

January/February 2015



Environmental Update



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Welcome to 2015!

Did you make any resolutions for 2015? Did any of them involve trying to save money? You can reduce your costs and help the environment. It's hard to beat being thrifty and "green" at the same time! Here are five ideas:

1. Use a bottled water alternative

By using an at-home filtering pitcher, you can help cut back on the 1.5 million barrels of oil used to make plastic water bottles each year; add in a reusable drinking bottle for even more household and environmental savings. If you just don't like the chlorine content, fill a 2-liter container with tap water and place it in the refrigerator. In a day or two, the chlorine dissipates. How much do you spend on bottled water each year? The NC Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources-Division of Environmental Assistance & Customer Service (NCDENR-EACS) website has some interesting plastic bottle recycling statistics. Here are two:

- Every week, North Carolinians throw away enough plastic bottles to line the Outer Banks 28 times.
- North Carolinians throw away more than \$41 million in plastic each year. (We throw away more than \$72 million in aluminum cans!)

2. Brew your own coffee & use a travel mug

Carrying your own coffee in an insulated travel mug helps you reduce waste from cardboard cups and thermal sleeves – of which 58 billion are thrown away each year. That's a lot of coffee and a lot of trash! If you do stop to pick up coffee on-the-go, several establishments offer a discount if you have your own refillable mug.

3. Remember your reusable bags

Plastic grocery bags are recyclable; however, the vast majority end up in the trash or as litter. Start taking a reusable bag to the store. People have commented that the hardest part about using the bags is remembering to take them when going shopping. If you do use the plastic store bags, try to give them a second - or even third - use in their life. The following are examples of how plastic bags are reused:

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- Packing shoes in suitcases
- Store dirty laundry on trips
- Line small trash cans
- Pick up dog waste
- Cleaning litter box
- Store craft/knitting projects
- Wrap items for storage or shipping
- Package padding
- Car trash bag
- Donate them to food or clothing charities

Do you have other uses for these bags? When done with them, take them back to a store for recycling.

4. Use fewer paper towels

People in the US use roughly 3,000 tons of paper towels each day. That equals a lot of paper towels, trees, process water, energy, and landfill space. Try reducing the use of paper towels - even if only by a few rolls per year - by using washable cleaning cloths and cloth napkins.

5. Check for leaks and drips

Small leaks and drips can really add up. For example, a recent commode flapper leak caused someone's water usage to increase by 1,500 gallons for a 33-day billing period. The effect on the water bill was roughly \$8 for that one month. The repair cost \$10 (replaced flapper and refill valve). The leak was small enough that there were no "phantom flushes", just a steady small flow of water. How small? Well, 1,500 gallons in 33 days equates to 4 ounces per minute. It was hard to hear or see, so check carefully.

Rain Barrels ...

Due to popular demand, rain barrels will be available beginning February 21. An order form is included with this newsletter. If you have any questions, contact us at (910) 455-5873.

Rain Barrel information handout:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Rainbarrels2.pdf>

Order form:

<http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Rainbarrels2015-flyer-LH.pdf>



Camellia Festival & Sale

The 2015 Camellia Festival and Sale, sponsored by the Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteers, will be held Saturday, February 21, 2015, at the Onslow County Multi-Purpose Building. The Festival will run from 9:00 am-3:00 pm. The Festival will include an amateur camellia show, informational seminars, a camellia sale, camellia displays, artwork displays, a raffle, and a bake sale. The amateur camellia competition is open to the public. So bring your blooms and let them shine! The seminars will focus on camellias and related gardening topics. All proceeds will be used to further the educational and outreach efforts of the Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteer Association.

Camellias will be for sale at the Festival, as well as pre-ordered. To see a selection of the camellias available or to preorder your favorite variety - see the links below. Numbers of each variety are limited so if you have your heart set on one, consider pre-ordering it to reserve yours.

<http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Camellia-Final-Preorder-Form.pdf>

<http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Camellia-Final-Preorder-Photo-List-2015.pdf>

Pre-order forms can be mailed to:

Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteers
4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville NC 28540

For more information, find us on Facebook at Gardening in Onslow County.