

March 1, 2021

8 Spring Recycling Projects

As the great outdoors blossoms into a beautiful array of colors and textures, it's the perfect time of year to think about sustainability and how you can adopt more eco-friendly practices. Your commitment to green living will have an impact on the world around you, both now and in the years to come. There's a lot you can do to make your home recycling systems as efficient as possible. While you're at it, you can also create fun and beautiful recycling projects from items you were planning to discard.

1. **Set up recycling bins:** Most homes discard a higher volume of recyclable items than non-recyclable items, but the difficult part is making a plan to reuse items or store them for putting in the recycling bin. Raid your storage unit for unneeded plastic storage bins and repurpose them as recycling bins throughout your home. Your kitchen is an ideal location for a recycling bin to gather cardboard, cans and plastic bottles. Your office or mail station should also have a recycling bin for paper. Consider putting a bin next to other frequently used trash cans in your home.
2. **Recyclables education:** Recycling bins won't do much good if your family members don't know what you can put in them. Look up recycling tips for your city, and print out a list of items that are and aren't recyclable. Go over it with your family and post it by or on your recycling bins for reference. If you have kids, you can play a game of sorting items into the recycling bin and trash can. The commonly recyclable items include: paper, #1 and #2 plastic bottles and jugs, #5 plastic yogurt/fruit cups and butter tubs, glass, aluminum and steel cans, and cardboard. Look to see if there is a recycling symbol on the package, if it doesn't have one, then it's probably trash! For more guidance on recycling and trash disposal, visit www.preblecountyrecycles.org or the **Preble County Solid Waste District's Facebook page**.
3. **Spring blossom art:** If you have kids, they may want a fun art project to work on while you're focusing on spring cleaning and greening in your home. Get them in on the spirit of recycling by letting them use recycled bottles for a simple and beautiful art project. Have them paint the silhouette of a bare tree with branches, and then stamp blossoms on them with the bottoms of plastic soda bottles. Two-liter bottles make large blossoms, and smaller single-serving bottles can be used to intersperse smaller blossoms.
4. **Tire planters:** Your tires may be shot after the winter, but when you go to replace them, keep the old ones. With a little bit of paint, old car and truck tires make striking planters for your garden at home. After washing the tire and allowing it to dry, paint it with a few coats of spray paint or if you are feeling artistic, by hand. Hang the tire on end from a tree with a length of rope or chain to make a hanging planter for flowers or trailing plants. If you want a larger, stationary planter just
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8 Spring Recycling Projects (continued)

set it in your yard on its side and fill it with dirt. You can even stack two tires on top of each other for a taller planter.

5. **Recycled broom:** Plastic takes a long time to break down, which makes it an ideal material for things that you want to last, like outdoor brooms. This spring, make your own earth-friendly broom out of recycled plastic two-liter beverage bottles. You can cut the bottoms off the bottles and then cut up the sides to make thin strips of plastic that will be your broom. Cut the tops off all but one bottle so you can nest them over the one with a top, and secure them together with wire. Attach a broomstick or dowel to the top and you have a durable outdoor broom.
6. **Recycling batteries:** If you haven't changed the batteries in your smoke detector, it may be a good time to do so (and dust away cobwebs while you're up there). When you do this, remember that used batteries contain hazardous waste that should be disposed of properly. Look up options for recycling batteries in your area and create a battery collection container for them in your home. You can bring old batteries for recycling to the Preble County landfill's household hazardous waste trailer, which also accepts household cleaners, lightbulbs, chemicals, and other toxic materials for free recycling/disposal during regular landfill hours (M-F 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM). There is even an electronics recycling trailer for free recycling of computers and other electronic devices.
7. **Composting:** If you are really committed to green living, composting at home is a way to take it to the next level. Fruit and vegetable scraps, egg shells, coffee grounds, tea leaves, and newspapers can all be easily composted into rich, fertile soil for use in your garden. The easiest way to get started is with a compost tumbler, which is a barrel-style bin that you can turn to mix the contents. Repurpose an unneeded kitchen canister with a lid (or pick one up at a thrift store) to give you a place to drop your compostable scraps in the kitchen. Then empty it into your outdoor compost bin every few days, and add grass clippings and dry leaves to fit it out and achieve the proper nutrient balance.
8. **Streamline your home office recycling:** Gather up your old and no-longer-relevant documents for shredding. L&M Products (1407 N. Barron Street, Eaton) offers document shredding services by appointment with the cost being 50 cents per pound. If you are interested in this service, contact Chris Armstrong by calling 937-456-7141. Another great way to recycling in the home office is to recycle those used-up ink cartridges. Spent ink cartridges can be recycled by taking them to the Preble County OSU Extension Office (119 S. Barron Street, Eaton) and putting them in the ink cartridge recycling collection barrel located in the hallway.



(*Article adapted from <https://www.cubsmart.com/blog/inspo/diy-projects/8-spring-recycling-projects/>)

Friendly reminder to citizens using the Preble County Solid Waste District's public recycling bins...these items are NOT recyclable and should NOT be deposited inside the recycling bins:



Tanglers



Clothing/Textiles



Plastic Bags



Metals/Wood



Yard Waste



Food Waste