Virginia Gardeners Recycle: Statewide Container Recycling Program

The Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Green Industry Council are pleased to announce that we will continue our statewide container recycling program in 2013. To date we have collected about 16 tons of nursery and garden containers. We have identified interest in container recycling across the state. Through a partnership between garden centers willing to collect consumer’s containers and a supplier who is willing to collect and transport pallets of containers, and Extension Master Gardener volunteer educators, we can promote container recycling to consumers, educate those consumers on how to prepare and sort their containers for recycling, and in some cases, assist garden centers with collection and sorting.

Griffin Greenhouse & Nursery Supplies has again agreed to collect pallets from operations in their delivery area, which continues to expand across Virginia.

How It Works

Local independent garden centers, growing, or landscape operations would be responsible for collecting and sorting the plastics by resin code onsite —#5s, #6s and co-mingled others — with NO household plastics. We will provide educational material that will explain this process. You will provide stackable bins/boxes in which to collect the containers. Full pallets of larger, uniform containers can be shrink-wrapped to a maximum height of about 60 inches. We understand that this is a time and financial commitment that you must make to participate in the program; however, the previous participants considered it well worth the investment. When you have full pallets of sorted plastics, contact Joyce Latimer (contact information below) to arrange for pickup of the pallets. Do not foist the pallets onto the Griffin truck drivers.

Our program is primarily aimed at retail operations to address the consumers, but we will also accept containers from commercial greenhouses and nurseries and landscapers as long as the material is clean (loose dirt knocked out), sorted, and palletized.

For more information, check out http://www.hort.vt.edu/vagardenersrecycle/. We will post all participants on the website to assist in promotion of container recycling.

NOTE: We are now using a local recycler, Wanda McGee of Four Season Recycling, 10264-B Sycamore Drive, in Ashland VA, 804-339-4964; http://www.fourseasonrecycling.com/ and wanda@fourseasonsrecycling.com. If you want to take your containers directly to their operation, they do not need to be as tightly packed as with our previous collections but they should be boxed, bagged or on a pallet. And, they MUST be sorted into #5s, #6s and co-mingled others. Do NOT include any household plastics (#1s = water bottles, bleach bottles, etc.) or your load will be rejected. Call before you go so they will expect you. Tell Wanda that your containers are part of the “Virginia Gardeners Recycle” program.

Registering

To register for the program in 2013, contact Joyce Latimer (540-231-7906; jlatime@vt.edu). Include your business name, address, phone number, and website (or email).

Once registered, you will be listed on our website as a participant in the program. The website contains educational and promotional information for your use. If you have gardening events at which you would like to have Extension Master Gardener participation to promote container recycling, contact Dave Close (dclose@vt.edu), and we will try to accommodate your request. The more notice we have for such events, the more likely we are to be able to help.

Funds

Any funds paid for the recycled plastics will be donated to the Virginia Master Gardener Association’s State Master Gardener Coordinator endowment fund. If you have large amounts of containers that you want to recycle from your own operation, and you don’t want the funds donated to VMGA, contact us and we can help you find a recycler that may work with you directly, depending on your volume.