

Celebrate Wisconsin's Recycling Tradition

Written by Clean Wisconsin
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Go beyond paper and plastic with these 10 recycling ideas for America Recycles Day this Sunday, Nov. 15 and every day.

MADISON - The next six weeks will be filled with traditions: Pumpkin pie and turkey. Caroling. Making cookies. Spending time with family and friends.

Add one more to the list: Recycling.

"Wisconsin has a strong recycling ethic," says Amanda Wegner, communications director with Clean Wisconsin. "We enacted one of the first recycling laws in the nation in 1990, and a whopping 94% of households here recycle. Recycling is very much a tradition in Wisconsin."

This Sunday, Nov. 15 is America Recycles Day, a national day to raise awareness about the benefits of recycling and buying recycled products. While we're all familiar with how to recycle household items such as paper, cardboard, bottles and cans, many other household items have recycling solutions.

Here a few to consider:

1. **Appliances:** Steel is North America's most recycled material. If your community doesn't offer appliance recycling, [visit the Steel Recycling Institute](#) to find out a location near you. Goodwill also accepts working appliances.

2. **Athletic shoes:** Don't kick your old shoes to the curb. [Drop them off at a Nike store](#), and Nike will grind them down to create play surfaces.

3. **Juice pouches, empty tape rolls, writing utensils & more:** Does an item have you scratching your head, wondering if it's recyclable? [Check out Terracycle's Brigades program](#), which offers national programs to collect previously non-recyclable or hard to recycle waste.

4. **Packaging peanuts:** Many suppliers are happy to take these back. [Find a site near you here.](#)

5. **Unused/unneeded drugs and pharmaceuticals:** Many municipalities and police

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departments now sponsor regular drug take-back days or have secure dropboxes; [find one here.](#)

6. **Wine corks:** Raise a glass responsibly by recycling your corks. Whole Foods offers bins for corks in stores or find a ReCork drop-off site at www.recork.org/en/locations

7. **Holiday lights:** 'Tis the season for burnt-out and broken light strings! [Holiday LEDs will recycle them for you](#) and send you a coupon for new LED light string. As an added bonus, their recycling center is here in Wisconsin!

8. **CFLs:** While they save 75% more energy than incandescents, even CFL lightbulbs burn out now and then. And because they contain a small amount of mercury, it's important to dispose of them properly. Many hardware stores will take spent CFLs for recycling; [visit Focus on Energy for a full list.](#)

9. **Old thermostats:** Like CFLs, old dial-style thermostats contain a small amount of mercury. If there's a remodeling project in your future or you're upgrading to a programmable thermostat to save energy and money, visit www.thermostat-recycle.org/zipsearch to find a recycling location.

10. **Other items:** Try listing other items on sites like www.freecycle.org, Craigslist and online garage sales. Your trash could very well be another person's treasure.

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*On behalf of its more than 30,000 members, supporters and its coalition partners, Clean Wisconsin protects Wisconsin's air, water and natural heritage.
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