

County of Santa Cruz

CURBSIDER

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COMPARE: A Trip to the Landfill

Beyond the joy of watching the seagulls and experiencing unique olfactory sensations, there are some good reasons to drive to the Buena Vista Landfill or Ben Lomond Transfer Station. The disposal sites can handle all types and sizes of scrap metal objects, including large appliances, which are accepted at no charge. Residents may find it most convenient to haul a large load of yard trimmings directly to the yardwaste collection site rather than stuffing a little each week in their green cart. What about those old tires, that broken down couch and those half-filled paint cans? The disposal sites have appropriate places to take recyclable, bulky, and hazardous wastes that don't fit or are now banned by County ordinance from your trash and recycling carts.



There are some drawbacks to taking this drive. The staff at the scale house is known for efficient and courteous service, but the wait in line is sometimes long, especially on weekends near the 3:30 p.m. closing time. Putting your vehicle on the road is no bargain these days with the rising cost of gas. And what is the value of your time to make the trip?

TO: Curbside Collection

Convenient weekly pickup is provided at your home. Garbage service includes weekly recycling and yardwaste collection. You will save time and gas. The cost of garbage service compares favorably with landfill rates if you factor in the expense of operating your vehicle, and if you value your labor at more than the minimum wage.



Keeping Your Green Clean!

Would you use compost in your yard if it was full of plastic and broken glass? The universal answer is no. Please help to “Keep Our Green Clean” by making sure you only put yardwaste and clean wood in your curbside yardwaste carts or in your vehicle if you haul your green materials to the landfill or transfer station. Do not use plastic bags to collect your yardwaste, or put glass, plastic, cans or garbage in your yardwaste cart. By following these simple rules, you are helping to make the compost and mulch products we create beneficial for our gardens, parks and agricultural community.

What's New with Curbside Recycling?

Please note a few changes in “recycling etiquette” since the curbside recycling program has been under new management (GreenWaste Recovery took over the curbside collection contract from Waste Management in May 2007).

- **Household batteries:**

Sealed in a clear plastic bag now go ON TOP of the blue cart (not inside).

- **Shredded paper (the long stringy “spaghetti” kind):**

Bag it in a CLEAR PLASTIC BAG (not a paper bag) and put it inside your blue cart. (Crosscut or “confetti” shredded paper still cannot be recycled. Bag it and tie it closed to prevent litter and toss in the garbage.)

- **Nursery pots:**

Now accepted, along with other rigid plastic containers. Just knock off all loose dirt and place in your blue cart.

- **Raw fruits and vegetables:**

Deposit in the green yardwaste cart.

A complete list of acceptable items for curbside recycling can be found on GreenWaste Recovery's website: www.greenwaste.com. Select “County of Santa Cruz” under “Areas We Serve.” Then at the bottom, click “What can be recycled?”



Greening the Holidays

What's the real meaning of the holidays? Wouldn't a gift to our children and grandchildren of the blue sphere pictured in astronaut William Anders' famous “Earthrise” photo from the moon be a precious gift? To deliver this gift in good condition to future generations, we must be good stewards today. Considering the welfare of the planet and all its inhabitants, now termed being “green,” leads us to challenge a few traditions.

The period between Thanksgiving and Christmas is traditionally the biggest shopping season in the U.S., and we produce 25% more trash than usual during this time. For every product we buy, ten times its weight in garbage and pollution was generated in the manufacturing processes before it reached the retailer's shelf.

With a little imagination, joyous celebrations with those you love can occur without creating waste or environmental harm. Consult the many lists and sources of eco-friendly holiday tips for ideas. Besides “green purchases,” which still involve consumption but with a supposedly lighter environmental impact, tips include zero waste options such as giving gifts that can be experienced, like a homemade dinner or tickets to a show.

Wishing you happy and green holidays!

What's That Black Plastic Thing in My Backyard?

If you are asking yourself this question, it is likely that you've inherited an Earth Machine compost bin. The bin is designed for composting kitchen scraps and moderate amounts of garden clippings. Many people say the Earth Machine bears a striking resemblance to Darth Vader's mask from Star Wars. Unfortunately, like the villain of the Dark Side, the fate of many Earth Machines is to suffer defeat in a neglected sector of the backyard universe. Fortunately, an Earth Machine can be revived in three simple steps:

- 1) Relocate the bin to an easily accessible location, within reach of a garden hose.
- 2) If the top and bottom halves don't fit together quite right, use duct tape to hold the halves in place, or drill sets of small holes on the top and bottom halves and wire them together.
- 3) Call the Rotline (831) 423-HEAP or visit www.compostsantacruzcounty.org to request the publication "How to Use Your Earth Machine," which will explain how to make great compost!

To obtain a new compost bin, GreenWaste Recovery customers may call customer service at 1-800-665-2209. Customers and non-customers alike can receive a discount on a new compost bin by attending a backyard composting workshop. Call the Rotline for the workshop schedule and registration.



Recycling Center Recycled

The Recycling Center at the Buena Vista Landfill, operated by the California Grey Bears, will have a new home by the end of the year. A facelift of their old site will give the non-profit recycler twice the space to accept and process scrap materials.

Traffic flow for the public will be much improved, providing easier access to bins for free drop off of a wide variety of recyclable items now banned from landfill disposal by County ordinance.

Revenue from the sale of scrap materials is divided between the County's recycling fund and the Grey Bears' Brown Bag Program, a weekly food distribution for 2,300 needy seniors throughout the county.

Hazardous Products Don't Belong in the Trash

Some common consumer products contain toxic substances and may not be thrown in the trash and buried in landfills. These items include household batteries, e-waste, fluorescent lamps, mercury thermometers, and certain medical wastes. These all contain small but toxic amounts of heavy metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium or poisons. While safe during normal use, they must be handled carefully when disposed to avoid hazards to workers and contamination of the environment.



Batteries

Household batteries are conveniently accepted in curbside recycling in areas served by GreenWaste Recovery.

Residents with recycling collection service may put spent dry cell batteries in a clear plastic bag, seal it shut, and place the bagged batteries on top of their blue recycling cart or bin. Household batteries include AA, AAA, C, D, 9-Volt, watch and hearing aid button batteries, cell phone batteries, and battery packs from tools and computers.

Household batteries are also accepted at all disposal site recycling centers in the county. The County's Buena Vista Landfill and Ben Lomond Transfer Station are open daily from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The City of Santa Cruz Resource Recovery Facility on Dimeo Lane, serving Davenport and the north coast, is open the same hours but closed Sundays. These recycling centers also accept auto batteries.

E-Waste

Computers, TVs, VCRs, stereo equipment, telephones, and other electronic products containing circuit boards, collectively known as e-waste, are accepted at all disposal sites in the county at no charge. The picture tube in a TV or computer monitor contains as much as 10 pounds of lead.

This tube poses no hazard when intact, but if smashed in a landfill could leach lead into the groundwater. Other electronics require special handling because most circuit boards are fabricated with solder containing lead and other heavy metals.

Residents with newer working computers and other electronic products may prefer to donate their items for reuse. For a list of reuse options for household electronics, call County Public Works at (831) 454-2160.

Fluorescents

All fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent bulbs, even those rated "low mercury," contain enough mercury to be considered hazardous. When no longer functioning, these fragile lamps must be handled and transported carefully to avoid breakage. If broken, contain the pieces in a sturdy plastic bag. Fluorescent lamps are accepted for recycling at Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities. Call (831) 454-2606 for locations and scheduled days and hours of operation.

Thermometers

Other devices in the home containing mercury include older thermostats, "quiet" light switches, and bulb thermometers. Manufacturers have phased out these uses for mercury in new products. When older mercury-containing products are disposed, they must be taken to a HHW Facility.

Sharps

Hypodermic needles and syringes used for delivering medicines, once used, become bio-hazardous sharps waste. Sharps that end up in the recycling or trash pose a puncture wound risk to recycling and waste management workers. Proper disposal now requires the use of an approved red plastic sharps container. These red containers are accepted at no charge at HHW Facilities and at participating pharmacies. For a list of collection sites, call County Public Works at (831) 454-2160.

Old Drugs

Outdated pharmaceutical drugs and medicines can be potent contaminants to water resources if improperly disposed. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to neutralize medicines flushed down the drain. Like sharps, old drugs are accepted at HHW Facilities and participating pharmacies.

County of Santa Cruz Public Works

701 Ocean Street, Room 410

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 454-2160

Presort Standard
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Recycling Resources

Recycle Info Line

831-454-2333

- What and where to recycle (recorded message)

Curbside Refuse,

800-665-2209

Recycling and Yard Waste Collection

- Begin new service
- Report missed recycling or trash service
- Request delivery or removal of carts
- Obtain oil recycling jugs

County Public Works Dept. 831-454-2160

www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org

- Apartments or Business recycling inquiries
- Complaints, compliments or suggestions

Household

831-454-2606

Hazardous Waste (recorded message)

- Schedule for free disposal
- Non-hazardous alternatives
- Free surplus paint

Ecology Action

831-426-5925

www.ecoact.org

- "Where to Recycle" guide (recorded message)
- General recycling information

Home

831-423-HEAP (423-4327)

Composting Hotline

Buena Vista Landfill

831-454-2430

(recorded message)

- Recycling Center: 479-1055
(Operated by the California Grey Bears)

Ben Lomond

831-454-2430

Transfer Station (recorded message)

- Recycling Center: 338-1728
(Operated by the Valley Women's Club)

City of Santa Cruz

831-420-6270

Resource Recovery Facility (landfill)

- Open to Unincorporated County residents in Davenport and Bonny Doon only

Para información en español sobre el reciclaje en las áreas no incorporadas del condado de Santa Cruz, favor de llamar al (800) 665-2209.