

Finally Fall: America Recycles Day 2020

Learn about the importance of recycling and what you can do to get involved.

America Recycles Day (ARD) aims to educate people on the importance of recycling, and it falls on **November 15th** every year. This day was introduced by the [National Recycling Coalition](#) and is a nationwide initiative by [Keep America Beautiful](#). The first celebration of this day was in 1997, which means this year will be 23rd anniversary! ARD was started was to teach the public about the importance of reducing waste, reusing and repurposing materials, and of course, recycling. It also aims to educate on the correct way(s) to recycle, including what materials are recyclable. For more information on ARD and additional resources check out [this page](#) by the EPA.



Each year various groups will host events for America Recycles Day and they even have resources to help people and organizations to host their own events. [Click here](#) to sign a pledge to recycle and learn how to get involved.

We encourage you to research recycling guidelines in your town or county! Unfortunately, recycling procedures including curbside recycling and drop-off events vary from town to town, so it is important to become familiar with how to properly recycle in your area. Check out your local municipality’s website or call your recycling center for more information.

Activity 1: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle...Reflect

Think about how you currently reduce daily waste, how you reuse different items and materials, and how often you choose to recycle – fill in the blue columns with these efforts. How you can improve your efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle? – fill in the green columns with these possible efforts.

WAYS I ALREADY REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE			WAYS I CAN IMPROVE MY EFFORTS TO REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE		
Reduce	Reuse	Recycle	Reduce	Reuse	Recycle

Activity: Review and Respond to Recycling Guidelines

In this activity you will view recycling guidelines, research guidelines in different areas, and compare and contrast how recycling is done in different places.

Part 1: As stated above, recycling guidelines are specific to different areas. Before you do any research, write down a list of materials and items that you think are common recyclable objects that could be recycled in any town – be specific.

Part 2: After completing part 1, [click here](#) to view the curbside recycling how-to guide for Somerset County, NJ (where Duke Farms is!). Take a look at the top half of the document where it includes preparation of recyclable items and which items are accepted curbside, then take a closer look at the bottom section titled “what not to recycle curbside”. How accurate was your list that you made initially? Was there anything that is or isn’t recyclable curbside that struck you as odd? Why?

Part 3: If you aren’t from Somerset County, NJ, find information about **your** recycling center and how-to recycle in your area. If you are from Somerset County, then choose a different location and look up their guidelines – it could be where a family member or friend lives, or maybe somewhere have thought about moving to one day! Compare and contrast how the recycling plans different? How are they similar? Does one place have more recycling options than the other?

Bonus: [Click here](#) to check out recycling drop-off events for Somerset County, NJ. Do a bit more research about drop-off events to accompany your findings from part 3. Compare and contrast the recycling days available for items that are not curbside friendly.

Activity: DIY Products

Of course it is easier to go to the store and grab some all-purpose cleaner or other supplies right from the shelf, but is it more cost-effective or sustainable? Chances are most of what is in that all-purpose cleaner is water, and when you're finished with the bottle it will go right in the trash or recycling. By making some of your cleaning supplies at home you can reuse single use items, treat your body better, save money, and be more sustainable.

DIY All-purpose Cleaner

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup rubbing alcohol
- 3 drops dawn dish soap
- Water
- A few drops of essential oils (optional)

Materials:

- 16 oz. spray bottle (preferably metal or reused from another product)
- Liquid measuring cup
- Funnel

Instructions:

1. Measure rubbing alcohol and add to your spray bottle using the funnel.
2. Add 3 drops of dish soap.
3. Fill the rest of the spray bottle to the top with water.
4. Add essential oils for fragrance (optional).
5. Shake bottle to incorporate all ingredients.

Notes:

- This is an all-purpose spray *without* the essential oils – if using oils be sure the material you are using it on will not be harmed by the addition of that ingredient.
- It can be beneficial to use filtered or distilled water in your surface cleaner – especially if you have hard water with a lot of minerals – this will minimize streaking, but this is personal preference.
- Instead of using paper towels to wipe down surfaces try reusable options like a microfiber cloth, rag, or reusable “paper towels”.
- Buying in bulk is usually more cost effective and saves on plastic.
- Try to find a bulk store where you can bring your own containers in and refill products.

If DIY projects aren't for you, you can make the switch to tablet cleaners which are concentrated cleaning tablets that you add to water. This option definitely saves on plastic! You can also find all-natural options with tablet cleaners if preferred.

Additional Resources

- [Additional recycling information for Somerset County](#)
- [Frontline Documentary: Plastic Wars](#)