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TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

NOVEMBER 2008

Reduce Your Holiday Waste

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Americans throw away 25 percent more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's than during any other time of year. This holiday season, try trimming your trash and you may discover that helping the environment can also help you save money.



Try these simple ways to create less waste while enjoying the holidays:

- Decorate a tree that can be reused next year, or, after the holidays, take your tree to a community recycling site.
- Set your holiday table with cloth napkins and reusable dishes, glasses, and silverware.
- Make your own holiday decorations using pine cones, dried plants, popcorn, cranberries, paper, and other household items.
- Package your gifts in baskets, tins, bags, or containers that can be reused, instead of using boxes or bags that often end up in the trash.
- Save leftovers in recyclable containers and share them with family and friends.

Find more ideas for reducing holiday waste at www.epa.gov/osw/wycd/funfacts/winter.htm.

Applied Materials – A Clean Texas Leader



As a Platinum Level member of Clean Texas since 2003, Applied Materials has continually engaged its community through environmental service projects and educational opportunities, and acted as a model for other companies looking to improve their own environmental performance.

Clean Texas, a voluntary environmental leadership program to protect air, water, and land resources in Texas, recognizes organizations that make a strong commitment to improving the environment.

This past year alone, Applied Materials has achieved the following improvements:

- maintained a dynamic and effective recycling program,
- participated in a community park cleanup,
- implemented xeriscaping in several areas on one campus,

- supported several Commute Solutions programs,
- maintained a wetland area on campus where natural vegetation and wildlife are left to their natural states.

Applied Materials has clearly shown that it shares the commitment of the Clean Texas program to protect the Texas environment. For more information on becoming a Clean Texas member, please visit www.cleantexas.org or call 512-239-3100.

Cleaning Up After Hurricane Ike

Texans are working hard to clean up communities affected by Hurricane Ike. To help make this long process safer and more effective, state and federal officials ask that residents keep these recommendations in mind:

- Separate debris into piles to make it easier for local waste-disposal agencies to pick up;
- Clearly mark debris containers before disposing so that materials can be easily identified by waste-disposal agencies;
- Place leaking containers in plastic bags to prevent spills of any potentially hazardous substance;
- Properly dispose of household hazardous waste. Never pour products such as paints, cleaners, or pesticides down drains or storm sewers.

For more information on what to do while cleaning up after a hurricane, visit www.epa.gov/region6/disaster/what_to_do.htm.

Shopping for a New Car?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Vehicle Guide provides consumers with information about the environmental performance of vehicles. Using dynamic search and sort capabilities, users can compare up to three vehicles at a time to determine their own best match.



Vehicles that have exceeded environmental thresholds on air emissions scores are designated either SmartWay or SmartWay Elite, making it easy to determine which vehicles have the best environmental performance. To use the Green Vehicle Guide, visit www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/Index.do.

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An environmental message brought to you by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division.

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Shopping for a New Car? (cont.)

If your current vehicle is 10 years old or older, or has failed an emissions test, you may qualify for up to \$3,500 towards replacing your car. The TCEQ's AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine program removes older, more polluting vehicles from Texas roadways in counties with high ground-level ozone. For more information, visit <www.driveacleanmachine.org>.

Winter Gardening

As the holiday season approaches, many of us turn our efforts from taking care of the garden to preparing for upcoming festivities. But a few simple tasks can keep your yard looking great throughout the winter:

- Improve your soil by adding compost to vegetable, perennial, and shrub beds.
- Use cloth sheets or blankets instead of plastic sheets to wrap plants during a freeze. Cloth better protects plants from freezing winds and can be reused next year.
- Rake the leaves in your yard, and keep a stockpile to use in compost or mulch through spring and summer.
- Turn off your irrigation system from November through February. Native and adapted plants need little or no supplemental water during the winter. Cutting back on watering also saves money on your water bill.

For more tips on keeping your garden healthy all year long, visit <www.yardwise.org>.

FREE Take Care of Texas Print Ads

The TCEQ's Take Care of Texas program is designed to engage all Texans in lifestyle and habit changes that will help improve air and water quality, conserve water and energy, reduce waste, and save individuals a little money in the process. All Texans can help make our state a better place to live, work, and play.



Download free, ready-to-go print and online advertisements from the Take Care of Texas Web site to encourage others to get involved.

There are four campaigns with ads in various sizes: Everything is Bigger in Texas, Composting, Lights Off, and Replace Old Refrigerators.

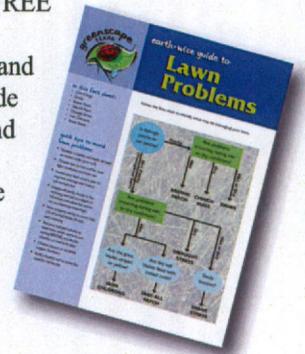
To download these ads and more, visit <www.takecareoftexas.org/campaign-ads.html>.

Mark Your Calendar!

The UST Management & Compliance Assistance Seminar will be held on Dec. 9, 2008, at the Austin Marriott North in Round Rock, Texas. Be sure to attend and learn how to comply with petroleum storage tank regulations. For more information, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/ust-seminar.html>.

Getting bugged by lawn issues?

It's your last chance to order your FREE copies of these information guides: Fire Ants (M-024), Fleas (M-025), and Lawn Problems (M-026). Each guide includes full color graphics, tips, and useful solutions for common yard problems. To order, send your name and shipping address to <educate@tceq.state.tx.us> (with the titles of the desired guides as the subject), or call 512-239-3143.



Updated TCEQ Publications

Municipal Solid Waste in Texas: A Year in Review, 2007 Data Summary and Analysis (AS-187/08) analyzes data submitted by municipal solid waste facilities each fiscal year to determine trends in the amounts and types of waste disposed of in Texas.

Texas Clean School Bus Program (GI-381) includes information about this comprehensive program designed to improve the health of school children and bus drivers by reducing the emissions of diesel exhaust from school buses.

To order TCEQ publications, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications>.

Take Care of Texas Tips

At Home

Use an Electric Lawn Mower

For each hour of operation, one gas-powered lawn mower emits 11 times more air pollution than a new car. Forty million American lawn mowers consume 200 million gallons of gasoline per year, and gas-powered garden-tool emissions account for an estimated 5 percent of the nation's air pollution. Using an electric lawn mower instead can save you 73 percent in total energy cost.

Around the Office

Reduce Your Unwanted Mail

Each year junk mail, including unsolicited mail to businesses, ends up as 4 million tons of solid waste. E-mail or call direct-marketing companies to remove your name or those of former employees from their mailing lists. Some companies have Web sites that allow for removal. You also can register with a comprehensive junk-mail reduction service for a small fee. Search for "junk mail" online to find some of these services. By taking your name off marketing mailing lists, you can help reduce waste.

www.takecareoftexas.org

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