

Beyond the “Blue Box”

Waste management is one of the three EarthCARE themes. EarthCARE stresses the importance of the 3 Rs: Reduce, Re-use and Recycle, in that order. Before you consider buying something, ask yourself if you really need it, or do you need it in this packaging? **Reduce** is the first and most powerful of the 3 Rs. Next, ask yourself if the item can be reused in some format by someone, i.e., **Re-use**, the second of the 3 Rs. Finally, ask yourself if the item can be recycled or does it have to go as refuse. **Recycle** whenever possible to avoid sending items to the landfill sites.

Here are several suggestions to consider for waste management of some pesky items before they go “out the door”.

1. Use tube socks to collect plastic bags; donate them to local food banks or homeless shelters.
2. Hold clothing exchanges (for both adults and children or for charity).
3. Make a rainbow for the school’s front hall made from recycled materials to correspond with the colours of rainbow. Chicken wire is used to hold material in place. Make a mascot in school colours from recycled materials.

4. Pop tab collections. Donate the tabs to charities.
5. Ink-cartridge collections – some agencies pay for ink cartridges or plant tree seedlings. Check www.thinkgreen.com.
6. Composting- vermiculture or otherwise. Use the dirt in the school gardens.
7. Paper revolution - use both sides of paper or posters before recycling. Make scratch pads from paper used on one side only and deliver to teachers for use in the classrooms.
8. Make a butterfly garden. Take turns among classes caring for the garden. Partner with the community to care for gardens during the summer months.
9. Battery collection – collect old batteries (battery bake sales, lunches, etc.) and return them to a disposal centre.
10. Create junk monsters from recycled materials. Use aluminum cans to create a globe or other structural art. Make a tin man or robot from aluminum cans or pails. Check www.aluminouspublishing.com.
11. Cut plastic pop bottles in half and use as planters for seeds.
12. Use Styrofoam for art activities. See www.kinderart.com/recycle.
13. Save gas and reduce pollution - start a walk to school program.
14. Save energy - use clear mac-tac to attach LOCO stickers on light switches and computers.
15. Hold a chalk-a-thon - have all students draw EarthCARE messages on the schoolyard.
16. Hold a book exchange or book sale.
17. Hold a used toy exchange or sale.
18. Plan litterless lunches or snacks – reduce the garbage in your school and schoolyard.
19. Send the school newsletter on-line to as many homes as possible.
20. Have students submit as many assignments as possible on-line.
21. Ensure purchases for the school are recyclable – buy liquids in plastic

containers (#1 or 2) instead of glass where possible.

22. Make “Lug-a mug” a routine practice, no matter what the activity/event. Carabineers are great for lugging mugs!
23. Insist on liners (both top and bottom) when ordering pizza – the liners protect the box from contamination so it can be recycled. The liners themselves should be put in the garbage.
24. Make it easy to comply. Place recycle bins next to garbage cans so it’s “one stop’ disposal.
25. Have a recycle race or competition. Prepare a garbage can or bag with a mixture of recyclables and refuse. Have teams of students and teachers complete to sort the refuse. Provide rubber gloves!
26. Consult with your custodian to identify other areas in waste management for your school.

A Dozen Ways to Use Milk Cartons

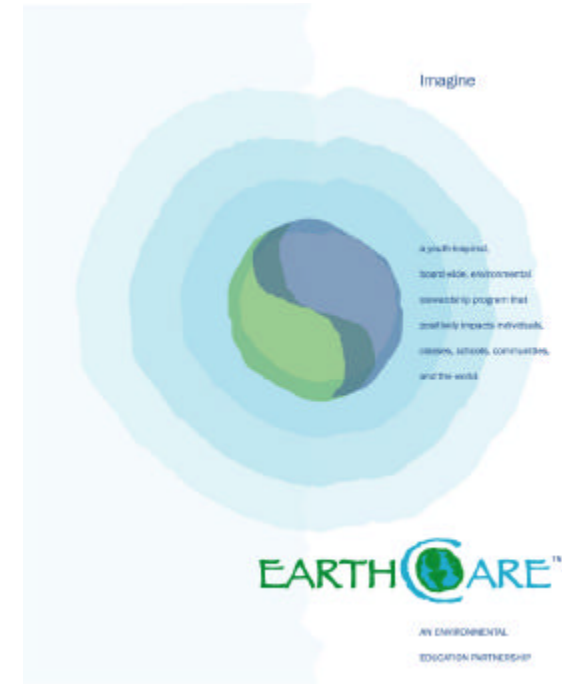
It is important to make sure that cartons have been thoroughly washed before students start working with them.

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1. Use cartons to plant seeds - gift for Mother’s Day.
2. Make bird feeders
(www.efinch.com/milknest1.htm)
3. Use in sandbox or water tables for scoop-filling, dumping, straining.
4. Use as mold for clay/plaster of paris or for mixing paints.
5. Use as holders: Cut top off, paint and decorate to use:
 - a. In the classroom to hold paper clips, stickers, post-it-notes, elastics, crayons, chalk, erasers, staples, pencils, scrap paper, etc.
 - b. At home for needle & thread, bobby pins, hair elastics, toothpicks, twist ties, bread clips, etc.
 - c. In staff room/kitchen areas to hold packets of sugar, tea bags, stir sticks, etc.
 - d. As trivia or card game holders.
6. Seed spreaders.
7. Use for earwig control in gardens.
8. Make toys, junk monsters, 3-D sculptures, bridges, etc.
9. Bean bag/ball toss in the gym.
10. Fill with sand and use as doorstep.
11. Make piggy banks or ballot boxes.
12. Make rattles for music.

See also www.familycrafts.about.com

EarthCARE
See yourself making a
difference!



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