

Living green

in the United City of Yorkville

Your community news source for recycling, reusing and reducing

Winter 2009

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DID YOU KNOW?

The YORKVILLE GREEN COMMITTEE—Is an advisory committee formed by Mayor Valerie Burd and the United City of Yorkville. The committee meets every fourth Monday evening, 7 p.m. in the Yorkville Public Library, 902 Game Farm Rd. For information contact 630.553.4350. To learn more about the Green Committee see page three of this publication.



City passes resolution to pave way for LEED design

The United City of Yorkville City Council moved one step further in making their 2008/2009 goal a reality. Last year during a January goal session meeting, the City Council committed to a Municipal Green Building Initiative.

At the Dec. 22 City Council meeting a resolution was adopted that mandates all future City-owned public buildings be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified at the silver level. This commits the City to energy efficiency, water conservation and to be conscious of building materials.

What is LEED Design?

LEED design was created by the U.S. Green Council (USGBC), a non-profit organization that is committed to expanding sustainable building practices,

by transforming the way buildings and communities are designed, and built and operated to ensure a prosperous environment that improves the quality of life. The LEED rating system addresses all building types and sustainable site development and has four levels—certified, silver, gold and platinum.

What does this mean?

The City will design, construct, and ensure the LEED certified rating is in place for all future City owned construction projects greater than or equal to 5,000 square feet. For City-owned renovation projects, the requirement is projects greater than or equal to 1,000 square feet. The City will encourage LEED certification for all projects that fall under the required square footage.

“GO GREEN” Environmental Fair

The United City of Yorkville’s **Green Committee** is sponsoring a **FREE ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR** from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 21 at the REC Center, 202 E. Countryside Parkway. Families are welcome. Presentations and informational tables on topics such as Green Home Design, greening your current home, recycling and ‘green’ landscaping. Call 630.553.4350 for information.

When disposing of CFLs use caution!

CFLs are small versions of standard fluorescent lamps that come in a variety of shapes and sizes. CFLs use less energy and save you money. The downside is that although CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, they are safe to use in your home. Mercury is not released when the CFLs are in use. Recycling is the best way to dispose of CFLs. You can safely recycle CFLs by following the guidelines listed below.

- Recycle locally. Retail giants **Home Depot** and **IKEA** have CFL recycling programs. IKEA stores also collect other toxic household items. You can find other local retailer recycling programs by entering your zip code on www.earth911.org.
- If you can't find a local retailer to accept your CFLs, double bag them and place the bulbs in a plastic bag and dispose of it in the regular trash, or other protected outside location.
- Return it to the retailer, many name brands have a warranty.
- Take them to a Hazardous Solid Waste Collection site. Continue to check local newspapers for collection events in Kendall County.

WHERE TO RECYCLE YOUR CFLS

(Taken from The Home Depot's Eco Options on Web site www.homedepot.com)

In June of 2008, Home Depot launched a national in-store consumer Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulb recycling program in all 1,696 Home Depot locations. As of October 1, 2008, all stores were equipped with orange CFL units to collect bulbs for free recycling!

At each Home Depot store, customers can bring in any expired, unbroken CFL bulbs, place them in a plastic bag, and deposit them into a collection unit. The bulbs are then managed by an environmental management company that coordinates the CFL packaging, transportation, and recycling to maximize safety and ensure environmental compliance. Customers can find CFL units in each

store near the front entrance, by the Returns desk, or near the exit doors.

The CFL recycling program is an extension of Home Depot's Eco Options program, which allows customers to easily identify products that have less of an impact on the environment.

In addition, Home Depot has also launched an in-store energy conservation program to switch Light Fixture Showrooms in the U.S. from incandescent bulbs to CFLs by the fall of 2008.

Don't forget to recycle your CFLs at the Home Depot location at 735 Edward Lane, Yorkville, located in the Kendall Marketplace Mall, Rt. 34 and Cannonball Trail. For more information call the Yorkville Home Depot at 630.882.8159.



Save energy and money with CFLs... FREE CFLs are available at City Hall, 800 Game Farm Road. You can pick them up from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To receive your CFLs call 630.553.4350.



DO IT YOURSELF... SWITCH TO CFLS

If every household in Illinois switched one incandescent bulb to an 18-watt CFL, it would be equivalent to: removing 294,000 tons of carbon emissions from the air, planting 39.4 million trees, removing 82 pounds of mercury, and removing over 74,000 vehicles from Illinois roads each year (from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity).

Listed below are a few CFL facts you can use if you make the switch.

- Incandescent bulbs waste 90% of their energy as heat, while CFLs use 75% less energy to produce the same amount of light!
- One CFL can last as long as 10-12 incandescent bulbs or for as long as 10 years!
- CFLs burn at a lower temperature than traditional bulbs and reduce pollution for a cleaner environment.
- CFLs come in standard incandescent sizes, so they won't stick too far out of lamps.
- You may need to buy a brighter bulb than the manufacturer suggests. CFL equivalences are based on overall light output, but because CFL light appears more diffuse, the same output isn't always enough. For instance, replacing a 100-watt incandescent with a 150-watt CFL is still only 42-watts in incandescent-speak, so it's safe to use in a fixture with a 60-watt maximum warning label. And it's still cheaper to use.
- Three-way and dimmable CFLs are available for about \$10-\$15 each. View some at Earthtronics, www.earthbulb.com.
- Outdoors is not the best place for CFLs. If the air is cold, the gas inside the bulb will take a few minutes to warm up. Plus, the frequent on-off switching of a motion sensor light, for instance, shortens the bulb's life.

To learn more... Go to www.thisoldhouse.com/shortcuts to find which CFLs work best with your fixtures or for additional CFL information go to www.illinoisrecycles.com and www.illinoisenergy.org.

Who We Are

The United City of Yorkville's Ad Hoc Green Committee was established by Mayor Valerie Burd in October of 2007 to research, advise and recommend solutions to the City Council on environmental issues facing our community. The Green Committee is instrumental in providing information and educating the Yorkville community about ecological and environmental topics such as water and energy conservation, LEED design and recycling.

Mission Statement

To advise the United City of Yorkville City Council on ways to enhance the community environment and ways to equip and encourage citizens and businesses to participate in sustainable ecological practices.

Making a Difference

Though the Green Committee has been in existence for just a short time, they have already made great strides both in the Yorkville community and the region by studying several environmental issues, making recommendations for changes to City ordinances, conducting informational events, and making presentations.



Yorkville's GREEN COMMITTEE



City Hall, 800 Game Farm Road, is sporting a new Rain Garden courtesy of the Green Committee and United City of Yorkville staff members.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS...

Yorkville's New Rain Garden

Planted on May 19, the Rain Garden is located on the south side of City Hall, and was planted to capture 900 square feet of roof runoff. The function of a rain garden is to collect the runoff at the end of the downspout acting as a storage area where native plants absorb the water and allow for infiltration. Stop by City Hall and see the fruits of our efforts! Learn how you can plant your very own rain garden by visiting www.yorkville.il.us/raingardens.cfm.

Every Drop Counts

The Green Committee held its first Water Conservation forum in March 2008. Over 150 Yorkville and

county residents joined Mayor Valerie Burd, the Green Committee and representatives from the Environmental Law and Policy Center, the Kendall County Soil and Water Conservation District and Engineering Enterprises for a frank discussion on water conservation practices for the future of Kendall County.

Share and Care Recycling Day

The United City of Yorkville's Green Committee conducted the City's first Share and Care Recycling event on Saturday, Nov. 1. Over 30 volunteers were on hand during the free five-hour event held at the Kendall County Fairgrounds. The event was attended by over 300 Yorkville residents who recycled items to make a difference!

We're Expanding

The Yorkville Green Committee is looking for individuals with a special interest or talent to aid them in their quest to reduce, reuse, recycle and conserve precious natural resources for future generations. Do you have an interest in a special area of conservation? If you answered yes, then bring your ideas, input and creativity to the next Green Committee meeting.

Meetings

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday evening of each month, 7 p.m. in the Yorkville Public Library meeting room, 902 Game Farm Road. All are welcome to attend. The meeting schedule is subject to change.

How You Can Participate

Experience is not a requirement to become a member of the Green Committee. The group is looking for dedicated people who want to make an environmental impact in Yorkville. Anyone interested in joining the Committee can get an application form at the front desk in City Hall or from the chairman of the Green Committee at any regular meeting. If you are interested in any special area, such as water conservation, research, trees etc., please note that on your form. You can also get a form online at www.yorkville.il.us.

WE'RE MAKING CONNECTIONS

A FUTURE INITIATIVE— YORKVILLE'S INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The United City of Yorkville is environmentally conscious and is always looking for ways to conserve, reuse and recycle. Alternative transportation has become increasingly important to the Yorkville community. In a 2007 survey by the Parks and Recreation Department, 83% of Yorkville residents felt that bike trails are an important offering by the United City of Yorkville. A trail network as planned in Yorkville's **Integrated Transportation Plan (ITP)**, the first step in the development of an alternative transportation network, is under way. It will provide Yorkville residents with the ability to walk or cycle to destinations such as school, work, shopping centers, or parks in

addition to providing recreational cycling throughout Yorkville and Kendall County.

At a December 4 meeting, Yorkville's Integrated Transportation Plan highlighted its two-fold focus – the production of a Shared-Use Trail Plan and a Downtown Streetscape Plan.

The purpose of the Shared-Use Trail Plan is to establish Yorkville as a great place to ride your bike, jog, or walk by planning an extensive trail network throughout the Yorkville region. The Integrated Transportation Plan is also important to the revitalization of Yorkville's downtown area. A pedestrian friendly environment will not only rejuvenate the downtown area, but will create Yorkville



On your mark, get set go! Cyclists get ready to try the new bike trail linking the communities of Oswego and the United City of Yorkville.

as a destination for residents, visitors and recreational enthusiasts as a great place to live, work and play. The plan will provide guidelines for a successful pedestrian environment through the creation of a Pedestrian System Analysis and Design Standards for Streetscape Elements in Yorkville's downtown.

Track the progress of Yorkville's ITP at www.yorkville.il.us



BE A PEDAL PUSHER—HERE'S HOW

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY – once you learn how to ride a bike, you never forget. Bicycles take up less road space, give much needed exercise, create virtually no pollution, and are easy to use on many forms of public transportation. Maybe it's been a while since you last took a spin around the block on two wheels, but with Yorkville's new **Integrated Transportation Plan** hoping to connect the entire city within itself and already connecting to Oswego and beyond, now is the perfect time to get back in the saddle! But before peddling off, here are a few reminders.

1 Not every bike is for every person – so do some research beforehand. First, determine how often you are going to use your bike. If you have an older bike stored away, make sure it's in good condition before hitting the pavement. Brakes, tires, reflectors for nighttime riding, etc. should all be in working order.

2 Also, make sure the bike is sized right and you fit comfortably in the seat. If you plan on renting or buying a new bike, be sure to take a test ride. Bike shops will always have someone there to lend some advice on the best bike for you! For some more tips on beginners'

cycling, safety, and more, check out the following Web site at www.commuterbybike.com/cats/commuting-101/.

3 According to state law, cyclists must follow the same rules of the road as drivers – so be aware and plan your route ahead of time. For some tips, visit www.biketraffic.org/knowyourrights or www.bikelib.org. Once you're ready to ride, don't forget a helmet, and a working lock if you're planning on biking and parking for the afternoon. For more rules of the road, visit www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/drivers/traffic_safety/bike-pedestrian_safety/home.html.

4 Want to log your miles once you start going? Get the New Year off to a good start by keeping track of how much you've cycled with other Illinois cyclists in 2009 at www.leepirtle.com/lib/milelog/.

5 Join the **Yorkville Cycling Club!** This new bike club formed by resident Ben Niles is just getting started. All levels are welcome. More information on the structure of the club and the next meeting date is available by e-mailing Ben at bniles_308@yahoo.com.

before you recycle **PRECYCLE!**

If you put becoming more environmentally conscious on your list of New Year's resolutions, then the new buzz word in the recycling arena is **PRECYCLING**. There are things you can do to reduce and conserve before you even get to the recycling bin.

1. Bring your own shopping bag to the grocery store. You can make your own or purchase them from many retail outlets such as **Target, Walgreens and Wal-Mart**. The bags are inexpensive, and in many cases cost less than \$2 per bag and are made of products that can be reused over and over again. Develop a habit of keeping the bags in your car or by your front door, for easy access!
2. Remove your name from mail order companies that send you catalogs especially if you have never purchased an item. Or, you could request to have a catalog sent to you via e-mail.
3. Same tip as above but this time count the number of magazine subscriptions you get. If you can get the same subscription online do it!
4. If you use paper napkins or towels it may be time to switch to cloth. Plain or natural white cloths are sold in bulk at many retail outlets and are inexpensive to purchase. You can also save money in the long run!



Recycle Your X-mas

Tree... Veolia Environmental Services collects and recycles Christmas trees free of charge the first two weeks in January. Trees will be picked up on residents' regular pick up day only. Any trees left on the curb after the two-week time period expires will require a garbage sticker. Garbage stickers can be purchased at City Hall from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday for \$1. Call Veolia at 630.587.8282.

Facts about Veolia Environmental Recycling Services

The United City of Yorkville contracts refuse and recycling collection with **Veolia Environmental Services**. Every Yorkville residence is provided with one navy blue, 65-gallon recycling cart. Additional recycling is free, but must be placed next to the cart in standard 18-gallon recycling bins. Please do not bag recyclables. Below is an updated list of recyclable items accepted by Veolia:



CONTAINERS—including aluminum cans, trays and foil (trays and foil must be cleaned).

STEEL CANS AND TINS

- Aseptic packaging & table top containers (milk and juice cartons)
- Glass bottles and jars (clear, brown, green), no window glass, auto glass, dinnerware or ceramics
- PET soda, water and flavored beverage bottles (#1 clear and green plastic resin)
- HDPE milk, water and juice jugs (#2 clear plastic resin)
- HDPE detergent and fabric softener containers (#2 colored plastic resin)
- PVC narrow neck containers only (#3 plastic resin; such as health & beauty aid products, household cleaners)
- LDPE grocery containers (#4 plastic resin); such as margarine tubs, frozen desert cups, six-pack rings, etc.
- PP grocery containers (#5 plastic resin); such as yogurt cups, and narrow neck syrup and ketchup bottles
- #7 plastic resin narrow neck containers only
- Plastic buckets such as kitty litter containers (5-gallon size max.)

The following paper items are accepted by Veolia. Please use the guidelines below when recycling paper products.

- Newspaper including inserts (remove plastic sleeves)
- Cardboard (no waxed cardboard)
- Kraft (brown paper) bags
- Magazines, catalogs, telephone books
- Office, computer, notebook and gift wrapping paper
- Carrier stock (soda and beer can carrying cases)
- Junk mail and envelopes (no plastic cards, unused stamps)
- Paperback books (no hard cover books)

For more information call Veolia Environmental Services at 630.587.8282 or online at www.OnyxWasteServices.com.



One step further... **Catalog Choice** is a free service that allows you to decline paper catalogs you no longer wish to receive. Reduce the amount of unsolicited mail in your mailbox, while helping the environment! So far, the Catalog Choice community has opted out of 6,121,168 catalogs and counting. Get started at www.catalogchoice.org.

Dispose and reduce the safe way with these collection locations

The United City of Yorkville, Kendall County and retail chains now provide many opportunities to dispose of hazardous waste materials, batteries, medications and computers conveniently and safely. Below is a list of locations that provide services to help you reduce, reuse and recycle!

Medication Disposal

Dispose of unwanted or unused medication at the United City of Yorkville Police Dept., 800 Game Farm Road, Yorkville. The Police Department accepts unwanted medications between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information and a list of required guidelines call the Yorkville Police Department at 630.553.4340.

Computers

•**Yorkville's Good Will Store**, 481 Countryside Parkway, Yorkville, also accepts computer and computer-related accessories such as: hard drives/towers, monitors, mice, keyboards and printers. Donors are responsible for removing all data before donating their computers. The computer CPU/hard drives are not sold, but are salvaged, greatly reducing what goes into landfills.

For donation guidelines go to the Good Will Web site at www.amazinggoodwill.com. Drop off your donations at the Yorkville store Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m.-8 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

•**Office Max**, 376 E. Veterans Parkway in Yorkville will accept your old electronics for a fee of \$5 to \$20 depending on the type of equipment to be recycled.

Replace obsolete equipment with your instant-off manufacturer's coupon when you bring in your old equipment!

- Best Buy**, 2600 U.S. Rt. 34 Oswego, 630.551.3233
- Tweeter Retail Store** 4411 Fox Valley Ctr. Dr. Aurora, 630.820.2299
- Staples**, 133054 S. Rt. 59 Plainfield, 815.577.2964

Lead Acid Battery (LAB)

Recycling

You can recycle large lead-acid batteries from autos, boats and sump pumps to any store that sells these batteries for free or a small charge. All of these batteries are completely recycled.

- Goodyear Tire & Service** 1490 Douglas Rd., Montgomery, 630.892.8473
- Interstate Battery** 23481 Aero Court, Plainfield, 815.436.4787
- Stob Battery Manuf. Co.** 1102 Bridgeway, Aurora, 630.897.1226 (LAB)

Nickel Cadmium

Batteries

These types of batteries are commonly found in phone batteries and other rechargeable types of equipment. Most Radio Shack retail stores accept Nickel Cadmium batteries. To recycle your batteries close to home visit the Radio Shack

location in Yorkville listed below:

- Radio Shack**, 9620 Rt. 34, Yorkville, 630.553.7466
- Kendall County Health Department**, 811 W. John Street, Yorkville. Drop-off nickel cadmium batteries between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. For information call 630.553.9100, ext. 8026.

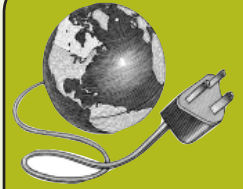
Alkaline Batteries

The Kendall County Health Department, 811 W. John Street no longer accepts household batteries. Veolia Environmental Services will recycle small household batteries (A, AA, AAA, C, D, and 9-volt) if you place them in a resealable plastic bag and put them out on your curb during your regular pick up day.

Motor Oil, Tires

(Call the locations below for specific recycling items accepted)

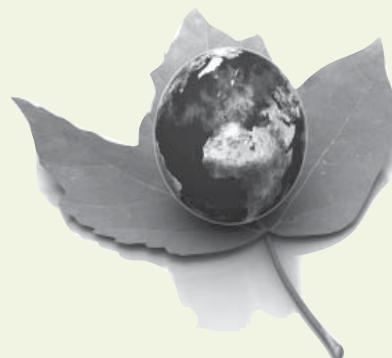
- FS Grainco**, 8511 Rt. 47 Yorkville, 630.553.6520
- Tuffy Auto Service Centers**, 456 Veterans Parkway (Rt. 34), 630.553.9311
- Tire Tracks**, 118 E. South St., Plano, 630.552.4776
- Goodyear Tire & Auto**, 1490 Douglas Rd., Montgomery, 630.892.8473



GET UNPLUGGED!

In today's consumer oriented society, the average home has tons of products that need power. Computer equipment is the fastest-growing electric load in the world. Unfortunately, much of that energy is wasted when the equipment is not in use. Idle appliances including, microwaves, TVs, VCRs, DVD players and cordless phones, all continue to use energy while they are switched off – Idle TVs and VCRs alone cost U.S. consumers over \$1 billion a year, or about \$30 per household!

Turning off your computer during long periods of non-use cuts costs and improves longevity. Plus, activating the 'sleep' feature on your PC, fax machine, and printer so that it automatically powers down when not in use, can save you even more in energy bills.



DO IT YOURSELF: Weatherproofing Your Home

Locate and Block Air Leaks (From www.homedepot.com)

Air leaks can not only make your house drafty, but also increase your heating bill. Attics act like a chimney, pulling warm air upwards, and sucking cold air in through windows, doors, and leaks. To stop leaks and save some cash this winter, try these tips:

- **Check interior spots** in your home that are most likely to have leaks: behind knee walls, attic hatch, wiring holes, plumbing vents, recessed can lights, furnace flue and chimneys, etc.
- **Check exterior spots** in your home most likely to have leaks: bath, kitchen and dryer vents, outdoor electrical wires, pipes and spigots, utility openings including TV cables, window and door frames, and foundation sill plates.
- **You can usually feel drafts** or temperature differences with your hands, or by watching the smoke from a candle or incense stick can also help. If the smoke swirls, you have an air leak.
- **Check for insulation** that is dirty around the edges, where air has been passing through.
- **Caulk window air leaks.** Use clear caulk around the outer edges if you don't want to worry about matching paint colors. Replace broken or cracked panes.

- **Use interior plastic window sheeting** to further weatherize your windows. Simply tape a sheet of plastic to the inside edges of the window with double-sided tape, and blow dry to tighten.
- **Install a door sweep** to prevent warm air from escaping from a shut door.

INSULATION

According to the Department of Energy, up to 45% of a home's energy loss is through the attic. When adding insulation, first evaluate how much and what type of insulation you currently have. Then, follow these tips for insulation:

- Start at the outer edges and work toward the center.
- When adding a second layer of insulation, always use unfaced insulation, even if the present layer doesn't have a vapor barrier. Adding a second vapor barrier will create moisture problems.
- Keep insulation in the packaging until you're ready to use it. Packaged insulation is compressed and will expand when opened.
- Cut insulation in a well-ventilated area, and always follow the manufacturer's recommendations and use protective gear.

IS YOUR HOME LEAKING ENERGY DOLLARS?

Did you know that energy in your home might literally be going out the window? Get the maximum savings from your heating and cooling systems with some tips from the Illinois Alliance to Save Energy:

- Appropriate insulation for your climate (Based on R-values) can increase your comfort and reduce your heating and cooling costs up to 30%. Start with attic insulation, followed by exterior and basement walls, floors, and crawl spaces.
- When shopping for new windows, glass doors, or skylights, look for Energy Star labeled ones. They're 40% more efficient than the standard and can save you 15% on heating and cooling costs. Check out more at www.efficientwindows.org.
- Install storm windows or double-paned windows. Or, for older windows you can't replace, consider a plastic film kit or low-e retrofit film.
- Remember that when adjusting your thermostat, the house will not warm up or cool down any faster if you crank the thermostat past the desired temperature. Plus, it's easy to forget to turn it back down, wasting more energy dollars.
- Clean or replace furnace and air conditioner filters once a month during heating/cooling seasons.

Help is available... The United City of Yorkville's Department of Building and Zoning is available to answer your questions, give you tips and guidelines, and provide you with assistance during your home weatherization projects. To ask a question or receive assistance call 630.553.8545.



Our Green Calendar

Keep connected with these Green Events all year long!

GREEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Yorkville Green Committee meets on the fourth Monday evening of each month, 7 p.m. at the Yorkville Public Library, 902 Game Farm Road. Join them on

the following dates: Jan. 26, Feb. 23, Mar. 23, Apr. 27, May 25, June 22, July 27, Aug. 24, Sept. 28, Oct. 26 and Nov. 23.

GO GREEN ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR

Learn how to incorporate Green living into your home and much more on Saturday, March 21 from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the REC Center, 202 E. Countryside Parkway. Free. Activities for kids, presentations and more!

USED MOTOR OIL COLLECTION

Used motor oil will be collected by the Kendall County Soil and Water Conservation District on Saturday, June 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at FS Grainco, 8115 Rt. 47, Yorkville. Information is available by calling 630.553.5821, Ext. 3.

SHARE AND CARE RECYCLING DAY

Check the City Web site at www.yorkville.il.us for a future date.

Choose Larger Trees for Your Yard

While small trees certainly have their place, think about planting species that are large when they mature.

- Trees that grow larger also tend to live longer. This means more years of service for the same amount of time, energy, and often expense of planting - a great investment!
- Larger trees provide shade and cooling, block wind, retain storm water, provide wildlife habitat, and clean the air! They use more carbon and remove many more pollutants than smaller trees.
- In terms of value, large, healthy trees generally add more resale value to your property than smaller trees.

For a complete guide to recycling in Kendall County call the **Office of Solid Waste Management** at 630.553.8026 to request a copy of the county's "Green Pages". The guide is also available online at www.kendallhealth.org. This newsletter has reproduced portions of the Kendall County Green Pages for resource purposes.



DO IT YOURSELF: Composting 101

Fall is the perfect time to start composting. Just pile up your raked leaves with yard waste and select food waste, and microbes will naturally break down the organic matter to create a nutrient-rich soil additive. Decomposition takes a few months, so come Spring, you'll have heaps of rich soil for your plants. For free! Go to www.safelawns.org for additional information.

Get started...

1. Pick a spot about 5 feet square, out of direct sunlight. Clear the ground of grass, then pile the material on the spot.
2. Roughly layer equal amounts of both "browns"

(carbon-based) and "greens" (nitrogen-based) plant materials. Browns include leaves, twigs, wood chips, shredded newspaper or cardboard. Greens include fruit and vegetable scraps, grass clippings, coffee grounds, and eggshells. Visit www.epa.gov/epaoswer to learn more.

3. Don't add animal products! Microbes have a hard time breaking down items like cheese, butter, milk, cooking oil, or scraps of meat.
4. Aerate with a pitchfork or shovel (or by turning a compost tumbler) about once a week to distribute air and moisture.
5. Proper water content is key. The pile should be as damp as a wrung out

sponge - not too much water. As you add each layer of browns and greens, lightly mist the pile with a hose sprayer or watering can.

6. Even in chilly weather, the pile will heat up. Ideally, it should range between 105 to 145 degrees F. You can use an elongated soil thermometer to test the temperature.
7. Finished compost soil looks dark and crumbly in texture, with no chunks of material. To check if yours is ready, grab a handful, put it in a pot, and place a few grass seeds in it. If they sprout within a week, your compost is "cooked" and ready to go!



A guide to Native Plants

Are you thinking of adding Native Plants to your landscape? The United City of Yorkville is currently publishing a guide to Native Plants for homeowners and an additional guide for Homeowner Associations (HOAs). Don't forget to pick up your copy at the Go Green Environmental Fair on Saturday, Mar. 21 from 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m. at the REC Center, 202 E. Countryside Pkwy.

Rain Gardens-The natural way to landscape

Rain gardens are a simple solution to beautifying your landscape and providing additional benefits as well. A rain garden is an attractive landscaping feature that is planted with perennial native plants. The shallow depression made into the ground when creating a rain garden absorbs rain water (runoff) from impervious surfaces, primarily from the roof of a home.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) approximately 70% of water pollution is carried to our water bodies by stormwater. As the rain runs off a roof, it travels to a storm sewer picking up pollutants such as oil, chemicals, bacteria, fertilizers, pesticide and more. One of the primary functions of

a rain garden is to decrease the pollutants going into water bodies by keeping rain where it falls.

By installing a rain garden into your landscape, you are helping the environment by improving water quality, reducing flooding, and creating a habitat.

With research and a little help, rain gardens can be easy to plan and install. But when you begin don't forget a few key considerations: location, the size and shape of your design, soils and drainage, and vegetations.

A complete guide on rain gardens is available through the **Kendall County Soil and Water Conservation District**. "Natural Solutions: Rain Gardens," is available on their Web site. (text courtesy of *Natural Solutions: Rain Gardens*)

www.kendallswcd.org