper towels and bathroom tissue.
- ◆ Mixed paper goes to a plant where it is used in hydro-seed and insulation products.
- ◆ Glass bottles and jars become new glass bottles and jars.
- ◆ Aluminum cans are turned into new cans.
- ◆ Steel cans are turned into a variety of new steel products, from cans to bikes to cars.
- ◆ Corrugated cardboard becomes new corrugated cardboard.

Reuse for fall leaves

As autumn arrives, we anticipate cooler temperatures and beautiful colors. We get those, along with an abundance of fallen leaves. As you begin your annual autumn yard cleanup, plan to reuse the fallen leaves in your yard.

Here are three ways to reuse your fall leaves:

- ❖ Use your mulching mower to shred the leaves onto your lawn. The small leaf parts will decompose by spring. In the meantime, they will protect your grass roots from harsh temperatures and provide valuable nutrients to your lawn. If you don't have a mulching mower, you can simply remove the bagger attachment on your mower and insert the chute cover, if needed. You want the leaf parts to be small, so you may need to go over the lawn more than once. Your lawn should not look as though it is buried in leaves. Instead, the leaves should be "dusted" over the grass.
- ❖ Rake your leaves and then layer them onto your garden or flower beds. Or, pick up leaves with your bagging mower and put these shredded leaves in a layer onto gardens and flower beds. Whether the leaves are whole or shredded, the layer should be no more than 2 to 3 inches thick. These leaves will serve as mulch, protecting helpful insects, bacteria, and fungi from the colder winter weather and keeping moisture in



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the soil for spring plants. In the spring, mix the decomposing leaves into the soil to fluff it up with organic matter.

- ❖ Add fall leaves to your compost bin or pile. Mix over-ripe fruits and vegetables and grass clippings into the compost pile or bin to help the leaves decompose more quickly. If you would like to learn more about backyard composting, contact our office.

And, remember, don't burn your fall leaves! Leaf burning releases many pollutants into the air. Smoke from just 5 pounds of burning leaves creates a full pound of pollution. Leaf burning can create health hazards for those who are vulnerable, including children, the elderly, and people with breathing difficulties. Burning can also put nearby properties at risk.

Did you know?

- ◆ Once an aluminum can is recycled, it can be part of a new can within six weeks!
- ◆ Recycling a glass bottle causes 20% less air pollution and 50% less water pollution than making a new bottle from raw materials.
- ◆ Recycled-content paper creates 35% less water pollution and 70% less air pollution than making paper from new materials. Plus, it also requires that fewer trees be cut down!
- ◆ Over 500 North Carolina companies use the recyclables you recycle to make new products.

Put items to good use

Most of us had a parent or grandparent who would often say, "Well, you can still use that—it's perfectly good." Or maybe you are the one who reminds others to keep using things that are "perfectly good." When you extend the life of an item, use it over and over again, or find a new and novel use for it, you are reusing, which keeps perfectly good stuff out of landfills.

Here are some easy ways to reuse:

- Instead of disposable containers or plastic bags, choose reusable containers for leftovers and lunches. Washable containers can be used for years without being replaced—saving you money and reducing your waste!
- Fix broken items. To make many repairs, a small tool kit, some wood glue, or a needle and thread may be all you need.
- Rent what you will need for only a short period of time. Whether it is tables for a big party, a chipper-shredder for limbs you pruned from your crab apple trees, or a carpet cleaner, rental is a great way to get what you need when you need it without having to pay the full purchase price or find space to store it while it isn't in use.
- Borrow books, movies, and other media

from the local library.

- Rent movies and video games from a local store or an Internet service.
- Download music onto your iPod or MP3 player and books onto your e-reading device.
- Set up a neighborhood "swap meet." This is a great way to meet your neighbors and trade what you don't need for something you do need.
- Sell working and usable items that you no longer want or need at a garage sale, through classified ads (in the newspaper or online), or to a secondhand store.
- Buy from resale stores, such as thrift stores, antique shops, and used bookstores.



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Getting and giving

The Freecycle Network is made up of 4,834 groups with 7,341,000 members across the globe. People



who belong to this network, "freecyclers," are part of local, online communities devoted to one thing—keeping stuff out of landfills by giving it away. Freecycle is a nonprofit network of people giving away (and getting) stuff in their own towns.

Each Freecycle group is local and independent, but all groups follow a few simple guidelines—everything offered or accepted must be free, legal, and appropriate for all ages. Membership in local groups is free, and it is easy to join,

usually just requiring an email or two to get started. Members can post items that they would like to receive (Wanted) or items

they would like to give away (Offer). An email alerts all members of these postings. People give away and get office and school supplies, clothes and shoes, sports equipment, books and magazines, toys and games, home decorating items, furniture, computer accessories, sheets and towels, CDs, DVDs, and so much more.

To join the local Freecycle group, go to www.freecycle.org and search for Asheville.

Attention Weaverville Residents

The residential recycling information brochure contains important information about recycling and phone numbers. However, the phone numbers for the Buncombe County Transfer Station and Landfill are incorrect. Please call the Buncombe County Transfer Station at 828-250-6205 and the Buncombe County Landfill at 828-250-5462.