

# THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Spring 2015

## Learn about Recycling Organic Waste by Composting

### Next Meeting:

**Monday, April 27, 2015, 7 p m.  
Room 205, Second Floor  
Rutherford County Courthouse**

Composting can be a small operation such as putting grass clippings and leaves from your yard in a pile and waiting for the combination to decompose and form a soil-like material you can use in your garden. Or it can be a large commercial operation that diverts tons of organic waste from the landfill and turns it into mulch or soil. Either way, composting is nature's way of returning valuable nutrients to the earth.

Recycle Rutherford's speaker later this month will talk about the large commercial version. "Composting in Tennessee" is the topic that Ed Wansing, chief executive officer of The Compost Company, will present. His company, located in Ashland City, is described on its Website as "Middle Tennessee's source for organic waste recycling and humus compost."

Come to Recycle Rutherford's annual meeting on Monday, April 27, to learn more about all aspects of composting. Individuals can greatly reduce the volume of materials going into the landfill by composting raw vegetable and fruit wastes.

---

**Note the change in meeting location: Room 205 rather than the Courtroom.**

---

Wansing is a LEED accredited professional. (LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is widely used as a rating system for environmentally sound building.) He has been involved with the U.S. Green Building Council for more than eight years. Included in his professional activities are chairing the Middle Tennessee Chapter of Emerging Professionals and the Emerging Professionals National Committee and serving as an advocate for the Middle Tennessee Chapter of Green Schools.

He and his wife, Carly, have been recognized for their work in the green building industry, for their contributions to the community, and for the energy efficiency achievements at their home. He is a member of the Cheatham County Habitat for Humanity board of directors and volunteers on the Friends of the Cheatham County Bicentennial Trail board of directors.

Wansing holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Kansas State University and a Master of Science in Sustainability from Lipscomb University. He is a licensed architect in Tennessee.

### **Celebrate Earth Day 2015: Do Your Part; Be Water Smart!**

Murfreesboro and Rutherford County will celebrate the fourteenth annual Earth Day on **Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** on the historic Public Square. The theme is "Do Your Part; Be Water Smart!"

New to this year's event will be 'Green Market' vendors, such as Grump Goat Farms and Pies Divine, selling locally-grown and harvested agricultural products. Without clean water, none of these naturally grown products is sustainable.

"We are excited to welcome even more vendors and participants to this year's celebration," said Earth Day Committee Chair Amy Byers. "Everyone understands how vital and precious clean water is, not only for good health but for agriculture and economic sustainability. We look forward to celebrating the benefits of water quality and urging citizens to 'Do Your Part' by being 'Water Smart.'"

#### **Examples of ways to be "Water Smart" include:**

- Do not flush oils down the drain. Dispose of cooking oils on kitty litter and place it in the trash.
- Repair leaks to conserve water by checking toilets annually to inspect for malfunctions.
- Drink water locally. Plastic water bottles are bad for the environment.
- Deliver unused medicines to the Rutherford County Sheriff's Department. Do not flush medicines down the toilet.
- Consider using rain barrels to capture rainwater for watering plants. There is no new water, and every drop counts.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Avoid Polluting Your Home As You Try to Clean It

Conventional household cleaners that are sold to help us improve our homes can, in reality, undermine our health. According to *The Herb Companion*, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency “warns that cleaners, disinfectants, and air fresheners, among other products, can contribute to indoor air pollution. They list negative health effects that range from eye and respiratory tract irritation to headaches, dizziness and even cancer.”

So what are we to do? First of all, we can be informed and avoid buying products that contain such chemicals. *The Herb Companion* goes on to explain that “most commercial chemicals are irritants, are derived from petroleum, or are hormone disruptors.”

Examples of **petroleum-based chemicals** that irritate the respiratory tract are ammonia and monoethanolamine (a substance that helps cut through grime).

**Phthalates**, chemicals used to make plastics more flexible or durable and also found in synthetic fragrances in cleaning and personal care products, are hormone disruptors. Phthalates have been linked to possible birth effects and weight gain in children.

**Formaldehyde**, often found in furniture polishes, aerosols, and cosmetics, is a carcinogen, neurotoxin, and central nervous system depressant.

There are ways to avoid the ill effects from harsh chemicals like these, but it requires reading labels and thinking beyond persuasive commercials and ads that imply you have to use certain products to be successful, sexy, or a good mom. There are plenty of nontoxic products on the market; at traditional grocery chains, safer products may be located in a section featuring “green” items or they may be in the regular sections.

You can also make your own natural cleaners from simple ingredients, such as those described below. Not only will you avoid the chemical hazards but you will save money.

### Non-toxic Cleaning Ingredients

**Washing soda**, or sodium carbonate, is traditionally used to boost the effectiveness of laundry detergent. It is a strong base, which makes it powerful as a cleaner, but it also means that you should wear gloves to handle it. Washing soda is similar to baking soda, which is also a good cleaner, but it is more alkaline and caustic. It can neutralize stubborn stains, but it doesn’t give off harmful fumes.

**Vinegar** is a wonderful all-natural grease cutter. There are many varieties of vinegar, but what you want for cleaning is distilled white vinegar. The acidity in this food-grade cleaning staple makes it effective for

banishing mold, bacteria, and viruses. Suggestions for cleaning with a cloth dampened with equal parts water and vinegar range from computer keys to floors.

**Essential oils** are the distilled essences of plants. The concentrated oils, often collected laboriously from steam-distillation, retain active compounds of the plants from which they came. In the recipe included below for an all-purpose cleaner, lavender and tea tree essential oils are used. Lavender essential oil is used in aromatherapy as a calming agent and to relieve headaches brought on by stress. It is also antiseptic and can be used to disinfect counter tops. Tea tree essential oil contains compounds that are naturally antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral. It has a pleasant, distinctive odor.

While washing soda and white vinegar are widely available, you may have to search a bit for essential oils. *The Herb Companion* cautions that “fragrance oil,” “nature-identical oil,” or “perfume oil” are not the same as 100 percent pure essential oil. They may be combinations of essential oils and chemicals or just plain chemicals. Avoid oils in plastic bottles or with rubber eye-dropper bulbs in the top. These can degrade and contaminate the oil. Look for small (4-ounce or less) dark or opaque glass bottles.

### All-Purpose Cleaner and Disinfectant

2 cups hot water  
¼ cup white vinegar  
½ teaspoon washing soda  
15 drops tea tree essential oil  
15 drops lavender essential oil

1. Combine all ingredients in a reusable spray bottle and shake well.
2. To use, spray on kitchen and bathroom surfaces, such as cutting boards, counter-tops, and toilets. Wipe with a dry cloth.

### Tub Scrub

If you enjoy soaking in the tub with oils and herbs, you know that cleaning the tub can be a task. This fragrant, easy-to-made recipe makes the job less daunting—and the bathroom smells wonderful when you finish.

1 cup baking soda (not washing soda)  
¼ cup salt  
10 drops tangerine essential oil  
5 drops lavender essential oil.

1. Combine ingredients and mix well. You can double or even triple this recipe and store it in an airtight container. It keeps well, and you will enjoy the convenience.
2. To use: Sprinkle a small handful into the tub. Use a wet scrubber or sponge and scrub thoroughly. Rinse well—tub can be slippery if you don’t.

## Celebrate Earth Day 2015:

(continued from page 1)

On display at this year's Celebration will be the winning Poster-Essays from the Murfreesboro and Rutherford County Schools 5th grade competition. More than 200 5th graders participated in the contest to demonstrate how being "smart" about water is part of responsible earth-friendly citizenship.

Activities for young and old alike will be available on the downtown square. Children can enjoy temporary tattooing; MED's mascot, Louie the Lightning Bug; and General Mills local sustainable mascot, Mr. Megs. Musical entertainment will be provided by Creative Rhythm as well as various bands from MTSU.

The Murfreesboro Water and Sewer Department, [www.murfreesboro.gov/mwsd](http://www.murfreesboro.gov/mwsd), is among dozens of vendors participating in the Celebration by engaging attendees with fun facts and other valuable information about water and water quality as well as smart water usage and re-usage.

Other participants setting up informational booths on earth-friendly topics and services will include Friends of the Greenway, the MTSU Stormwater Program at [www.mtsu.edu/stormwater](http://www.mtsu.edu/stormwater), Rutherford County Stormwater, MTSU alternative fuels researcher Dr. Cliff Ricketts, the Stones River Watershed Association, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Smyrna High School FFA, Earth Experience (Middle Tennessee Natural History Museum), Murfreesboro Park and Recreation Department, Linebaugh Public Library, and Recycle Rutherford.

The Murfreesboro Electric Department, a major sponsor of the annual Celebration, will distribute information on the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Green Power Switch program. For more information, visit [www.greenpowerswitch.com](http://www.greenpowerswitch.com) or contact Murfreesboro Electric (MED). In addition, MED will give-away 500 Pecan Native Sweet saplings. Other major sponsors include General Mills, the City of

Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, TVA, All in One Recycling, Murfreesboro City Schools, Rutherford County Schools, Kroger, and Lewis Bakery. Sponsor MaxShred will offer free shredding of two bank-sized boxes per person.

## It's Gardening Time!

After the bitter cold of this past winter, it's a special treat to dig in the dirt and plant seeds and set out plants. Before you start planting, you may need to enrich your soil by adding compost or organic fertilizer. Opinions about tilling vary among gardeners. If you garden in raised beds, probably very little tilling is needed. If you do till your garden, be sure to wait until the soil is dry enough and warm enough.

To check the dryness, pick up a handful of dirt and squeeze it. If the ball falls apart when poked, the soil is dry enough; if it stays together in a ball, the soil is too wet. To check the warmth, stick your finger a few inches into the ground. If you are unable to keep your finger there for a full minute, the soil is still too cold.

Remember that it's good to rotate your crops—meaning don't plant the same things in the same places each year. I keep a simple diagram to help me remember from one year to the next because I grow second plantings in some beds.

There's a good suggestion in the inaugural issue of *Organic Living* (that's what *Organic Gardening* has become.) that I'm trying this year: "**Plant what grows fast with what grows slowly**"; for example, plant radishes, which grow to full size in three or four weeks, and beets together. As radishes are harvested, there's room for the beets to grow.

Gardener Mark Smallwood went on to suggest "**plant what grows high with what grows low**," giving an example of planting impatiens with tomatoes, pointing out that the impatiens like the shade and they help smother weeds. I usually plant basil with my tomatoes, but I think I will try impatiens this year.

--Suma Clark

## Recycle Rutherford Membership Form

I enclose my annual dues to support Recycle Rutherford and receive the newsletter.

\$25.00 supporter                       \$15.00 student                       \$100.00 patron

I am contributing \$\_\_\_\_\_ in addition to my dues.

**PLEASE PRINT:**

name \_\_\_\_\_ amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

telephone: day \_\_\_\_\_; evening \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_; volunteer interest \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable and mail to Recycle Rutherford, P.O. Box 1804, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804**

## 4 The Recycler, Spring 2015

### Kudos and thanks go to

- **All in One Recycling** for presenting the first Rally for Green Fun Run at 8:00 a.m. on April 25, 2015. All proceeds will benefit Homer Pittard Campus School and Waste to Wise, promoting and teaching sustainability. The family-friendly, non-timed run will be about a mile long and will include inflatables and obstacles. Visit [www.RallyforGreen.com](http://www.RallyforGreen.com) to register and get more details.
- **Friends of the Earth** for launching and continuing a vigorous campaign to get Bayer to stop manufacturing and selling neonicotinoid **pesticides that are deadly to bees**. It is especially disturbing that Bayer has gone to extreme lengths to protect its bee-killing products, using “industry spin” to ensure that the EPA doesn’t restrict its toxic products and filing a lawsuit against Friends of the Earth Germany to try and shut down their campaign to save the bees. Go to the Friends of the Earth Website at <http://www.foe.org/> for more information.
- **CREDO Action** for taking on Monsanto and its allies in Congress, who have successfully fought off attempts to pass any legislation to label GMOs. Tell Congress that we, the citizens, have the right to know what’s in our food. For more information and to sign a petition, go to [http://act.credoaction.com/sign/congress\\_gmo\\_labeling](http://act.credoaction.com/sign/congress_gmo_labeling). GMO stands for genetically modified organism, plants or animals that have had their DNA artificially altered.

**Reminder: To renew your membership, please see the form on page 3.**

**Dues are only \$25 per year.**

**We don’t want to lose you!**

*This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.*

### 2014-16 Officers and Board

*Recycle Rutherford holds elections each April at the annual meeting; in general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms.*

*The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the term of each ends. The board meets monthly on first Mondays at 6:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. Spring Street.*

Glenn Himebaugh, president  
Linda Hardymon, vice president  
Rachel Cornett, secretary  
Rick Racker, treasurer

#### Board Members:

Gib Backlund, 2016    Suma Clark, 2016  
Bonnie Black, 2016    Crystal Mallery, 2016

### Dates to Remember

#### Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 25, 2015, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Murfreesboro Public Square  
Theme: “Do Your Part! Be Water Smart!”  
To volunteer to help, call 615-542-3407.

#### Annual Meeting—Recycle Rutherford:

Monday, April 27, 2015, 7:00 p.m.  
Rutherford County Courthouse, Room 205  
Speaker: Ed Wansing, The Compost Company

**For more information, go to  
[www.recyclerutherford.org](http://www.recyclerutherford.org)  
Like us on Facebook!**