

# "One Person's Trash..."

your guide to reducing, reusing and recycling



Fall 2015

Buncombe County  
Solid Waste Department  
828-250-5462

[www.buncombecounty.org/green](http://www.buncombecounty.org/green)

## Landfill's green energy helping to reduce harmful emissions

Did you know that garbage can be turned into electricity? The Buncombe County landfill generates electricity for over 1,100 homes in the surrounding area.



divert it to the generator. Creating electricity from this gas reduces the demand for coal or natural gas, which are both non-renewable resources.

The Buncombe County Landfill Gas-to-Energy Project began producing electricity in 2011 with a generator powered by landfill gas. The landfill gas project is approved by the Climate Action Reserve to register carbon credits for the capture and destruction of methane emitted from the landfill. Since 2012, the county has registered 58,274 carbon credits, which is equivalent to taking 12,205 passenger vehicles off our roads. Carbon credits are a market-based mechanism to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions.

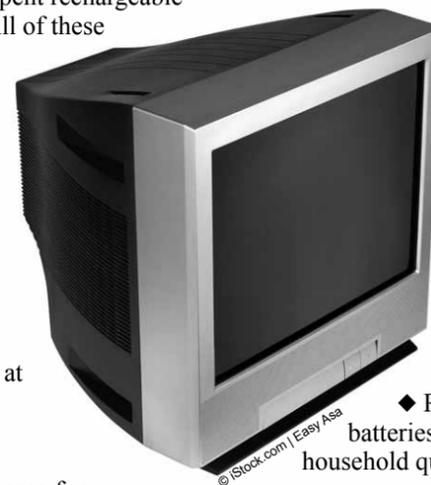
The Landfill Gas-to-Energy Project began in 2010 with the installation of additional gas collection wells at the landfill. These wells tap the methane gas that is produced as trash decomposes in the landfill. Instead of releasing this powerful greenhouse gas into our air, which can negatively affect air quality and trap heat in our atmosphere, the wells capture it and

The generator at the landfill will produce 1.4 megawatts of electricity annually over the next several years. The electricity generated is being sold through a joint venture between Progress Energy and French Broad Co-op.

In addition to generating a renewable energy source, Buncombe County's bioreactor program continues to enhance landfill gas and electricity production by recirculating leachate, another byproduct of waste decomposition. Leachate is generated when rain water filters through garbage and is collected at the bottom of the landfill. Instead of hauling this liquid to the wastewater treatment plant as many landfills do, Buncombe County pumps it back into the closed areas of the landfill. So far, we've reduced our tanker truck trips to the Metropolitan Sewerage District by 741 trucks, with a cost savings of over \$283,000.

## Wondering where to dispose of household hazardous waste, TVs, or electronics?

The answer is simple! On Fridays at the Buncombe County Landfill, residents can drop off old televisions, computers, and other electronics, as well as unneeded household chemicals, fluorescent light tubes and bulbs, and spent rechargeable household batteries. All of these items are accepted in a special collection area which is only open on Fridays. When you get to the landfill scale house, you will be directed to the disposal area. Proof of county residency is required. If you have questions, please call the landfill at 828-250-5462.



- ◆ Computers and other electronics – No charge to residents for first three computers per week, then 30¢ per pound for additional items
- ◆ Paint and paint-related items, such as water sealer, paint thinners, enamels, and polyurethane – \$2.00 per gallon with a 20-gallon limit
- ◆ All flammable liquids (gasoline, kerosene, etc.) – Recycling fee of \$2.00 per gallon with a 20-gallon limit
- ◆ Pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, motor oil, antifreeze, and lead-acid batteries – No charge
- ◆ Rechargeable household batteries – No charge for typical household quantities

### Drop-Off Dates

The special collection area for televisions, electronics, and household hazardous waste is only open on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The area is closed on Fridays on or immediately preceding a holiday. Here is the schedule for the remainder of 2015:

- ◆ October 16, 23, and 30
- ◆ November 6, 13, and 20
- ◆ December 4, 11, and 18

### Disposal Fees

- ◆ Televisions – \$5.00 for each TV less than 19" and \$10 for each TV 19" and larger

### Businesses

Businesses are NOT permitted to drop off hazardous waste. However, businesses may recycle electronics and televisions at the landfill during the Friday-only collections. Businesses will be charged \$5.00 for each TV less than 19", \$10 for each TV 19" and larger, and 30¢ per pound for computers and other electronics. Businesses that wish to drop off electronics must call the Solid Waste Department at 828-250-5462 prior to arrival to make arrangements. To participate in this program, proof that your business is located in the county is required.

## Get some "re-leaf" this fall

The leaves are turning yellow, orange, and red. In the evening, the air is crisp and cool. You know what that means—the chores are about to begin! Here are some "re-leaf" ideas that will reuse your fall leaves in your own yard:



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- Using a mulching mower, shred leaves and let them stay on the grass. The shredded leaves will provide a winter cover to protect grass roots and soil and will decay by spring. If you have a lot of leaves, you'll need to mow often during the weeks when the most leaves fall.
- Use your mower to create leaf mulch. Simply attach the bagger and collect the leaves. Your mower will shred the leaves as it picks them up, creating a great mulch. Put the leaf mulch on your garden or flower beds, around trees, or on paths. Leaf mulch will help keep moisture in the soil where plants will be able to use it next spring.
- Pick up shredded leaves with the mower, or rake up whole leaves, and then add them to your compost pile or bin. To learn more about backyard composting, visit <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/deao/recycling/composting/101> or <http://carolinacompost.com>.

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- Collect your leaves for composting. You can drop off leaves, clean wood, brush, and limbs at the Buncombe County Landfill. Bagged leaves must be separate from woody debris as they are collected in separate areas. Landfill hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There is a fee of \$20 per ton (prorated) or \$1 for every two bags of leaves.

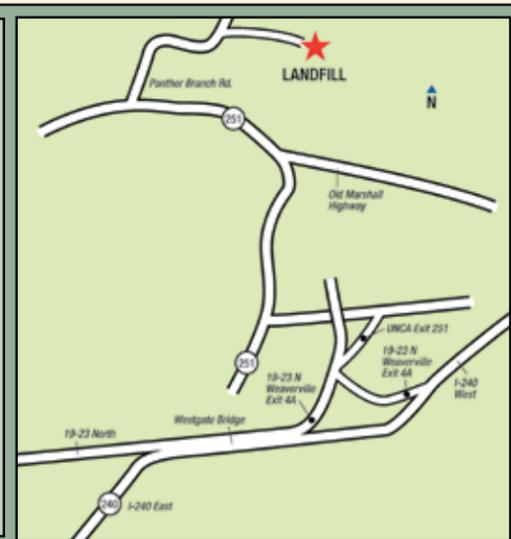
All of the yard material accepted at the landfill is ground and turned into mulch, which is available for \$10 per scoop. (One scoop will fill the bed of a standard pickup truck.) To purchase mulch at the landfill, you must have a tarp to cover it for the trip home.

Please don't burn fall leaves. Leaf burning releases as much as one pound of air pollution for every 5 pounds of burning leaves. Leaf burning creates particular health hazards for children, the elderly, and people with asthma and other breathing difficulties. Depending on wind and weather conditions, burning can also create a fire risk for your own buildings, as well as those of your neighbors.

Don't forget to savor the fall weather! Take a hike and take in the fall colors. Rake a big pile of leaves for the kids and let them jump in. Snap some photos to enjoy autumn memories on chilly winter days.

### Directions to the Buncombe County Landfill:

From I-240 East or West, take Exit 4A to 19/23 North. Travel 1 mile and then take UNC-A exit. At the end of the exit, turn left. Go to traffic light and turn right onto 251 North. Continue on 251 North for 9 miles to Panther Branch Road. Turn right onto Panther Branch Road and travel 1/10 of a mile to the Buncombe County Landfill, which is located on the right. The new landfill is 6 miles north of the old landfill.



85 Panther Branch Road, Alexander  
250-5462

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.;  
Saturday, 8 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.

# Recycling for the Evil Genius

Russel Gehrke, author of *Recycling Projects for the Evil Genius*, is the kind of guy who appreciates a challenge. He takes someone else's problem or question and sees it as an opportunity to create something useful. He employs an engineer's understanding of how things work and applies an inventor's spark to see how things might work better, work in a different application, or work for a different user. In that respect, the word "genius" in the title is appropriate. In this book, Gehrke assembles a collection of projects with an environmental theme. While many of these feature the recycling of post-consumer products, the title doesn't capture the full range of what is offered here.

The projects on recycling plastics, asphalt shingles, and paper fibers (Chapters 5 and 6) are the meat and potatoes of the book. After chapters on the author's personal experiences and beliefs, as well as the current state of recycling, household cleaners, and pest control, the real fun begins. The first three projects teach the reader how to manufacture wafer board from mixed plastics, cut those boards into dimensional lumber, and construct a birdhouse from that lumber. You may not believe you would dare to attempt such a thing. However, the background information provided, combined with the detailed material lists, safety tips, and step-by-step instructions, will have you cheerfully melting plastics on a cookie sheet in your kitchen oven. That is the evil genius part of this book.

The author has tried every project presented and worked out the kinks and provides the reader with the tools to succeed at making things. Like any good how-to book, it not only educates the reader, but it also builds the reader's confidence to try progressively more difficult and complicated tasks.

After the birdhouse, Gehrke shows you how to make landscape blocks from recycled plastics and paver bricks and road patch from recycled asphalt shingles. Chapter 6 is all about making durable building materials from recycled paper and concrete. Learn to make landscape blocks from concrete papier-mâché. Then use those blocks to build raised bed gardens, landscape retaining walls, and storage sheds. After that, he shows you how to form this cheap, durable material into planters, birdbaths, stepping stone walkways, and tabletops.

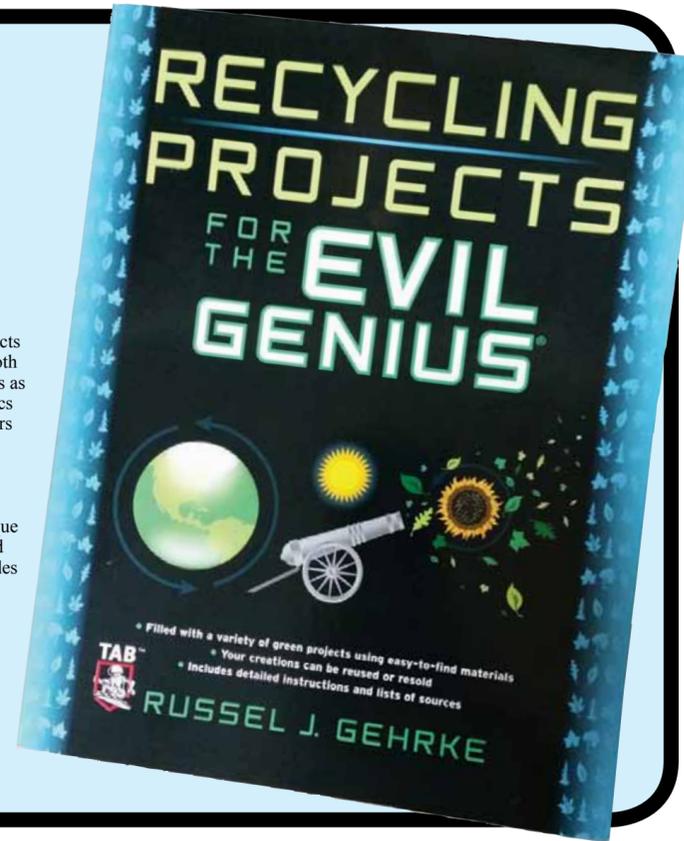
In just 15 pages of Chapter 7, Gehrke covers composting in a way that brings a beginner up to speed quickly. He includes six simple, safe projects on composting, as well as fermentation and the production of compost tea for use as a liquid fertilizer on plants. Most of these are suitable for anyone with at least a small yard.

The chapter on cleaning projects (Chapter 8) is mostly about replacing expensive, store-bought products with effective, environmentally-friendly alternatives that save you money. Similarly, the chapter on weed and pest control (Chapter 9)

provides you with the knowledge and confidence to produce effective alternatives to the expensive products most people use to control weeds and bugs. While both of these chapters feature the reuse of packaging items as applicators, the primary benefits are minimizing toxics and reducing costs. For that reason, these two chapters probably hold the greatest potential for individual readers to permanently change their behavior in an environmentally positive way.

Chapter 10 has 101 quick tips on how to reuse everything from aluminum foil (to clean your barbecue grill) to used fabric softener sheets (to clean soap and hard water stains from shower doors). He also provides 20 quick and easy projects that you may find useful, helpful, educational, or just too crazy not to try.

If you are willing to try new things and want to save money and do something good for the environment, this is a great book for you. If you are a parent, teacher, scout leader, or other adult who is interested in fun projects that help young people learn about biology, chemistry, earth science, and the world in which they live, you will find a lot of useful experiments and instructions here.



# The Buyerarchy of Needs

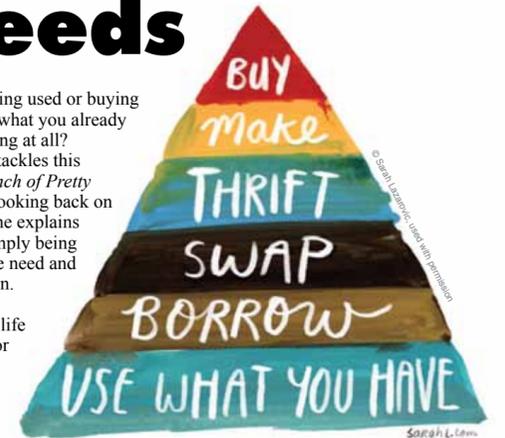
It's easy to think about buying used or buying less. But what about using what you already have and not buying anything at all?

Artist Sarah Lazarovic tackles this question in her book, *A Bunch of Pretty Things I Did Not Buy*. By looking back on her own spending habits, she explains how we've moved from simply being consumers, buying what we need and using it, to overconsumption.

Lazarovic decided to counteract this trend in her life by not buying any clothes or housewares and taking her time, encouraging others to try her method.

"I'm slow, steady, and intent on quality," she writes. "What I love best is how time often reveals a solution to what I need that doesn't involve buying."

In a culture that encourages us to race to the sale or make a purchase before it's "too late," it's hard to think about not buying and doing so slowly. But following Lazarovic's Buyerarchy of Needs shows how many other ways there are to find "new" stuff. Buying only what you want and need means you will use what you own, creating less waste both in your life and in the world.



THE BUYERARCHY of NEEDS (with apologies to Maslow)

# 7 ways to reuse every day

Recycling gets most of the headlines, but the other two Rs, reduce and reuse, deserve more credit because they actually prevent discards—no recyclables and no trash. Because there are hundreds of ways you can turn items into something new (and thousands of Pinterest boards to show you how), reuse can sometimes seem overwhelming, especially if you aren't much of a do-it-yourselfer. But it doesn't have to be overwhelming at all! Reuse can be quick and easy. Here are seven simple ways to incorporate reuse into your day:

1. Carry a reusable water bottle. Reusable water bottles reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy used to produce plastic, and transportation costs to get water to stores. By bringing a bottle to meetings and outdoor events, you can avoid buying plastic water bottles or using disposable cups. Tap water is just as good as bottled water (and much cheaper!). If you love the taste of filtered water, invest in a water filter pitcher that you can use at home or the office.
2. Keep a reuse bin in your kitchen. Anytime you come across a paper clip, twist tie, paper tube, plastic tub, glass jar, rubber band, plastic bag—anything that can be reused!—place it into this bin. Before purchasing anything new, look through your reuse bin to see if you can use what you already have on hand. Glass jars and a little ribbon become instant centerpieces, and plastic bags can serve as packaging materials to cushion shipments.



3. If anyone in your family packs a lunch or snack, use a reusable lunch box or bag and washable containers. These containers are easy to fill and reuse, and they keep everything fresh until it's time to eat. The bag and some ice packs can also act as a mini cooler. You can even reuse an old drink

4. Bring your own reusable shopping bags to the grocery or other store. You can find these

5. Use cloth napkins and dish towels in the kitchen instead of their paper counterparts. Clean up any large messes with rags made by cutting up old clothing or bath towels. Throw everything in the wash and use it again!
6. Turn leftovers into new meals before they go bad. Make yesterday's grilled chicken into chicken fettuccine or transform old stir-fry vegetables into taco filling. Everyone will forget dinner was once leftovers and gobble it down.
7. Visit your local library for books, CDs, and DVDs instead of purchasing new ones. Some libraries even have magazines to check out so you can avoid the extra paper waste.

Reuse doesn't have to be time-consuming or require super-human craft skills. You can easily make it part of your routine. If you reuse every day, it will be easy to reduce your waste and make your life a little more eco-friendly!



QUOTES QUOTED



A cloak of loose, soft material, held to the Earth's hard surface by gravity, is all that lies between life and lifelessness.

Wallace H. Fuller  
In *Soils of the Desert Southwest*, 1975

IWantToBeRecycled.org

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL

# Buy in bulk the smart way



There's a holiday for everything, and bulk foods are no exception! October 11 through 17 is National Bulk Foods Week, sponsored by the Bulk Is Green Council. Bulk foods are a great way to save money and reduce packaging waste, and this week will mean special savings in select bulk foods stores. It's the perfect time to start thinking about how to buy in bulk in a way that reduces waste instead of creating it.

On average, buying organic foods in bulk costs 89% less than buying them in regular packaging. With those savings, you'll want to make the effort to be smart about buying in bulk! Not only will you reduce food waste, you'll reduce the amount of packaging you purchase every year and help make the Earth a little more healthy.

There are certain foods that last longer in bulk. Non-perishables, such as dried beans, rice, and pasta, snack foods, like chips and popcorn, salty condiments, such as mustard and ketchup, hard candy, and paper products, such as toilet paper, tissues, or paper towels, all last a long time and are frequently used items that won't be left on the shelf. Put these at the top of your bulk shopping list.

The main question to ask yourself when buying in bulk is, "How much do I need?" Non-perishables can be bought in large quantities and will sit on the shelf until you need them, but fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meats require more careful consideration. If you don't eat a lot of a type of food, it doesn't make sense to buy a large quantity of it. If you can't finish it before it goes bad, put the big pack back on the shelf.

Once you get your bulk foods home, make sure to store them properly. Put food in air-tight containers and refrigerate or freeze what can't be left out. Keep food that

you need to eat in a visible place so that it's not forgotten during the week. Place food that is in danger of spoiling in an "eat me first" area in your fridge.

If you do purchase perishable foods in bulk, consider freezing what you can't cook or eat before it expires. Meat is the easiest to freeze, but most foods can be frozen with a little preparation. Blanch vegetables before they go bad and dry fruits before storing them in the freezer. Fruits like berries and ripe bananas can be frozen without drying and then thrown into a smoothie or batch of muffins. Citrus fruits, like lemons, limes, and oranges, can be sliced and frozen on a flat sheet. After they are frozen, remove them from the sheet and place them into a container. Use the frozen slices to give some flavor to water and other drinks.

Canning, pickling, and boiling are other options for extra food. Almost any vegetable can be canned, and fruit can easily be turned into jam. Boiled bones or vegetable scraps can become soup stock. More than cucumbers can be pickled for a tasty treat.

If you buy a food item in bulk and it spoils before you can eat it, composting is a good last resort. You can place spoiled fruit and vegetables, along with peels, rinds, egg shells, tea bags, and coffee grounds, into your backyard compost bin. Your spoiled food and scraps can create compost to help you grow your own plants! If something spoils, remember to buy less of that item or cook it faster in the future.

Gear up for National Bulk Foods Week and start preparing a list of what your family could purchase in bulk. Then head to your local store and start helping your wallet and the Earth!

# Thinking BIG for reuse

When you're looking for a new set of dishes or a lamp, it's easy to find them in local thrift shops or at flea markets. Yet you might walk right by larger items, like couches, kitchen tables, beds, and appliances. Why is that? Your local Goodwill, Salvation Army store, and Habitat ReStore offer larger items for sale and can also help you find a home for your old furniture and appliances.

When cleaning out your home, sometimes you have more stuff cluttering your space than you can handle. Goodwill and The Salvation Army accept usable items from large, such as furniture and appliances, to small, such as dishes, decorative items, clothing, shoes, and handbags. These organizations use your

donations to help improve the lives of



people in our community with everything from job placement to housing services. So while you are doing a good thing for the environment by ensuring that your old, usable stuff is reused, you are also doing something good for our community. Both organizations provide tax-deductible contribution receipts for donations.

Habitat for Humanity will also take your bulky goods. The Habitat for Humanity ReStore accepts donations of used construction supplies and old building materials, such as wood flooring, roofing materials, shingles, tiles, fixtures, and plumbing and piping. They use the materials or sell them and use the proceeds to build houses for low-income families. They also accept home furnishings and appliances.

If you are looking for furniture and appliances, remember to shop secondhand first. Goodwill, The Salvation Army, and the ReStore are great places to start. Plus, you can look in furniture reuse stores, which are great places to shop, especially for young adults and college students moving into their first apartments. You will often find unique items in secondhand shops, giving you the chance to give your home some personality without creating unnecessary waste.

The next time you are ready to say goodbye to something old, think about selling it or giving it away. You might be finished using something that someone else would love and appreciate. Reuse is always a great idea, no matter how big the challenge.

# What about bulky items that can't be reused?

If you have old furniture and appliances that are no longer usable or can't be donated or sold for reuse, you have "bulky waste." You can recycle large appliances at no charge at both the Buncombe County Landfill and the Buncombe County Transfer Station.

Old furniture items, such as couches, kitchen tables, chairs, and chests of drawers, are only accepted at the landfill. Regular landfill fees apply, which are \$43 per ton (prorated).

The landfill is located at 85 Panther Branch Road, Alexander, and the transfer station is located at 191 Hominy Creek Road, Asheville. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 12:30

p.m., Saturday. For more information, call the landfill at 828-250-5462 or the transfer station at 828-250-6205.

If you have curbside trash service, contact your hauler to ask about bulky waste collections and fees.



**Important Phone Numbers for County Residents**

Mobile Home Removal/Environmental Control – Roger Presley.....	828-250-5470
Junk Yards/Junk Cars – Geoff Noblitt.....	828-250-4847
Bioreactor Manager – Kristy Smith.....	828-250-5473
Buncombe County Landfill.....	828-250-5462
Buncombe County Transfer Station.....	828-250-6205
Waste Pro – Residential Trash Pick-up.....	828-684-7790

**Important Phone Numbers for City of Asheville Residents**

Asheville City Sanitation – Trash Pick-up.....	828-259-5857
Curbside Management – Recycling.....	828-252-2532

CLIP & SAVE

**We want your suggestions, questions and comments!**  
**Buncombe County**  
**Solid Waste Department**  
**81 Panther Branch Road**  
**Alexander, NC 28701**  
**828-250-5460**  
**www.buncombecounty.org**

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