

Commonly Asked Trash and Recycle Questions

By Gordon R. Watson

Questions as asked by Gordon Watson Editor of "The Voice" to Kay Serventi, Municipal Territory Representative, Tanner Market, Republic Services.

- What phone number should residents call if they have questions about Republic Recycling and Trash? 713.726.7300 Are the numbers the same for recycling and trash? Answer: Yes
- Is there an email address for the public to contact Republic? Answer: The website allows for email to Republic customer service at republicservices.com.
- How can a resident get a new recycle container if the old one was damaged? Answer: They would need to contact customer service. A replacement is free. If they request an additional bin, there will be a fee to the resident, and they would need to set up an account for the extra bin.
- What large items (such as washers and dryers) can and cannot be put on the curb? What is the weight and/or size limit? I would assume, for example, that a 300 pound camper shell would be too big, but residents don't know one way or another. Answer: The contract allows for Refrigerators (Freon removed tagged accordingly), stoves, water tanks (drained), washing machines, dryers and dishwashers.
- If large metal items, such as a washer or dryer are put on the curb, are these recycled or trashed? Answer: Trashed.
- If we have more recycled items than the green container can hold, is it OK to place them outside and adjacent to the container? Answer: No, everything needs to be in the bin.
- If we have metals (copper, steel, aluminum) other than food containers, is it OK to put them in or adjacent to the bin? Is there a weight limit for recycled objects (such as an electric motor)? Answer: We do not recycle copper, steel or aluminum only what is on the recycle protocol.
- Is a recycle flyer available on line? Where? Answer: No, it is not.
- Does recycled material need to be in a bag? Only if it is light-weight and might blow out of the container.
- What are the requirements for the trash container such as material and size? Answer: Trash cannot exceed one 95 gallon barrel. Bags cannot exceed 35 pounds. You must buy your own garbage can.
- Do you accept PVC and ABS pipe to recycle? Answer: No
- Should bottle caps be removed from glass bottles or plastic? Are they recyclable? Answer: No, they are recyclable.
- Are beer or soda plastic ring holders recyclable? Is there a need to cut these to prevent animals from being trapped in them? Answer: Yes, they can be recycled. I would cut them.
- Do residents need to call in to ask that heavy items be removed? While it theoretically isn't necessary, the crew would appreciate a heads-up call at 713.726.7300 to make sure they are aware that it is trash, and they have the personnel to handle it. All items should be placed curbside by 7 am on Friday to ensure pickup. It would also help to put a note on the heavy item indicating it is to be picked up as HEAVY TRASH by Republic.
- How many bags or bundles of branches may be put out? Answer: Residents may put out 6 bags or 6 bundles of branches in addition to the garbage can on either Tuesday or Friday. Any yard debris must be cut to 4 foot length or smaller and tied or bundled.
- Can I put loose trash into the trash can? No. It is important that all trash is bagged. This helps keep the neighborhood clean. For example, don't put saw dust or lawn clippings directly into the garbage can. Put them in a bag first.
- Do you accept plastic grocery bags? Answer: No. We do not accept plastic bags for recycling. This is because of their light weight and tendency to jam the recycling equipment. There are some grocery stores that have bins to recycle plastic bag.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY DIAL 911

SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD 281-357-3100, www.tomballisd.net
Willow Creek Elem (K-4)..... 281-357-3080
Northpointe Int (5-6)..... 281-357-3020
Willow Wood Jr (7-8) 281-357-3030
Tomball High (9-12)..... 281-357-3220
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Transportation..... 281-357-3193

SERVICES

Harris County Animal Control 281-999-3191
Lost/Found Pets Nextdoor.com
Harris County Veterinary Public Health..... 281-999-3191
Municipal District Services (24 hrs) 281-290-6503

... For water leaks, water outages, water quality, or sewer leaks or stoppage.”

Street lights out & power outages: www.centerpointenergy.com/outage

Harris County traffic signal outages..... 713-881-3210
Republic Waste..... 713-849-0400

Trash on Tue and Fri. Heavy items on Fri only.

Recycle Fri (#1 through #7 plastics; aluminum, steel & tin containers; glass bottles and containers; newspapers; cardboard; and mixed paper)

Digging? Two days prior to ANY digging in your yard, call 811 or use <http://www.lonestar811.com/>

NEWSLETTER

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's note: This letter is in response to the May, 2016, article on EZTAG. As the writer indicates, the one method to use depends on your visitor's situation).

I read your EZ Plate article with interest, and thought it would help to give you my experience with it. We had family from Iowa come to visit in March, and I thought it would really help them if they could drive on I-99, so I checked the EZ Plate idea with Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA). To my surprise, I found out the toll road operations in Texas are a confused mess. There are actually three separate entities in Texas. Two of them now have toll roads in the Houston area: HCTRA with EZ TAG, and TXDOT with TXTAG. 249 toll road is HCTRA, but I-99 is TXTAG. HCTRA informed me that the EZ Plate ONLY works on HCTRA toll roads, consequently they can NOT use it on I-99. I came to the conclusion that the best option for a tourist would be the TXTAG. If they ordered it on line far enough in advance, they could install the tag before they came to Texas. It is good on almost all toll roads in Texas. But the best part is if they set it up for autopay with a credit or debit card the TXTAG is FREE. The EZ TAG costs \$15.00. In addition the TXTAG only takes \$20.00 at a time for one car. EZ TAG takes \$40.00 at a time.

Hope this is helpful,

J.R. (full name withheld at writer's request)

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TEXAS FRITO BRITTLE

Modified and submitted by Donna Lowe
and from <http://www.bunsinmyoven.com/2010/07/30/texas-brittle/>

- Cover a 9 x 13 cookie sheet w/ a lip w/ foil
- Layer a single layer of pretzel sticks on the foil (a few handfuls)
- Put a few handfuls of Fritos (not the big scoops) on the pretzels
- Melt (microwave or double-boiler) about 4 oz. milk chocolate (I used chips) and drizzle over the pretzels/ Fritos
- Top w/ chopped pecan pieces (I toasted mine first)
- Put in freezer about an hour til it sets
- Break apart - keep in sealed container in cool spot



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The Voice

THE RIDDLE OF THE WET LAUNDRY: ANOTHER HOUSE DETECTIVE MYSTERY

By Gordon R. Watson



July is hot and humid in Tomball, like a Louisiana swamp without the gators. I had the car windows all rolled down, but I am sure it was hotter in the Packard than outside. The two-tone black top didn't help much. Sweat ran down my brow and neck. My hands glistened. The hot coffee was a bad idea. The AM radio had just mentioned that Tomball had reached 95 degrees. The moving car cooled me a bit, but I was still hot. I pulled into a Dairy Queen. The Packard rolled to a stop precisely between the two white lines on the blacktop. I got out. The paving was as hot as a pancake griddle at a church breakfast. The sliding walk-up order door opened. The calorie-laden fragrance of fries, hamburgers, and ice-cream rushed out. The teenage girl cheerfully took my order: one single chocolate dipped cone. I felt the cool air from their air conditioner. It felt wonderfully cooling, but she quickly closed the order door to keep the evil heat out. I was thankful that I was at least standing in the shade.

My secretary had just received a call that a client's clothes dryer was not working. The clothes weren't getting dry. I got back in the car, and ate the cone as I headed to her house. I had finished it before I pulled up. There is nothing like a Dairy Queen cone on a hot day.

The house was a typical home in Tomball: nice yard with huge oaks, a few crape myrtles, and roses...lots of roses. I noticed nothing awry with the entrance. As my mom used to say, the first impression people have of your home is your door. Nah, she didn't say that. She said that first impressions were important. Always keep your hair cut, shoes polished, and brush your teeth. I added the part about the door.

The woman was concerned. She had just purchased a new clothes dryer because the old one no longer worked. She also mentioned that her church was having a rummage sale that week. I advised her to stick with the facts. She seemed OK with that. I took notes on my spiral pad. The old dryer slowly died. It was ten years old. Clothes never got dry. As I made notes, I began adding up the clues.

I thought back over my dryer cases. The most interesting case involved some friends who did some sleuthing on their own. They discovered that the booster fan was connected physically (and sealed in with sheet rock), but it had never been connected to an electrical source. As the dryer was used, lint built up in the fan, and the dryer eventually would not work at all. In this case, the home owner removed the fan, re-connected the duct, and the dryer worked fine without it.

I pulled the dryer out from the wall. They are so light that anyone can do it. The hose was a flimsy plastic one. It was bent tightly. I wondered if it ever worked at all. Thankfully, it never caused a fire.

This was a fairly easy fix. I advised her that the vent hose was crushed, and that such restrictions can cause fires. I told her that I would order her one of those fancy new metal telescoping vents. I also mentioned that the experts recommend using metal duct rather than plastic (less to burn if there is a fire). I carefully shoved the dryer back against the wall and advised her not to use it until I could return with a suitable telescoping vent. I returned to the hot Packard and drove down the oak-lined steamy summer streets of beautiful Tomball.

Village Creek Board Election

By the Editor

A Board election is coming up this month, and two seats are open. Both of these seats were filled by appointment. In fact, three of the five Board members were appointed because of resignations.

When you vote, make sure you read as much as you can about the candidates. Vote smartly. The Board spends a significant amount of your after-tax income, and their work can greatly affect our neighborhood.

We hope that those who are running have provided a clear statement of their vision for Village Creek.

Our Health

By the Editor

Until very recently, nasal rinsing was both unfamiliar and strange to our family. Then, after some sinus issues, my doctor suggested using it. He happened to mention that it actually was a pleasure to do and in no way painful. It generally does such good that patients quickly get into the nasal rinse habit. Before all else, check with your doctor to make sure that nasal rinsing is OK for you. If it is, I suggest you search YouTube for "Neilmed sinus rinse tutorial." You can buy NeilMed's starter pack for about \$7.00, but that includes only one salt package. You may want to check at the drug store, big box stores, or on-line for larger packages for more options and best prices. Generally, you will find that the salt packages will cost about fifteen cents per day or so. A couple of important reminders:

- Quality of water is important. Most waters must be boiled (and cooled). Follow the Doctor's and Neilmed's advice.
- Make sure you don't use water without the salt package. It will be painful.
- Again, make sure it is OK with your doctor!

Texting and Cell Phone Use during Driving

By the National Highway Safety Administration (edited for space)

In 2014, 3,179 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver. One of the most alarming and widespread forms of distracted driving is cell phone usage. According to a study by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds, the equivalent of driving blind at 55-mph for the length of an entire football field. And a 2014 special article in the New England Journal of Medicine found that the risk of a crash or near-crash among novice drivers increased with the performance of many secondary tasks, including texting and dialing cell phones.

Text messaging is of heightened concern because it combines three types of distraction – visual, manual and cognitive. In other words, texting involves taking your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off the task of driving.

NHTSA's message is simple – "One Text or Call Could Wreck it All." Legislation is being passed across the nation to discourage distracted driving. We hope drivers get the message loud and clear.

So the next time you are pressed for time, and it seems like multitasking in the car is the best decision, remember those 3,179 lives that were taken because someone decided they could do two things at once. A text or call is not worth your life, or anyone else's.

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* According to the American Cancer Society **Tomosynthesis, (3D mammography) an FDA approved imaging technology designed for early breast cancer detection, is available here.



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Tomball Gardens

By The Editor

Vegetables: This is a great month (start as soon as feasible) to plant these: eggplant, cantaloupe, okra, southern peas, sweet potato, pumpkin, and watermelon.

Trees and Bushes: Trees and bushes, particularly young ones, will need some water if it doesn't rain. Don't over-water, but allow the roots to be moist (neither wet nor dry). If it doesn't rain during the week, give them a deep watering. Dig down a few inches in the root area to check the moisture. It is desirable to have the soil damp (not wet) 12" below the surface. Fertilize new plants with a lawn fertilizer with about 1 to 2 cups per inch of trunk diameter...according to the "Texas Gardener Magazine." Water it in well! A berm around young trees will help you keep sufficient water to their young roots.

Lawns: As we write this, rainfall has been plentiful, but one never knows. You will need to make up the deficiency using your irrigation system. Strive to one weekly....deep watering. Deep watering encourages deep roots. Most people water too little...too often. Note that irrigation timers can generally be set to water several times during one day...to allow time for the water to be absorbed in the soil. For those areas which have sparse grass, it is possible they are not getting enough water. Add or adjust sprinkler heads accordingly.

Reminder: Most experts advise keeping lawn clippings on the

lawn. They are the same as adding fertilizer...plus they enhance the soil, over time.

Personal Health: Garden in early morning if possible. Drink lots of water. Wear hats and sun screen. Use repellent. Consider kneeling on foam pads or knee pads. Wear gloves.

Recommended web site: <https://www.wildflower.org/> This is the University of Texas at Austin Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Go there for information about almost any plant in Texas.

Until next time, Happy Gardening!

Plant of the Month: Sunflower

By the Editor (with help from Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, University of Texas at Austin)

The Sunflower is one of the most common flowers in Texas. Varieties grow wild throughout the States. Some varieties grow up to 8'. They grow quickly, so are a good plant for children to try as one of their first gardening adventures. Point out to them that the flower heads follow the sun in a remarkable way, facing East in the morning and West at sunset. In fact the Spanish name for the Sunflower is Gyrosol, which means "follow the sun." The English scientific word for such turning is heliotropism. Remind them that the Sunflower is the State Flower of Kansas. The flower was used to obtain yellow, black, and blue dyes which were used by the American Indians for basket-making.

The Sunflower is drought-tolerant (once established), and the seeds may be planted as deep as 3 inches, though generally about an inch. Do plant them in the sun. Water sparingly, but water. In our soil, it is likely that they will become top heavy, so you may need to stake them. Birds and bees love them, and there is a certain strange spindly species of insect that you will probably find on the plants when they are mature.

Late April is the best time to plant, but July is not too late as long as you can keep the soil moist during the first few weeks of early life. Expect them to mature in about 90 days. It takes a very cold frost to kill them.



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