



**KY-A-Syst for the Home**  
Environmental Stewardship  
for Homeowners

# Be Waste Wise

## Teaching Guide

### Introduction:

Households in the United States generate more waste and consume more of the earth's natural resources than those in any other country. In 1996 each person in the U.S. produced an average of 4.3 pounds of waste each day. As the population of the U.S. increases, it becomes ever more important that we change from a resource-consuming country to a resource-conserving one.

There are many ways that individuals can do their part to facilitate that change. First you need to prevent yourself from generating waste. This can be done by only buying what you will use instead of being taken in by good prices for large quantities. Limit the amount of packaging that you are willing to buy with your products, and purchase items that are durable and can be repaired when broken. Purchase reusable products instead of throw-a-way materials.

Recycling is an important component of reducing household waste, but it is not enough to just recycle. You must also make a conscious effort to buy products that are made from recycled materials. Look on packaging materials for the words *Made from Recycled Materials* or *Made from Post-Consumer Recycled Materials*. *Post-consumer* means that all or part of the product has been made from materials that have been recycled by consumers in community recycling centers. It is also helpful to re-use waste items. This can be done through yard sales, by passing on foam packaging, or by re-using your plastic bags.

Another easy tool is composting. Yard and food waste make up 10 to 25 percent of the waste going into landfills. Kitchen scraps, grass clippings, and leaves can be composted right in your own backyard. The result is high quality compost that can be used in flower beds, around trees, in gardens, or spread on lawns.

### Focus on Children:

How we manage our waste today not only affects us, but the generations that follow. Improved waste management strategies can assist us in conserving energy and natural resources, providing clean air and water, and saving landfill space. Our waste management strategies and techniques will not only impact our children in the years to come, but also have an impact today. Children are at greater risk to toxic exposure from waste not properly disposed, and have increased risk from exposure to pollutants in our air and water. To protect our children's health and their futures, we all need to strive to improve our waste management habits. Practices like recycling and buying recycled products will have a lasting effect on our economy and our environment for years to come.

## **Lesson Purpose and Objectives:**

**Purpose:** This lesson is designed to assist people in managing their household waste by reducing the quantity generated, re-using waste items, recycling, buying recycled products and composting.

**Objectives:** This lesson guide contains a lot of information about managing household waste. It may be difficult to cover all the material in one session. Therefore, you are encouraged to select a program based on the type of audience you are serving and their needs. It is best to select and focus on *only two or three* of the following objectives.

Learn how to buy wisely so you don't generate as much waste.

Become knowledgeable about buying recycled and post-consumer recycled products.

Explore the many ways to re-use household waste.

Study the best ways for you to recycle and the importance of recycling.

Learn about how you can begin composting your yard trimmings and certain food waste.

Understand state laws on burning household rubbish and dumping waste on your own property.

Other (Please list in the space below):

## **Suggested Resources & Materials:**

The following items are available for your use in teaching this lesson. Select and use resources according to your program focus and needs. Resource materials are available from the ENRI Resource Center, 233 Scovell Hall, University of Kentucky unless otherwise noted. County agents should request these items in advance.

### Publications & Fact Sheets

Numbered-series Extension publications available through order entry :

- *Home Composting: A Guide to Managing Organic Wastes* HO-75

ENRI Fact Sheets – camera-ready copies available through the ENRI web site at <http://www.ca.uky.edu/enri>

- *Enviroshopping: Buy Smart!* – ENRI-300
- *Checking Out Your Packaging* – ENRI-302
- *Plastic Container Code System* – ENRI-303

## Suggested Resources & Materials: (cont'd.)

### Publications & Fact Sheets (cont'd.)

#### ENRI Fact Sheets (cont'd.)

- *Compost Bin Construction Series* – ENRI-307 to ENRI-312
- *How to Recycle: Beginning Recycling at Home* – ENRI-315

#### Videos (Available through the Ag. Communications video library.)

- *Your Trash Your Choice* (VEI-0532)
- *Recycle This* (VFH-0647) (targeted to teens)
- *Enviroshopping* (VHD-0829)
- *Home Composting* (VHO-0556)
- *Backyard Composting* (VHO-0638)
- *Don't Bag It – The Composting Plan* (HO-0707)

#### Displays

- *Enviroshopping: Shopping With Concern for the Environment Exhibit.* The graphics panels depict the composition of the waste stream and the **4R's** for waste reduction (reduce, reuse, recycle, reject and respond).
- *Product Life Cycles. . . Repeat Performances Exhibit.* This set of exhibit graphics depicts the basic life cycle for any product. The exhibit gives specific examples of products made from recycled aluminum, glass, paper and plastic.
- *Home Composting: Turning Waste to Resource.* This display addresses home composting and illustrates the do's and don'ts of composting and six basic compost structures. It also gives reasons for composting as well as some basic tips for successful composting.

Other: (Please specify below.)

## **Suggested Teaching Techniques and Activities:**

Select only those activities that will help you teach the lesson. Limit selection according to your program focus, audience, and length of lesson.

- Use the transparencies to give an overview of household waste management issues and strategies. Encourage discussion as you present the information.
- Have the participants read the Ky-A-Syst for the Home publication *Managing Household Waste: Preventing, Re-using, Recycling, and Composting*. Go back through the publication and have them answer the questions in the boxes. Suggest participants record all B and C responses and list changes they plan to make from information in the publication or from other sources. They can do this on the Action Checklist on Page 4. Encourage them to set target dates for taking action. Suggest that they review the checklist from time to time to see if any responses have changed.
- Show the video *Enviroshopping*. Ask participants what they do to limit the amount of household waste that ends up in the landfill. Have a collection of household items such as paper towels, cereal boxes, etc. and go through them. Decide which would be the best purchases in order to reduce waste. Discuss the difference between *post-consumer recycled materials and recycled materials*.
- Arrange for a guided tour of a community recycling center. Suggest to your audience beforehand that they bring items to take to the recycling center.
- Have the audience brainstorm different ways that they re-use household waste items. Depending on the age of the audience, have a craft ready to prepare from household waste items. Examples could be making bird feeders out of milk jugs or starting plants in cardboard egg cartons.
- Show the video *Home Composting*. Obtain plans for building compost structures. Construct a small compost pile using food waste (not meat or fat), grass clippings, straw and even small amounts of paper. Bring a glass container with finished compost. Pass out the plans for compost structures.
- Poll the audience to determine how many people burn household waste. Discuss items that should not be burnt. Review Kentucky Division of Air Quality restrictions on burning household rubbish. Encourage participants to subscribe to a garbage pickup service.
- If the group consists of teenagers, show the video *Your Trash Your Choice* or *Recycle This*. After the video is over, discuss items the audience already recycles. Have someone from the local recycling center come and speak to the group about what can be recycled. Also ask them to explain the best way to prepare items to bring to the recycling center.
- Other: (Please specify below.)

### **Suggested Evaluation Techniques:**

Select the technique(s) best suited to the information you would like to obtain from your audience. Immediate evaluation will provide reaction to the presenter and program materials. Delayed evaluation will give a better indication of changed behavior and attitudes.

- ◆ At the close of the program, ask each participant to name *one* thing they learned from the lesson.
- ◆ At the end of the program, ask each participant to list something they will go home and do as a result of the lesson. Have them write the item on a piece of paper with their name and the date of the lesson. Save the papers and several weeks/months later survey the group to see if they actually did it.
- ◆ Hand out a copy of the *Help Us Serve You Better* evaluation form. Ask participants to complete the form and leave it in a specific place as they leave.
- ◆ Return to the group several weeks later and ask them to fill out the Follow-up Feedback Form and leave it in a specific place as they leave. If you cannot return to the group in person, contact a representative number of the participants by phone and collect the data requested on the Follow-Up Feedback Form from each.
- ◆ Other: (Please specify below.)

#### **Reporting Impacts (*Information for County Extension Agents*):**

Use the following priority indicators and program accomplishment (PAC) codes when reporting impacts as a result of this program. Information taken from the FY01 PAC and priority indicators lists.

PAC Code 620 - Indicators:

(No priority indicators listed for FY01.)

PAC Code 510 – Indicator:

- Number of youth or adults who demonstrate informed and effective decision-making.

Prepared by Denise Hoffman, Temporary Extension Associate and Kim Henken, Extension Associate for Environmental and Natural Resource Issues.

This material was developed through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, Healthy Homes Project and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IV, Children's Environmental Health Project.