

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



**The City  
of Irvine**  
(949) 724-7669



**Waste Management  
of Orange County**  
(949) 642-1191

Spring 2005



## “Irvine Recycles” to take part in Woodbridge Street Fair, UCI Earth Day 2005

Events to be held April 9th  
in Woodbridge; April 16th  
at UCI's Aldrich Park

To mark Earth Day 2005, the City's "Irvine Recycles" team including the Orange County Conservation Corps will host its information booth at the upcoming Woodbridge Street Fair and the University of California Irvine Earth Day celebration. The Woodbridge Street Fair will be held on Saturday, April 9 on Barranca Avenue, in front of the Woodbridge Community Lake. The annual Earth Day event at UCI will be held a week later on Saturday, April 16, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Aldrich Park on the UC Irvine campus. Both of these

events are open to the public and parking is free.

"Irvine Recycles" will be one of many groups at these events promoting environmental awareness and will encourage pollution prevention, waste reduction, recycling, and the proper disposal of hazardous materials. The team will distribute written materials and promotional items and host its interactive Pollution Prevention Wheel Game.

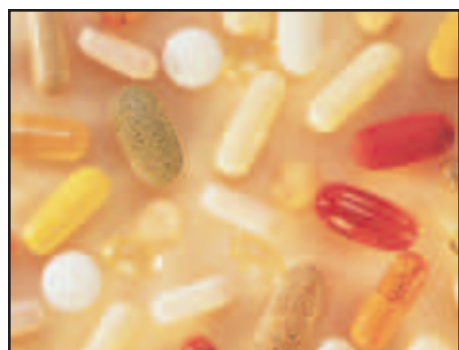


Other event festivities will include electric vehicles on display, the Dionysus Film Festival showing films that highlight social and environmental concerns, as well as many other interactive, hands-on educational booths and displays, earth friendly vendors, recycling, art, entertainment, food, and much more.

Come join "Irvine Recycles" at the Woodbridge Street Fair and Earth Day at the UC Irvine campus! For more information about the Woodbridge Street Fair, contact Louise Cook at (949) 786-1800, ext. 121. For an application to be an exhibitor at the UCI Earth Day event, visit the event website at <http://www.volunteer.uci.edu/earthday/index.html> or contact the UCI Volunteer Center at (949) 824-3500.

## Cleaning out the medicine cabinet?

**Both prescription medicines and  
over-the-counter drugs can be  
disposed of easily and safely**



Remember that cough you had in 1997? Chances are the cough syrup that you've been keeping in the medicine chest, just in case, has now expired. Many residents have a virtual pharmacy of unused, expired, and unusable medications taking up valuable space and potentially endangering people and pets.

Unused pharmaceuticals, which include both prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs, pose several risks in the home. First, there is a chance that a child, grandchild, or pet will consume a damaging or potentially deadly dose of a medication that looks or smells interesting. Second, if a friend or family member were to use up someone else's prescription, he or she would chance a dangerous drug interaction or allergic reaction.

Third, expired medications do not work as intended, meaning they may not provide effective treatment for serious illnesses. Fourth, certain medications, especially narcotics and painkillers, are commonly sought by criminals during break-ins.

In the past, you may have been told that old medicines should be poured down the drain. However, we now know that isn't a good idea. Antibiotics in sewer systems can undermine the work of helpful bacteria that are cleaning the water. Plus, some researchers believe that antibiotics in our water supplies are turning harmful bacteria into deadly "super-bugs." Antibiotics, over-the-counter pain relievers, and hormones have been found in small traces in water supplies. Chemotherapy drugs and antineoplastic medicines cause even greater concerns because they are extremely toxic. Products such as head lice shampoo may contain toxic insecticides.

The best way to dispose of pharmaceuticals, which include both prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs, is to return the unwanted portion to your pharmacist. Many pharmacists are willing to accept and properly dispose of unwanted pharmaceuticals. Chemotherapy drugs and antineoplastic medicines should be returned to the pharmacist or the cancer clinic where the drugs were administered or taken to a major hospital for proper disposal.

Another alternative is to take the drugs to a household hazardous waste (HHW) collection center. There are four HHW centers operated by the County of Orange, including one in Irvine at 6411 Oak Canyon. For recorded information, you may contact the County of Orange at (714) 834-6752. If you have a question for the staff, wish to have literature mailed to you, or have any suggestions for the County's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program, please call (714) 834-4000.

*Some information in this article was provided courtesy of the Purdue Research Foundation, West Lafayette, Indiana.*

## We've come a long way

In the early 1960s, Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, proposed a nationwide conservation tour to President John F. Kennedy. The tour, which took place in September 1963, was overshadowed by other events. However, six years later, in the summer of 1969, Nelson got the idea for a national "teach-in" about the environment. Planning began for this teach-in, which was dubbed Earth Day and set for April 22, 1970. A call went out. And Americans responded.

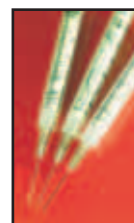
Going into that first Earth Day, no one could have predicted what was about to occur. School children, college students, community leaders, public officials, and citizens mobilized a huge, grassroots effort. By April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans, or 10 percent of our nation's population in that year, took part.

This demonstration for the environment brought about sweeping changes at the federal and state levels. Later that same year, President Richard Nixon established the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by Executive Order. In the years that followed, dozens of environmental laws were passed, protecting our coastlines, clearing our air, and cleaning up our water supplies.

Today, 35 years later, the successes of Earth Day are readily apparent. However, we aren't "done" taking care of our surroundings. As more people live more closely together in America and on our planet, we each need to make daily decisions to take good care of the environment we share.

## Be "sharps" smart

Each year, more than 2 billion syringes, pen needles, and lancets, which are referred to as "sharps," are used by people for their own in-home medical care. Because all of these items



have had contact with blood, they are considered infectious waste. As such, if they are disposed improperly, they can potentially contaminate children who may take them from the trash or sanitary and landfill employees who can be stuck when sharps puncture bags. In either case, contact with used sharps creates the risk of serious injury and illness.

If you use injectable products of any kind to treat a medical condition, you need to know how to dispose of the sharps properly and safely. According to EPA guidelines, the preferred method

for sharps disposal is one of the following: drop box/collection site, mail-back program, syringe exchange program, or at-home needle destruction. For more information, go to [www.safeneedle.com](http://www.safeneedle.com). If one of these options is not available to you, then follow these guidelines for safe handling when disposing of needles in the trash:

- Place sharps in a rigid, leak-proof container with a secure lid (examples are laundry detergent or bleach bottles).
- When container is full, disinfect the contents by pouring a 10-percent bleach solution into the container, closing the lid tightly, and shaking.
- Pour the bleach out into a sewer drain, such as your sink or toilet.
- Close the lid tightly, and seal it with heavy duty packing tape.
- Then dispose of the sealed container in your regular trash.



# Gargantuan garage sale

Do you still have the trumpet you used to play? What about the hand-me-down couch from Grandma's house that you no longer need? Or, is it craft books on a long-since abandoned hobby? We all have items in our house that we store for no good reason. Maybe you haven't gotten rid of these items because a garage sale seems like a lot of work or you don't have a truck in which to load the couch to deliver it to a charity.

No more excuses! The Internet is making it easier than ever to sell, trade, or give away things that you no longer want or need. It's like a huge nationwide garage sale. At auction sites, such as eBay, you can invite bids on your used stuff. At waste exchange sites, you can make arrangements to swap or, sometimes, sell your goods. At donation sites, you can learn how or where to drop items off. Or, you can post items that you would like to give away and wait for a taker, whether that is an individual or a charitable organization. No matter the method, ensuring that your good stuff gets reused is no more than a few mouse clicks away (see box).

Each of the sites devoted to reuse has its own rules and requirements. To post at the site, you often have to register or become a "member of the community." In most cases, there will be a few simple steps that connect you and your goods with the rest of the folks in cyberspace. Don't be daunted by the sign-up procedures. Once you're registered, participation is usually simple.

Getting reusable items into the hands of someone else

**The Internet is also a great place to find gently used items that you need. Check out these same sites when you need to shop for something new-to-you.**

who can use them is a great way to reduce your waste. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, about 23.3 percent of our municipal solid waste is actually reusable, including durable goods, such as appliances and furniture, and textiles, including clothes, blankets, and bedding. By the EPA's estimates, only about 16.7 percent of that material is currently being reused. This means the remainder is headed to disposal facilities—for no good reason.

Take part in the world's gargantuan, virtual garage sale.



**W**hen disaster strikes here at home or around the world, the first priority is always ensuring the safety of victims and meeting the basic human needs of survivors and their families. As that initial crisis wanes, communities are left with mountains of debris.

Last year, four separate hurricanes hit Florida during a two-month period, leaving behind 75 million cubic yards of vegetative (limbs, trees, and other plant waste) and construction/demolition debris. That was three times the volume of vegetative and construction/demolition debris in a typical 12-month period. In Florida, this waste was handled at 350 staging areas, many of which were mobilized to respond to hurricane debris only. Cleanup will take a year or more.

Much of the debris from any natural disaster is organic and woody. The vast majority of this material is chipped and turned into mulch. However, cleanup crews and debris site workers must beware of hazardous materials, including household hazardous waste, inadvertently mixed with these materials. As you know, household hazardous waste is so named because it is poisonous, corrosive, reactive, flammable, or explosive. Cleanups are dangerous enough without adding these hazards to the debris piles.

While none of us controls hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, mudslides, wildfires, or other natural disasters, we can each do more to be prepared. One of the ways that your family can be better prepared for any kind of disaster is to reduce the number of hazardous chemicals found in your home.

Here are some suggestions for reducing the hazards in and around your home. Don't buy chemicals that you don't need. If you need a chemical, choose a product that will solve the problem, select the most benign option available, and purchase only the amount you need. Keep leftover chemicals in their original, labeled containers. Never pour potentially harmful chemicals into food or beverage containers for storage. Use up products, or give them to a friend, neighbor, or organization that needs them. Or, call us to ask for safe disposal instructions.

For more information about disasters, disaster debris, and preparedness, visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

## Something for sale, something to swap, something for nothing?

### Search these sites

#### Dump & Run

[www.dumpandrun.org](http://www.dumpandrun.org)

#### Earth 911

[www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org)

(Click "Reuse & Recycling Services")

#### eBay

[www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

#### Freecycle

[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

#### Habitat for Humanity ReStore

[www.habitat.org/env/restore.aspx](http://www.habitat.org/env/restore.aspx)

#### i-WasteNot

[www.i-wastenot.com/](http://www.i-wastenot.com/)

#### Reuses

[www.reuses.com](http://www.reuses.com)

#### 2 Good 2 Toss

[www.2Good2Toss.com](http://www.2Good2Toss.com)

#### Throwplace

[www.throwplace.com](http://www.throwplace.com)

#### Waste Exchanges

[www.wastexchange.org](http://www.wastexchange.org)

(Click on "Other Exchanges")

## Worth noting

Since we're coming up on Earth Day, we wanted to share some good news that we've seen, heard, and noted:

- In a commercial entitled "Waste," everyday images of wasteful behavior—from leaving unneeded lights on to letting an unattended garden hose run—introduce this theme: "Maybe we could all use a little less." The ads promote the Honda Accord Hybrid.
- Kinko's stores, which are now part of FedEx, announced in

December that the standard paper used at the office and print centers will be 30-percent post-consumer recycled content, a jump from the 10-percent recycled content that the stores had been using. This raises the average recycled content used by the more than 1,100 stores to 26.2 percent overall.

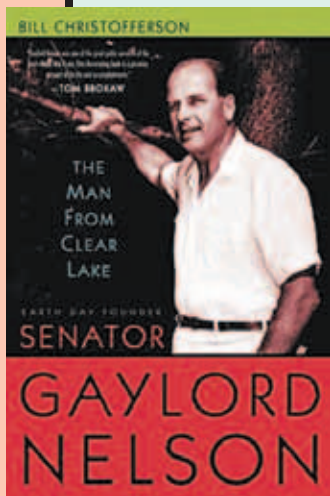
- Recycline makes toothbrush and razor handles from 100-percent recycled plastic. About 65 percent of the plastic to make these handles comes from recycled Stonyfield Farm yogurt cups. Recently, Stonyfield Farm and Recycline recycled the 1 millionth yogurt cup in this partnership. It takes two yogurt cups to make each new toothbrush handle. The yogurt cups must be returned to Stonyfield Farm for recycling. After use, the toothbrushes can be returned to Recycline for recycling. (For details about these recycling programs, go to [www.recycline.com](http://www.recycline.com) and [www.stonyfield.com](http://www.stonyfield.com).)



# Recommended reading for Earth Day

On April 22nd, we'll celebrate the 35th anniversary of Earth Day. Visit your local library or media center to learn a little more about Earth Day. While you're there, look for these three recently released books:

A biography that reads like a novel, *The Man from Clear Lake: Earth Day Founder Senator Gaylord Nelson* by Bill Christofferson (University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) tells the story of Gaylord Nelson. A governor of Wisconsin and later U.S. Senator from that state, Nelson is the man behind Earth Day. While in the Senate, Nelson championed the idea of a "teach-in" for the Earth in 1970, dubbed "Earth Day." To everyone's surprise, 10 percent of U.S. citizens took part in that first celebration, picking up litter, cleaning up playgrounds, learning about pollution, and making a difference. After leaving the Senate, Nelson continued to devote his life and career to the environment, serving as the head of the Wilderness Society.



*Read and enjoy!*

Written to the tune of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," *Earth Day Birthday* by Pattie Schnetzler and illustrated by Chad Wallace (Dawn Publications, 2004) introduces students in preschool through fourth grade to 12 native species of North American animals. The illustrations and lyrics show children and adults how habitats work and help them understand the importance of our country's varied environment.



Kids in first through third grade can learn math place values and learn about Earth Day at the same time in this clever book, *Earth Day—Hooray!* written by Stuart J. Murphy and illustrated by Renee Andriani (MathStart Series, HarperTrophy, 2004). In the book, a group of kids clean up a park and recycle aluminum cans to raise money for the purchase of flowers they want to plant.

## 10 Tips for greener gatherings

In the U.S., the wedding industry is a \$70 billion business, stressing brides, grooms, budgets, and the environment. Add to that the amount of money—and waste—created at other similar types of events, including family reunions, graduation parties, and retirement roasts, and you have a lot of resources devoted to gatherings.

Here are some of the ways to make your gathering or celebration fun and earth friendly:

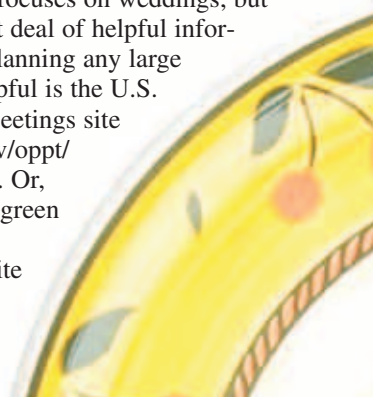
1. Avoid a lot of extra paper in invitations, such as double envelopes and reply card envelopes. If you need replies, request a phone call or include a stamped, self-addressed postcard.
2. Print everything from invitations and programs to thank-you notes on recycled-content paper.
3. Look for used formal wear, costumes, and wedding attire, including secondhand or vintage dresses and accessories.
4. Check into rentals. For years, men have rented tuxes. Why not rent or borrow a dress or suit for the occasion? In pictures, a rented dress can look just as lovely as a rented tux looks debonaire.
5. Select locally or regionally grown flowers, which are often grown with fewer pesticides and always require less fuel and create fewer emissions to deliver to your event.
6. Use washable and reusable plates, cups, napkins, and tablecloths. If you don't have enough for the



number of guests, rent or borrow extras.

Minimize your use of disposables, and you'll minimize your waste.

7. Plan to recycle at the party. Have containers for beverage container recycling near each trash bin. For multi-day events, such as family reunions, be sure to provide newspaper recycling, too.
8. Send leftovers home with guests, or donate leftover food to the needy.
9. Give party favors that are consumable, such as candy, teas, or coffees. Or, avoid party favors altogether. The guests came to share your special day—not to take a gift home!
10. Read more about greening weddings, gatherings, and other celebrations. Look for these books: *Green Weddings That Don't Cost the Earth* by Carol Reed-Jones (Paper Crane Press, 1996) and *Organic Weddings: Balancing Ecology, Style and Tradition* by Michelle Kozin (New Society Publishers, 2003). The website [www.organicweddings.com](http://www.organicweddings.com) focuses on weddings, but contains a great deal of helpful information about planning any large event. Also helpful is the U.S. EPA's Green Meetings site at [www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/). Or, type "planning green gatherings" into your favorite search engine and follow the related links.



## Brothers take greeting seriously

Since 1975, brothers Floyd and Earl Marian have been exchanging the same birthday card. Earl originally sent the Peanuts comic strip card, which carried the greeting: "This is the age of ecology! Don't throw this card away. Recycle it to a friend." Floyd took the message to heart and returned it on Earl's birthday the next month. The tradition has continued to this day, with each brother adding a handwritten line of greeting!

### Quotes Requoted

Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like.

Will Rogers  
American humorist  
and entertainer,  
1879-1935

Photo courtesy of Will Rogers Memorial Museums, [www.WillRogers.org](http://www.WillRogers.org)







**Bulky item pickup available on request** — Irvine residents receiving curbside service are provided free curbside bulky item collection service. Each residence is entitled to two FREE bulky item pickups each year with up to four items collected per pickup. Bulky items include large, hard-to-handle items, such as furniture and appliances. Just call Waste Management of Orange County's Customer Service Center at (949) 642-1191 to schedule a pickup. Residents living in apartments should contact Irvine Recycles at (949) 724-7669 for more information about dropping off large items from apartment complexes free of charge at Waste Management's Sunset Environmental facility located in Irvine.



**Clean your files!** — Businesses that generate mostly clean paper may be eligible for recycling services at a reduced rate. These recycling services will dramatically reduce their overall waste collection costs. Call the City of Irvine at (949) 724-6357 for more information about recycling services for businesses in Irvine.



**Make your landscape water-wise** — Did you know that the average Southern California homeowner uses twice the amount of water needed to keep plants healthy? At times, residents water too often. At other times, they water for too long. Learn how to create a water-wise, waste-reducing landscape and how to give it just the right amount of moisture. For more information, go to [www.bewaterwise.com](http://www.bewaterwise.com) or [www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com).

The Irvine Ranch Water District's spring Residential Landscape Workshop was held in March. Plan now to attend the fall workshop, which will be held in October. For information about the workshop, call (949) 453-5327.

**We want your suggestions, questions and comments!**

**The City of Irvine**  
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The views and statements of environmental organizations referenced in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the City of Irvine.



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## City to Commemorate "Arbor Day 2005"

This spring, the City of Irvine will again mark Arbor Day with a series of special events. Details about this year's activities were not yet available at this writing, but are expected to include a special proclamation from the City Council and tree planting events with local youth. Arbor Day is recognized nationally as the last Friday in April each year. This year, National Arbor Day will be on April 29.

Last year, the City's Public Works Landscape Maintenance Division partnered with Bonita Canyon Elementary School to plant 19 trees at Chaparral Park, a neighborhood park site that provides recreational use for the school. City staff, including the supervisor of the Tree Program, Henry Canales, prepared the land and instructed the children as they planted the trees.

Of the 19 trees planted, 10 were Raywood Ash, which will reach 35 feet in height when fully grown and provide considerable shade. The remaining nine were Chitalpa trees, which will grow to be approximately 25 feet tall. Each spring and summer, the community can look forward to lovely white blooms from the Chitalpas that will line the park walkway.

The City of Irvine values its inventory of over 55,000 trees and recognizes them as an important renewable resource that helps moderate temperature, mitigates air pollution, reduces erosion, and provides a habitat for wildlife.

In recognition of its ongoing commitment to an effective community forestry program, the City of Irvine has received the "Tree City USA Award" from the National Arbor Day Foundation for 14 consecutive years.

For more information about the City's "Tree Program" and this year's related events, please contact Henry Canales in the Public Works Department at (949) 724-7621.



**Public Works Supervisor Henry Canales teaches the "finer points" of planting trees to Irvine youth on Arbor Day.**



### Did you know?

Research has shown that lawns can generate approximately 300 pounds of grass clippings per 1,000 square feet annually. This can be as much as 6½ tons per acre each year!

Everything seems so fresh and new this time of year. As you are cleaning off your patio furniture, you are probably also getting out the extra garden tools and tuning up the lawn mower. Now is a great time to think about grasscycling.

Grasscycling, also called mulching, means letting your grass clippings drop onto the lawn when you mow, rather than picking them up with the grass catcher or bagger. These grass clippings can provide your lawn with moisture, as well as nitrogen, which is a food that your lawn needs.

If your family owns a mulching mower, the mower is designed to chop the grass blades into tiny pieces and then drop them onto the mown grass. If you don't have a mulching mower, you can simply remove the bag attachment from the mower and insert the "chute cover." This cover is a safety device that covers the hole where the bag is normally

attached. A regular mower may not chop the grass blades quite as small, so you might have to mow slightly more often.

Grasscycling is easier if you trim off no more than the top one-third of your grass on each mowing. If the grass is growing quickly, you may have to mow more than once a week. However, the small clippings will quickly begin to rot before the next mowing. Chopping off more than one-third of the grass blade is hard on the plants and leaves behind long clippings that take longer to break down.

In addition to providing moisture and nitrogen to your lawn and reducing your use of trash bags, grasscycling will also save time. If your lawn takes an hour to mow when you stop and bag the grass, it should only take about 40 minutes to mow when you grasscycle. Wouldn't you rather spend that extra time relaxing on the patio furniture?

**The City of Irvine Public Works Department recycled over 1,880 tons of greenwaste from City parks, facilities, and open spaces in 2004!**

## Need help?

While we aren't available to mow lawns, we do provide many services and resources to help make your lawn and other yard care easier. Most residents with curbside waste collection service are provided separate collection for excess yard debris, including grass clippings, leaves, and brush. Others with small lots that may have gardens but do not generate large amounts of green waste on an ongoing basis are encouraged to try backyard composting. For informative brochures, booklets, and other how-to materials relating to backyard composting, residents should contact the Irvine Recycles Hotline at (949) 724-7669.

## Children's Water Education Festival set for April 5-6

On April 5 and 6, more than 7,000 fourth and fifth grade students, teachers, parents, presenters, and volunteers from across Orange County will participate in the nation's largest water and environmental education festival. The festival is more than a field trip! It is an outdoor laboratory where students use their feet, hands, and minds to learn about water and the environment around them. The festival features interactive displays and activities about the water cycle; groundwater and surface water protection; wetland preservation; recycling; pollution prevention; water treatment, distribution and conservation; and local environmental issues.

The goal of the festival is to educate youth about our ever-decreasing water supply, environmental stewardship, and groundwater and surface water protection. Hopefully, the youth who attend the event will take what they learn and share it with their families, schoolmates, and neighbors. These students aren't just the leaders of the future—they are leaders today!

The Orange County Water District Groundwater Guardian Team volunteers, Disneyland Resort, and the National Water Research Institute coordinate the festival. However, public and private support is important to its success. The City of Irvine is one of the many sponsors, and its "Irvine Recycles" program staff will be on hand to conduct educational activities at the event and teach children about the importance of waste reduction, recycling, and conservation.

