

Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste at Tox Away Day

By Larry Caplan, Extension Horticulture Educator, Vanderburgh County, IN

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This column comes out on Sunday. Many of my readers have been (or are about to go to) church; or they were in synagogue yesterday. Thinking about this as I wrote today's column, I was reminded of the text of Numbers, Chapter 35, verse 34: "And you shall not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell..." My Islamic friends may recall "...And do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption." (Qur'an, 2:60)

Protecting our environment is not only a "good" thing to do...but it is our sacred duty.

Vanderburgh County is once again holding its annual Tox Away Day on Saturday, September 16, from 9 am to 1 pm. We will be at the Evansville Civic Center parking lot, located at the corner of Walnut Street and Southeast Ninth Street. The Solid Waste District sponsors this event each year, in order for homeowners to get rid of their household hazardous waste in an environmentally responsible manner, and at no direct cost to the individual.

It is dangerous to toss many products into the household garbage. Solvents and pesticides could leak and harm unprotected trash collectors, or leak out of the bottom of the truck and contaminate our streets. Some of these products could eventually harm the liners under our landfill, allowing these and other toxins to get into our groundwater.

Pouring liquid wastes, like pesticides and automotive fluids, down the drain is extremely dangerous. These chemicals are not removed by sewage treatment plants, and will enter the Ohio River unchanged. Yes, I know...your half a bottle of Chemical X doesn't amount to much when you think of how much water is in a river. But when you add up all the half bottles of all the residences throughout the Midwest, it becomes a lot of poison. Did you know that people fishing along the Ohio River should not eat more than one fish meal per month, because of the poisons the fish accumulate?

All residents of Vanderburgh County can drop off their household hazardous wastes at Tox Away Day. Sorry, this is not for businesses. Here is a list of items that will be accepted:

- Motor Oil & Filters
- Automotive Batteries & Fluids
- Gasoline

Antifreeze
Household Batteries
Pesticides & Herbicides
Aerosol Cans
Thermometers/Mercury
Household Cleaners
Glues & Adhesives
Photographic Chemicals
Pool Chemicals
Fluorescent Bulbs
Pharmaceuticals
Oil Based Paint
Solvents & Thinners

We are not accepting latex paints, because they are not toxic. They can be allowed to air dry, or the partial cans can be filled with kitty litter or sawdust to keep them from leaking, and then placed in ordinary household trash.

We are also not accepting tires, electronics, or appliances. Please contact the Solid Waste District to find out when those items will be collected.

For more information on Tox Away Day, please contact either the Vanderburgh County Solid Waste District at 812-436-7800, or the Purdue Extension Service at 812-435-5287.