

# Thoughtless backyard burning may be hazardous to your health

Outdoor burning of yard debris and household garbage, or "backyard burning," is an easy way for Columbia County residents to dispose of trash. However, it can be a nuisance to neighbors, as well as a major cause of health and environmental problems.

As smoke wafts through residential neighborhoods, backyard burning is the source of a common complaint received at local fire districts. Breathing toxic air pollutants can increase your chances of experiencing health problems ranging from throat irritation to cancer, emphysema or reproductive disorders.

With improved pollution controls on the nation's municipal waste incinerators, backyard burning may be one of the largest sources of these air pollutants. According to a recent

EPA report, household trash burned in one backyard barrel may release more chlorine-containing pollutants to the air than tons of trash burned by a municipal waste incinerator serving tens of thousands of homes.

Wood burned in fireplaces and stoves produces very small amounts of pollutants compared with trash burned in barrels, because of the presence of chlorine in garbage that contains plastics, food wastes, and bleached paper products.

If you are going to burn, get a burning permit from your local fire district and make sure that it is a burn day. Burn dry material during daylight hours, safely away from houses and trees. Burning of organic food waste, plastic, rubber, asphalt shingles, tires, and other mate-

rials that produce dense smoke is prohibited.

Alternatives to burning yard debris include shredding, mulching, composting or hauling it for a fee to the transfer station in St. Helens, or to Beaver Bark in Scappoose, which composts it.

### Free One-Day Yard Debris Drop-Off

A free yard debris drop-off day will be held at Beaver Bark for all Columbia County residents on Saturday, May 27, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Beaver Bark will accept all yard debris, clippings, leaves, grass, prunings, and clean, untreated, unpainted lumber (nails okay) at their site on West Lane Road, just north of Scappoose.

### Compost Bins On Sale

If you generate a lot of food

scraps and yard debris every year, consider composting it all yourself. You'll not only save landfill space and help preserve our natural resources, you'll also end up with rich soil for your garden or house plants. Columbia County is sponsoring the sale of compost bins for \$35 each. They are made of recycled plastic and are good for both kitchen scraps and yard waste. Orders

must be placed before May 19th.

For more information or to order a compost bin, call the Columbia County Recycling Coordinator at 397-1501 or e-mail <romanok@co.columbia.or.us>. For additional information on composting and recycling, visit the county's recycling site at <www.columbia-center.org/recycling>.

### County cookbook seeks recipes

The Even Start Family Literacy Program is looking for recipes for the upcoming Columbia County Community Cookbook.

There is no charge to publish a recipe. Submissions should be accompanied by a short statement to be published in the cookbook.

The cookbook cost will be

\$7.00. Both recipes and order blanks should be mailed to: Even Start Program, P.O. Box 10, Rainier, OR 97048. They may also be dropped off at either of two locations: 108 West B Street in Rainier, or at the Head Start building at 500 California Ave. in Vernonia.

To order a cookbook, call 1-800-352-7933.

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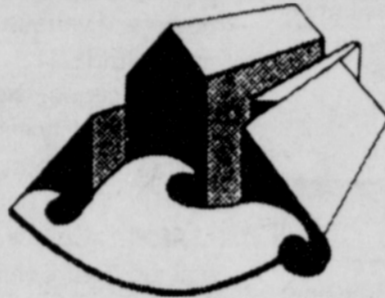
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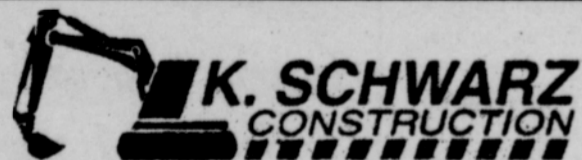
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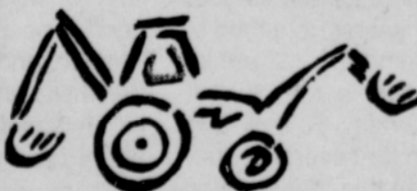
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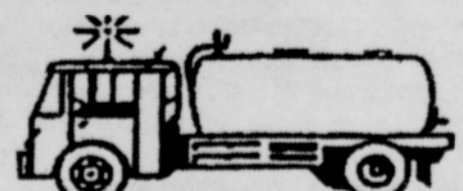
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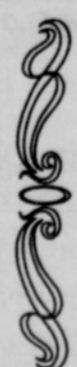
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