

THIS SPRING, "THINK GREEN" WHEN YOU CLEAN!

Waste Management Offers Environmentally Friendly Ideas for Spring Cleaning

Kapolei, Hawaii, March 18, 2008 – It's that time of year – the rainy season has come to an end, Easter is just around the corner and it's time for spring cleaning. This year, Waste Management of Hawaii asks you to "Think Green" when you spring clean by using eco-friendly cleaning products and finding new life for items you no longer need.

Many common cleaning products are hazardous to the environment when flushed down the drain or thrown away. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, fumes from household cleansers and other products make indoor air in the typical home two to five times more polluted than the air outside.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann and the City and County of Honolulu have an ongoing informational campaign to help kamaaina identify and properly dispose of unused household cleaning products and other hazardous waste. In addition, the City's Department of Environmental Services has detailed information and instructions regarding hazardous waste disposal available on its Web site, www.opala.org.

"Green cleaning products can help keep chemicals out of the waste stream and groundwater and also typically come in recycled packaging, which is an extra bonus for the environment," said Joe Whelan, acting general manager for Waste Management of Hawaii. "Homemade cleaning products are also a very economical option and use items that people already have at home."

Today, many cleaning products have reduced toxins, are made with natural ingredients and can be purchased at grocery and retail chains. Some examples of homemade green cleaning products include baking soda, lemon and white vinegar.

- Baking soda can be used as a gentle, non-abrasive cleanser for kitchen counter tops, sinks, bathtubs, ovens and fiberglass. It is a useful air freshener and carpet deodorizer. Because it neutralizes or absorbs odors, baking soda can also be added to litter boxes, left open in the refrigerator or freezer, or included with laundry detergent.
- Lemon juice is a natural substance that can be used to clean your home. Soap scum and hard water deposits are no match for lemon juice. The rind of the lemon can be put into the garbage disposal to freshen the drain and kitchen.
- White vinegar mixed in equal parts with salt removes mildew. A small amount of vinegar added to water makes a good floor cleaner. Used straight, white vinegar can remove stains from the coffee pot, and is a good fabric softener.

Another way to "Think Green" while you clean is to find a new life for items piled up in the garage or basement that you no longer need. Each spring, millions of reusable items are sent to our local landfills, but there are many other ways to give your unwanted items a second life. Some ideas include:

- Non-profit thrift stores will gladly take gently used items and usually give donors a receipt to use for tax purposes.
- Freecycle is a web-based, nonprofit organization made up of individual city groups that promote waste reuse among their members. Members have the opportunity to give and get great things for free; membership is free and open to all communities and all members who want to participate. Visit www.Freecycle.com for more information.
- Have a yard sale or sell your older items online. Try www.craigslist.org or www.ebay.com to sell your unwanted items.
- Give away old clothing, lawn care items, etc., to a neighbor, friend, or co-worker who may need them.
- Recycle what you can. Many items in your garage that are currently gathering dust, such as

books, small pieces of unfinished pieces of wood, or glass jars, are recyclable.

Waste Management of Hawaii operates Waimanalo Gulch, West Hawaii and Kekaha Landfills as an integral part of each county's solid waste management infrastructure. The facilities handle municipal solid waste, which is heavily regulated, monitored and controlled by local, state and federal government agencies. In addition to its community contributions and significant volunteer efforts, Waste Management of Hawaii provides a benefit to the local economy of more than \$2.9 million annually. For more information of how we "think green," visit <http://www.keepinghawaiiiclean.com>.

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