

# GREEN IDEAS

A SERVICE OF THE GREEN COMMITTEE OF FAUNTLEROY CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 9/2014



According to the Puget Sound Car Wash Association, a 10-minute home car wash with the hose running uses up to 14 gallons of water *per minute*. A commercial car wash uses only 15 to 60 gallons for the entire wash, depending on equipment and whether it's a self-serve or conveyor wash.

- use soap sparingly and put a nozzle on your hose so you can shut it off between uses.
- pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink, not into the street.

Washing your car in the driveway or a parking lot sends soap, oil, roadway dirt, and other pollutants into nearby storm drains. When those pollutants reach Puget Sound, they can cause significant harm to aquatic plants, fish, and other animals.

You can, however, wash your car without degrading water quality.

## Residential car washing

Your best choice is to take your car to a commercial car wash. Most of them reuse wash water several times before sending it to the sewer system for treatment. If you wash your car yourself,

- park the car in a grassy area if you can so waste water will filter naturally into the soil.

## Charity car washes

To protect water quality, setting up a car wash in your church or school parking lot is not recommended in the city of Seattle. Consider these two approved options for raising money with a car wash:

1. Sell tickets to a local commercial car wash. You buy them at a discount, sell them at a profit, and keep the difference for your charity. Visit the Puget Sound Car Wash Association at [www.pscarwash.org/Environment.htm](http://www.pscarwash.org/Environment.htm) for an up-to-date list of participating locations.
2. Stage your charity car wash at an approved site where drainage is treated. Find a current list of locations, plus guidelines for making the most of this option, at [www.seattle.gov/util/Environment/Conservation/MyHome/PreventPollution/CarWashing](http://www.seattle.gov/util/Environment/Conservation/MyHome/PreventPollution/CarWashing).

## TOXIC FLAME RETARDANTS COULD BE IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

Public interest in banning toxic flame retardants has spread to the living room, specifically to foam-filled couches and chairs.

A high percentage of upholstered furniture in use today has foam cushions and padding injected with flame retardants. You'll know it by the label: "This article meets the flammability requirements of California Bureau of Home Furnishings Technical Bulletin 117."

The Washington Toxics Coalition warns that, because flame retardants aren't bound to the foam, the chemicals can easily escape into the air, attach to dust, and get

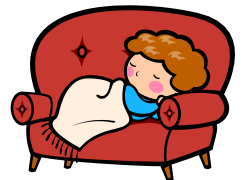
on hands and into mouths. The potential health effects (cancer, brain damage) are especially acute for children and pregnant women.

The good news is that couches and chairs sold today in the U.S. must no longer withstand an open flame, just a smoldering cigarette. The bad news is that finding the new TB 117-2013 label on the furniture is no guarantee that flame retardants aren't in the foam.

The coalition advises, that for the next year or two as manufacturers make the transition, it's buyer beware. Look for the new label *and* ask retailers about the upholstery.

So what can you do to be sure to avoid flame retardants? One option is to seek out eco-friendly manufacturers but be prepared for sticker shock.

Another option is to replace the foam in your existing furniture. Check out the Friendly Foam Shop in the U-District and Bellevue (<http://friendlyfoam.com>). It stocks retardant-free foam in many sizes, shapes, and densities and has staff who will understand your concern.



# CONSIDER WILDLIFE WHEN PLANNING FALL LANDSCAPE CHORES



## WHAT TO DO WITH THINGS 1 GREEN PLANET CAN'T TAKE

1 Green Planet cannot accept everything at our Recycle Roundups. Here's a current list of what you might do with things on our "do not bring" list:

**Televisions for recycling:** Burién Goodwill (1031 SW 128th), a collector for E-Cycle Washington. Free.

**Books (hard, paper, audio), art prints, posters, sheet music, CDs, DVDs for resale:** Friends of the Seattle Public Library. [www.friendsofspl.org/donations.php](http://www.friendsofspl.org/donations.php). Free.

**CDs, DVDs, videotapes for recycling:** GreenDisk. Details at [www.greendisk.com](http://www.greendisk.com). \$

**Wooden furniture, wood:**

- City transfer stations for recycling or disposal. \$

- Second Use (3223 Sixth Ave. S.).

Details at [www.seconduse.com](http://www.seconduse.com). Free.

- Ballard Reuse (1440 NW 52nd St.).

Details at [www.ballardreuse.com](http://www.ballardreuse.com). Free

**Cardboard for recycling:** Break down and put next to your recycling bin.

**Styrofoam for recycling:** V & G Styro Recycle (Renton or dropbox at IKEA store). Details at [www.styrorecycle.com](http://www.styrorecycle.com). Free.

**Historic porcelain sinks, toilets for resale:** EarthWise Architectural Salvage. Details at <http://ewsalvage.com>. Free.

**Porcelain sinks, toilets for crushing:** Renton Concrete Recycling; remove all guts. Call 206-772-2278 for details. \$

**Latex paint/stain for disposal:** See how to prepare for household garbage at [www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Garbage/SpecialorHazardousItems/SpecialItems/LatexPaint/index.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Garbage/SpecialorHazardousItems/SpecialItems/LatexPaint/index.htm).

**Oil paint/stain, gas/oil, fluorescent lightbulbs, chemicals, alkaline batteries for disposal:** South Recycling and Disposal Station (8105 Fifth Ave. S.). Free.

**Tires for disposal:** South Recycling and Disposal Station (8105 Fifth Ave. S.). Limit four per trip. \$

Leave your leaves. That's the plea from your avian friends who struggle all winter to survive.

Birds don't cuddle under leaves to keep warm. They don't insulate winter roosts with leafy linings. And they don't eat leaves.

What they do eat are bugs - or bug eggs and larvae - those that are buried, dormant, in the leaves.

After the first hard freeze, bugs disappear but a freeze doesn't kill them. Many bugs burrow into shallow ground or hide in the depths of matted leaves and turn inactive until the first warm days of spring or an unseasonably warm day in the heart of winter.

Having a tidy yard is a priority for some people. But raking and bagging every leaf defeat Mother Nature's inherent checks and balances by destroying critical habitat. A neat yard can become an avian desert, forcing birds to better winter forage elsewhere.

If you want the birds to stay, pile leaves under shrubs, along borders, next to fences, under dogwoods out to the drip line, and under low-hanging evergreens.

Towhees rustle among leaves for eggs and larvae, sparrows scratch for bug, flickers poke around for ants, and robins check for grubs. Come spring, more ground feeders will sift through your leaves. Nationwide, more than 100 species thrive and survive on foods foraged from backyard leaf litter. If your leaves are gone, the bugs are gone and so are the birds.

Don't worry about bugs in your garden. Birds eat an abundance of bugs all spring and summer and most of them feed bugs to their babies, as well. No bugs, no babies.

If you have more leaves than you think is healthy to pile under trees and shrubs, consider running them through a shredder for composting now or pile them to mulch flower beds next spring. Whichever use you put them to, your leaves will enrich the soil and the birds will enrich your life.

*Based on a "For the Birds" article in the Evansville, IN, Courier and Press*

## AND A LITTLE ADVICE ABOUT PRUNING FOR WILDLIFE

If you're planning to get to pruning projects in the yard, take the nesting habits of birds and squirrels into account.

Many animals nest between February and August. Hummingbirds are active in their nests by February. Other bird species begin nesting in March and can continue until late August.

Squirrels nest twice yearly, primarily in March and September. If you prune during nesting season, you risk destroying their nests.

Prune and trim October through early January when trees and shrubs are dormant and nests are not yet active.

Look before you cut. If you see a new or occupied nest, postpone your project until the young are grown.

For a project that must get done during spring or summer, hire a "wildlife friendly" arborist or landscaper who will be concerned about the health of your trees *and* the birds that nest in them.

## ABOUT THE GREEN COMMITTEE

The Fauntleroy Church Green Committee advocates for responsible stewardship of the earth within the congregation and community and provides green learning and action opportunities. Earth Ministry has recognized the commitment by certifying the church as a "greening congregation."