



# Sustainability Newsletter

April 2016

## Backyard Composting Program—Coming Soon!

Did you know that RDBN residents throw out more than an estimated 500kg of waste **per person** every year? Approximately 1/3 of that waste is compostable organic material (food scraps and yard waste), which is equivalent to 186 litres – a bathtub full!

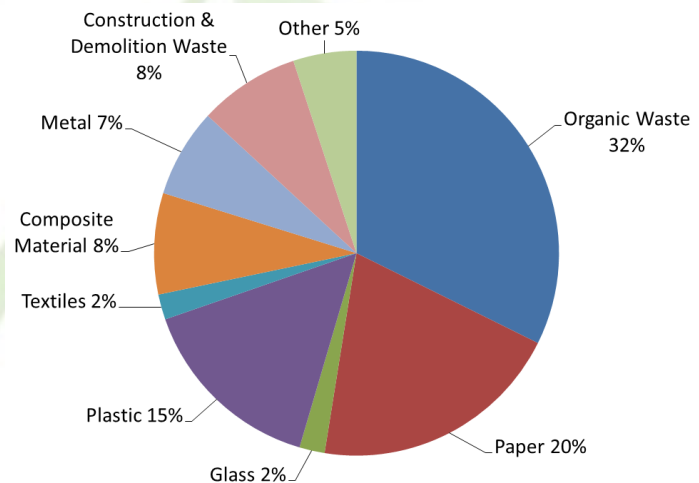
Composting your food scraps and yard waste can not only reduce your overall waste generation, but can decrease the smelliness of your garbage (and less trips out to the garbage can!), reduce greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing organic matter in the landfill and produce an incredibly nutritious supplement for your garden, eliminating the need for store-bought fertilizer.

This spring, the RDBN will be continuing to promote backyard composting by offering the opportunity to purchase a limited number of subsidized compost bins and mixing tools. Keep an eye out for more information as it becomes available! Contact Elaine Wiebe, Environmental Services Assistant for more info (1-800-320-3339 or 250-692-3195 or [elaine.wiebe@rdbn.bc.ca](mailto:elaine.wiebe@rdbn.bc.ca)).

### In this issue:

- Backyard Composting Program Coming Soon!
- Highlight on Recycling in Burns Lake
- Make the Switch from Disposable to Reusable
- DIY Homemade Cleaners

### Household Waste Composition in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako



**Stay tuned for compost program  
launch dates and locations!**



**Details will be announced on  
our Facebook page  
“Sustainable RDBN”.**



This newsletter can be viewed online at:

[www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter](http://www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter)

# Recycling Facilities — Burns Lake

Chris Beach has been operating the recycling depot in Burns Lake for just over a year. He took over the bottle depot, which also accepted electronics in December of 2014. Then, in June of 2015, they moved into their new location at 113 Park Street. Chris saw the need for more recycling facilities in his community when he was working at the local schools and saw the vast amount of paper that was not being recycled. Of course, living in the second largest city in the world (Seoul, South Korea) for some time influenced his recycling habits as well!!



When asked what his favorite part of being in the recycling business is, Chris quickly answers that it's the feeling of a project to him. He's really proud of the recycling depot and can't wait to see where it goes. There has been lots of community buy-in and he says you can never predict who is going to be a recycler. From all sorts of backgrounds and ages, there's always a different crowd of people coming through his doors. And really, it's the only place in town that you leave with more money in your pocket than when you came in!! If you haven't already, be sure to stop by and check out this great facility!!!!

## Accepted materials:

- Beverage containers (aluminum cans, plastic/glass bottles, juice boxes and cartons and bag-in-a-box containers)
- Electronics (television & stereos, computer equipment, cameras, non-cellular phones and video gaming equipment)
- Small appliances and power tools (kitchen countertop appliances, vacuums and personal grooming tools, circular saws and drills)
- Corrugated cardboard, boxboard and paper (currently accepting residential and commercial; after July 1st, there may be a change for the commercial corrugated cardboard customers)
- Household batteries (rechargeable and non-rechargeable batteries of various sizes)
- Cell phones
- Light bulbs and fixtures
- Food cans and cartons
- Residential plastic containers (#1 through #7)
- Glass jars and bottles
- Clear plastic wrapping and shopping bags
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Styrofoam (including foam egg cartons)

You can also check them out on Facebook ~

"Burns Lake Recycling Depot".



# Make the Switch from Disposable to Reusable

## Around the House

If each person switched from disposable tissues and paper towels to napkins and handkerchiefs, it would cut down on 3.5 million tons of refuse placed in landfills each and every year. Use high-quality reusable bags on shopping trips; each reusable bag can eliminate hundreds (if not thousands) of plastic bags. Not only are there eco-friendly non-toxic cleaning products available, you can also make your own at home. This can be much cheaper and even more gratifying. Green cleaning products can be just as strong as traditional cleaning products.



## Disposable Lunches

Use durable, long-lasting containers that will last years rather than disposable sandwich wraps, chip bags, fruit salad or pudding cups. Bento boxes are a perfect example of a solution to disposable sandwich wraps; they are compartmentalized, allowing one to bring up to four separate dishes without using a single bag or wrap. Use a high-quality water bottle to bring a drink instead of a disposable container (like a juice box). Thermal-insulated ones will even keep your drink as cold or as hot as when you packed it.

## Personal Care Products

Do you ever wonder what is in disposable pads and tampons? Do you experience any physical discomfort like rashes and itching from using them? By choosing to use washable and reusable menstrual pads and cups, you are no longer exposing yourself to the potentially harmful chemicals and synthetic materials found in most disposable pads and tampons.

The main point that ties many of these solutions together is a change in mindset. The solution is to embrace a cultural shift away from a use-and-toss mentality. High-quality, toxin-free products are available and using these long-lasting, durable items keeps hundreds, if not thousands, of cheaper, disposable products from ending up in landfills. Steer clear of harmful, noxious chemicals by buying environmentally-friendly, non-toxic alternatives or make your own. By choosing who we do and do not support, each of us can do our part to reduce demand for cheap disposables which can hurt the environment.

## Sources and More Information

Reusables vs disposables — <http://www.reuseit.com/fact-and-myths/learn-more-reuseables-vs-disposables-a-summary-of-facts-and-solutions.htm>

Why Switch? <http://lunapads.com/learn/why-switch>

Chem Fatale <http://www.womensvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Chem-Fatale-Report.pdf>

The Hidden Price of Feminine Hygiene Products <http://www.emagazine.com/magazine-archive/inner-sanctum>



# Green Up Your Cleaners!!

It can be easy and economical to make your own cleaners from simple ingredients. Try some of these homemade alternatives or look for a book or online sources for others that may be right for you.

## DIY Liquid Laundry Soap

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Borax
- 1 cup Washing Soda
- 1 cup Liquid Castile Soap
- 10-15 drops essential oil (optional)
- 17 cups of water



### Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, bring 6 cups of water to a slight boil. Once the water begins to boil, turn off the burner and add the borax and washing soda. Stir to dissolve.
2. In a large bucket, combine the remaining 11 cups of room-temperature water and 1 cup of liquid castile soap. You can choose to add in the essential oils here, if you wish.
3. Pour the hot borax mixture from the saucepan into the bucket.
4. Stir the mixture together.
5. Pour your mixture into the desired storage container.
6. As the soap sits, the mixture will form into a gel. There may also be liquid and gel separation, simply stir or shake. This is normal. Use approximately 1/8 to 1/4 a cup of soap per load of laundry. For stains, use a small amount of soap directly on the stain. The gel will dissolve in the water of the washing machine.



## DIY All-in-One Bathroom Cleaner

Ingredients:

- 2 cups warm water (distilled for longer-term use)
- 1 tablespoons baking soda
- 2 tablespoons liquid castile soap
- 30 drops tea tree essential oil
- 20 drops orange essential oil

### Directions:

1. Pour the warm water into the bottle, followed by the baking soda. Shake the bottle to combine the ingredients. Add the castile soap and essential oils, gently shaking the bottle to combine.
2. Use this spray to clean the tub, tile, toilet, sink and even floor (particularly around the toilet). Spray the surface, allow the cleaner to sit for a minute, then wipe with a damp cloth. Rinse the cloth as needed.