

Start the New Year Off By Recycling

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Happy New Year! Hopefully, you didn't over-indulge last night. If you did, the best thing you can do is burn off the excess New Year's cheer by gathering your recyclables for this Saturday's annual Holiday Recycling Day.

The Vanderburgh County Holiday Recycling Day will be held Saturday, January 7, from 8 am to noon, at the old west side Walmart location. If you need to plug in your GPS, the address of the vacant lot we'll be using is 4587 University Drive, Evansville, IN. It is north of the Lloyd Expressway, and west of Rosenberger Avenue.

Master Gardeners and volunteers from Wesselman Nature Society and local high schools will be collecting a wide range of recyclable materials, including paper (wrapping, newspaper, books, magazines), cardboard, aluminum and other metal cans, and plastic containers (#1 through #7).

Please be sure all containers have been rinsed and are clean and dry. We volunteers really dislike being repeatedly bathed in stale beer and flat soda. Also, it helps us tremendously if your recyclables have already been sorted into separate boxes or bags.

PLEASE NOTE: We are NOT accepting glass, Styrofoam, or plastic bags. The company that has been buying these materials will no longer take them. These items should be placed in your household trash.

As in previous years, we will be accepting dead (used? spent?) Christmas trees. The trees will be chipped up by a local tree care company, and the resulting chips will be distributed free of charge. These chips make good mulch, especially around acid-loving plants like blueberries and rhododendrons. Please remove all decorations, lights, and wire ties before dropping them off. We cannot accept artificial trees.

Why should you bother recycling these items? Mostly, because they CAN be recycled, and in doing so, we save a lot of resources. Making newspaper from old newspaper saves a lot of trees; making new aluminum cans from old cans saves a lot of energy in the mining, smelting, and processing. It takes a lot of fuel to drive raw materials to refineries and processing plants.

Materials that can be recycled don't need to go to the landfill. Landfill space is finite, and when one is filled, a new one must be dug. If recyclable materials can be redirected, then our landfills will last longer. This is especially important when it comes to Christmas trees. Even though they are organic and supposedly biodegradable, they

don't get the oxygen they need to break down in a landfill. They also don't compress well, so they take up more space per pound than most other materials.

For more information on recycling in general or the holiday recycling day, you can contact the Vanderburgh County Solid Waste District at 812-436-7800. For more information on mulching or other gardening topics, contact the Purdue Extension Service at 812-435-5287.