



**Ijams Nature Center**

**Earth Flag School Program**

**Over the past 14 years, the Earth Flag Program has focused on waste reduction and improvement of natural environments through reduce/reuse, recycling, composting, creation/ restoration of green spaces, and community involvement. Expanding on the success of this program, Ijams created a comprehensive recycling education program called Ijams Recycles. This is our signature education initiative providing recycling and waste reduction education to businesses, civic organizations, schools, and media outlets throughout Knox County as well as the general public.**

**The five goals of the program: reduce/reuse, recycle, creation or restoration of green spaces, composting, and educate/volunteer, are outlined in the following green plan as well as tips to get you started. It is extremely important to form a green committee to help start organizing the program. The first step is to fill out and return the application form. Then in the following months begin working with the school community to start implementing the program. Remember to start small. Pick one item from the following list to start with once that is successful move on to another.**

**Ijams Nature Center offers onsite consultations, a comprehensive series of educational programs focusing on green living and waste reduction as well as thorough waste audits to track impact and progress.**

**Feel free to make suggestions at any time as we value your input and are always striving to make improvements. Thank you again for your commitment to a greener environment and renewal of the earth through stewardship.**

**If you have any questions or would like further information, please call 577-4717 ext. 16 or email [sabrina@ijams.org](mailto:sabrina@ijams.org).**

**Sabrina DeVault  
Ijams Nature Center**

- 1. Reduce-**Purchasing, consuming, and throwing away less. Source reduction actually prevents the generation of waste in the first place, making it the most preferred method of waste management.
- Eliminate Styrofoam, plastic cups, and disposable paper and plastic products.
  - Reduce junk mail. Request senders to eliminate or ask for single catalogues.
  - Assess what you purchase and the packaging involved.
  - Use biodegradable bags for garbage.
  - Unplug computers/printers/coffee makers, etc. when not in use.

- 2. Reuse-**Reusing items by repairing, donating, or selling them. Reuse is even better than recycling because items do not have to be reprocessed before they can be used again.
- Encourage people to bring their own plates, cups, and utensils for meetings.
  - Provide/collect reusable plates, cups, glasses, and stainless-steel utensils for meals.
  - Use both sides of office paper.
  - Purchase rechargeable batteries for wireless microphones and flashlights.
  - Use refillable ink and toner cartridges
  - Donate unwanted items to local charities.

- 3. Recycle-**A series of activities that includes collecting recyclable materials, sorting and processing recyclables into raw materials and manufacturing the raw materials into new products. Recycling prevents the need to harvest new raw materials from the Earth.
- Recycle paper. Mixed paper includes printer paper, notebook paper, cardstock (e.g. cereal boxes, tissue boxes), paper bags, sticky notes, magazines, newspaper, and many other items. Sensitive material should be shredded before recycled.
  - Place recycling bins in all offices and common areas.
  - Aluminum can generate money for charity or school events.
  - Recycle plastic, steel, cardboard, ink cartridges, office equipment and glass.

- TerraCycle accepts items such as chip bags and drink containers.
- Buy recycled products whenever possible.
- Provide recycling information to members for home use (including hazardous waste disposal).

**4. Create/Restore-**Improve your site by implementing a project that will help the land, water, air, plants, and animals on or near your property. The use of native plants and grasses that require little or no water is strongly encouraged.

- Use organic gardening methods.
- Create a community garden featuring heirloom herbs and vegetables.
- Create a butterfly or bird friendly area.
- On an open lot, create a prairie or an orchard.
- Use memorial funds or gifts to dedicate trees and natural spaces.
- Add plants to inside areas to serve as air purifiers.
- Add rain gardens to absorb runoff. Avoid bare areas.
- Use live plants for decoration and then plant them on the property.

**5. Compost-**Yard trimmings and food scraps constitute 26 percent of the municipal waste stream in the United States. This organic matter can be turned into soil amendments for use with on-site gardening projects. Consider the various methods of composting and which one is best for you. Take into account any size or space restraints.

- Vermicomposting-Also known as worm composting, this method requires special worms called red wigglers. The worms live in a bin made from plastic, metal or wood and eat organic waste. The worm castings are rich in nutrients and provide beneficial soil amendments. Bins can be various sizes depending on your needs.
- Compost tumblers-Tumblers are larger than the worm bins systems. They allow composting matter to be turned for aeration purposes.
- Three bin system-This system uses three connected bins and can be more labor intensive. Three bins systems are a good idea when there is a lot of waste produced and ample space is available.
- Only compost napkins, fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells, and bread. Remember if it grows from the ground in can go to the ground.

- If your school doesn't have space for a bin, consider donating compost to community gardens in the area.

**6. Education/Volunteer**-Everyone should be educated about the program and be frequently updated on the program's challenges and progress. Volunteering in the community is vital to the program's success.

- Education should include all ages and can consist of classes, workshops and speakers.
- Environmental education should be a part of all events.
- Volunteer at local non-profit organizations such as Ijams Nature Center or Habitat for Humanity.
- Encourage youth participation in education and volunteer opportunities.
- Post weekly green tips in bulletins and website.

## **7. Additional Green Tips**

- Use natural light when possible.
- Open windows and use fans instead of air conditioning.
- Use fair trade coffee and tea in staff breakrooms.
- Provide locally grown, healthy snacks for events.
- Limit watering lawns. Do not water during droughts.
- Use a rain barrel to collect for watering gardens.
- Use CFL bulbs and LED for lighting.
- Use green cleaning products in all areas.
- Install low-flush toilets and low flow faucets.
- Organize car-pooling for off-site events.
- Enforce no idling zone on property.
- Provide information about public transportation.
- Install bike racks. (This is a great scout project).
- Offer tire pressure checks.
- Consider purchasing Energy Star appliances and electronics.
- Stay on top of the waste stream by having the students conduct a waste audit twice a year.

**Earth Flag School Application**  
An environmental education initiative of Ijams Nature Center

## General Information

1. Name of school:
2. Address:
3. Phone: Fax:
4. Email:
5. How many staff members?
6. How many students?

## Personnel Information

1. Name of principal:
2. Name of assistant principal:
3. Chief Custodian:
4. Overall Green Coordinator:
5. Reduce/Reuse Coordinator:

6. Restoration Coordinator:

7. Compost Coordinator:

8. Education/Volunteer Coordinator:

### Waste Information

1. Which company currently hauls your waste?

2. How often?

3. Who pays for this service?

4. Have you conducted a waste audit?

5. How much waste does your organization produce daily, weekly, and monthly?

6. What are the main materials in your waste stream?

7. What items are you currently recycling?

8. If you are not currently recycling, what challenges have prevented you from doing so?

9. Does your facility have any active compost piles?

10. Have you instituted any waste saving measures to date? If so, what are they?

This form was completed by:

Title:

Date:

List everyone involved in this process.

For assistance in implementing this program or for more information contact

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