



Sustainability Newsletter

www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter

October/November 2015

Electro-Recycling in the RDBN

Depot businesses in Smithers, Houston, Burns Lake and Fraser Lake collect a surprising variety of products for recycling. Did you know that they can take more than 300 types of electric and battery powered products through the ElectroRecycle program? This program is run by the Canadian Electrical Stewardship Association (CESA) - formed by industry members.

In this issue:

- Electro-Recycling in the RDBN
- Winter Composting
- Better Indoor Air Quality
- Recipes for Natural Cleaning



* How much is collected for recycling in BC through the ElectroRecycle program?

In 2014, over 3,672,265 kg (3,672 metric tonnes) of these products were collected in BC; 10,097 kg (10 metric tonnes) in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

Accepted Product Type	Example
Kitchen Countertop	food blender
Personal Care	blow dryer
Floor Cleaning	vacuum
Weight Measurement	bathroom scale
Garment Care	iron
Air Treatment	fan or air purifier
Time Measurement	clock
Very Small Items	electric toothbrush
Sports and Leisure	telescope
Power Tools	drill
Sewing and Textile	sewing machine
Exercise Machines	treadmill

* How does CESA manage these products?

Products are transported to BC and Alberta for processing (separation and recycling). The processors are contracted directly to CESA and are required to adhere to the *Electronic Recycling Standard*, an industry developed document that spells out the minimum environmental, health and safety requirements for handling end-of-life electronics.

* What parts are recycled?

Mostly steel and plastic, as well as smaller amounts of aluminum, wire and cables, copper, glass, circuit boards and rechargeable batteries.

For more information visit: www.electrorecycle.ca

and www.bcrecycles.ca

Past issues are available online at: www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter

If you have any questions or suggestions about the content of this newsletter, please call Lynda Fyfe, Sustainability Assistant for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako at 250-692-3195, toll free: 1-800-320-3339, email: lynda.fyfe@rdbn.bc.ca

In our region, more than one third of the waste that enters the landfill is compostable material such as kitchen scraps! Diverting organic waste from the landfill would greatly reduce the need for landfill expansion; protect land and groundwater and reduce climate warming gases. At home, it benefits you by reducing garbage odours and producing valuable soil fertilizer.

You can continue composting throughout the year! Your backyard composter will officially go to sleep at about -13°C ; however, the freeze and thaw that happens in the spring will help the materials to decompose when the pile starts to heat up again.

HOW TO START OFF A YEAR OF BACKYARD COMPOSTING

If you have some finished compost in October, you can add that to your garden or top dress your lawn. To get started with an empty bin, here are the steps to follow:

✓ First locate your bin where it is easy and convenient to access from your home.

✓ Next, collect as much brown and green material as you can and locate it in piles or bins next to your composter.

- GREENS—any live plant trimmings from your fall garden clean-up
- BROWNS—the decomposing plants in your garden and as many fallen leaves as you can collect—ask your neighbours if you can take theirs if they don't want them!



✓ Now, layer your compost with BROWNS and GREENS—aim for 2-3 times more browns than greens.

1. Start with BROWNS—e.g. leaves, straw or woody/brushy material, in the bottom. This will improve air circulation at the bottom of the pile. Layer 10-12 cm thick.

2. Add GREENS—kitchen scraps or green plant cuttings from your garden cleanup.

3. Then always follow with BROWNS—completely covering your kitchen scraps to keep odour down so that you don't attract animals.

Repeat steps 2 and 3. Mix the pile to add oxygen and add moisture if needed—until the end of October—then take a break until April.



Tempted to stash those fallen apples in your compost bin? Wait! Here is a better way that won't attract bears. Dig a trench in your garden and bury any large quantity of fruit in soil 12" or deeper, where bears are less likely to smell it.



As the daylight hours diminish and we start gearing up for winter, this is a good time of year to think about indoor air quality. The products used indoors for cleaning, or to freshen the air, can actually pollute the air and negatively affect our health. Test your knowledge below:

QUESTIONS (TRUE OR FALSE)

- Q 1. Today's fragrances are made from flowers and other herbal ingredients.
- Q2. Synthetic fragrances are only found in perfumes and colognes.
- Q3. One ingredient found in synthetic fragrances is known to cause asthma in previously healthy people.
- Q4. An ingredient that is put into cosmetic fragrances to make the scent last, has been shown to interfere with human hormone function.
- Q5. Manufacturers that add fragrance blends to their products have to list warnings or list the ingredients on the label.
- Q6. As long as I don't ingest these chemicals, they won't affect me.

ANSWERS

A1. *False*. "Fragrance" usually indicates man-made chemicals, many of which are toxic and derived from petroleum. These chemicals have been linked to reproductive issues, hormone disruption (which itself is linked to serious health issues including some cancers, thyroid disease, obesity and diabetes) and allergies.

A2. *False*. Synthetic fragrances are found in common household cleaning products, laundry detergents and fabric softeners, body creams and shampoos, air fresheners, scented candles, even kitty litter and garbage bags. The word "fragrance" or "parfum" on the list of ingredients can indicate a number of health damaging chemicals.

A3. *True*. The chemical is called toluene.

A4. *True*. The substance is DEP or diethyl phthalate.

A5. Good idea! But it's *false*.

A6. *False*. Fragrance chemicals can enter the body through inhalation (e.g. air fresheners) and skin absorption (e.g. fabric softeners). They may become stored in the body, leading to potential future health complications.



Since World War II, synthetic chemical production has increased exponentially.*

Before then, home cleaning was done using natural ingredients such as baking soda, fresh lemon, pure soap flakes, salt, soap nuts, washing soda and white vinegar.

You can find some recipes for cleaning and freshening your home on the following page.

MORE TIPS FOR BETTER AIR QUALITY

- Grow indoor plants
- Maintain clean heating ducts
- Keep kitchen scraps out of your garbage by composting through the winter
- Open windows for a period of time daily to let in fresh air

*Oxford Handbook of Environmental History (2014). Edited by Andrew C. Isenberg. Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

Below are some recipes for homemade cleaning products. The ingredients can be found at grocery or health food stores. As with any cleaning products, please keep these safely out of reach of children and pets.

AIR FRESHENING SPRAY

1. Pour 1 cup of water into a clean, reusable spray bottle.*
2. Add 2 tbsp of rubbing alcohol and about 20 drops of essential oils** (e.g. lavender, peppermint, grapefruit, lemon, ylang-ylang)
3. Screw on the top and shake well to combine the mixture.

**Since some essential oils are stronger than others, start off conservatively when adding them.



* Glass storage and spray containers are preferred over plastic because some essential oils can cause plastic to degrade over time.

POWDERED LAUNDRY SOAP RECIPE (USE 1-2 TBSP PER LOAD)

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 cup soap granules or flakes | 1/2 cup washing soda |
| 1/2 cup borax | 10 drops essential oil (optional) |

Combine dry ingredients. Stir in essential oil. Store in an airtight container.

TIP: 100% felted wool dryer balls, added the dryer, make clothes fluffy and soft while reducing static. They won't decrease the absorbency of towels like commercial fabric softeners do and they reduce drying time—which saves energy and money.



ALL PURPOSE CLEANER RECIPE

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 1/2 litres of warm water | 1 tbsp borax |
| 1/2 cup white vinegar | 10 drops essential oil (optional) |
| 1/2 cup liquid castile soap | |

Combine all ingredients in a storage container (a one gallon glass jug works great for this). Shake to dissolve. Funnel into a spray bottle to use as needed.