

The Struggle with Spaghetti Sauce...

Troy Martin, Sanitation Division



You pull out that jar of old spaghetti sauce from the back of the refrigerator. You find green fuzzy stuff all around the inside rim, take a whiff and almost get knocked over. It's another science experiment without a hypothesis—part of everyday life. As usual, you're in a hurry. What do you do? Conscientiously wash it out and place it in the recycling bin? Or just toss it into the garbage and get on with the day? We've all been there—experiencing quiet moments of pride and shame as we shape our relationship with the environment.

The answers aren't easy. Some would say it's actually better for the environment to use the garbage can. Although modern recycling has blossomed from a fringe ideal of "granola people" into a conventional practice, it's recently going through an identity crisis. In the United States, it has become one of the most hotly debated environmental issues of the day.



The U.S. is fertile ground for such a debate. It has only five percent of the world's population, yet generates 19 percent of its wastes. The U.S. uses 20 percent of the world's metals, 24 percent of its energy and 25 percent of its fossil fuels. Yet among the 20 most industrially advanced countries, it ranks only 15th in paper recycling efforts and 19th in glass recycling. Some 96 percent of U.S. plastic, and 50 percent of its paper, goes into landfills. Mexico—not exactly a bastion of environmental awareness—recycles more glass than the U.S.

The City of Plant City collects over 40,000 tons of garbage every year, with less than 6,000 tons recycled. That's less than fifteen percent, which sounds "not too shabby" until you think about the fact that 90% of what we landfill everyday is recyclable. If it is metal, cardboard, paper, plastic or glass it can be recycled. The only thing left after that is food waste and packaging. Throw in backyard composting of yard debris and food waste, and we're down to just packaging.

Recycling in Plant City is still in its infancy and has a long way to go. There are many obstacles still to face, from finding markets for all recyclable materials to encouraging residents and businesses to participate. This is something we all need to work on together.

Recycling issues aren't easy to sort out—and on both sides there are arguments driven more by emotion than logic. Our environment demands, however, that when it comes to deciding where to toss that rancid spaghetti jar, recycling still makes more sense than waste. For more recycling information, please visit: <http://www.plantcitygov.com/dept/sanitation/recycle.htm>

YOUR PUBLIC WORKS

Working For You



Holiday Garbage Schedule	Dates	No Pick-Up
Veteran's Day	November 12	No change in schedule
Thanksgiving	November 19—23	Thursday and Friday
Christmas Holiday	December 24-28	Monday and Tuesday
New Year's Day	December 31—January 4	Tuesday

**DO NOT POLLUTE THE WATER
DUMP NO WASTE
IT'S THE LAW**



**ES LA LEY
NO CONTAMINE EL AGUA
NO ARROJE BASURAS**

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLATE?

We've found some interesting things in the stormwater system: plastic bags, toys, money, leaves, honey bees, tires, kittens, you name it! The storm drains that keep the roads (and homes) from flooding in a residential area are often homes for other things that can cause problems for your entire block.

When people stick trash down the storm drains—or dump oil in them—they often don't realize that they could be polluting Blackwater Creek, the Hillsborough River, and even the Gulf of Mexico. Although that seems bad enough, the situation is even more severe when you consider that less than 1% of the Earth's water is drinkable. The result is that in heavily populated areas, such as the Tampa Bay area, water is recycled and reused more than we realize. The water we trash today, we may be drinking tomorrow.

We encourage residents to report anyone who may use the storm drains to CLEAN the road rather than CLEAR water from the road by calling 813.757.9289 during business hours or 813.757.9191 after hours. Residents may also take a proactive approach by ordering storm drain marking kits from the City of Plant City—simply call 813.757.9289 x 2249 for more information on how your neighborhood can learn more about helping our watershed while preserving local water quality.

Don't be a GREASER!

Every year, thousands of tax dollars are spent on unnecessary sewer overflows that are a result from... Can you guess it? YOUR KITCHEN!

When fats, oils and grease are poured down the collection system, they coat the inside of the sewer pipes. Once a pipe becomes clogged, sewage collects in the line and typically overflows into a man hole or lift station.

To receive a nifty can lid with instructions for residential grease disposal, call 813.757.9289 x 2249 and leave your name, address and phone number. A bag of environmental goodies will arrive at your door within two weeks! (City limits only, please).



What's this guy doing? Why is he doing it? Three free Parkesdale Strawberry Shortcakes could be yours with the right answer. Email revans@plantcitygov.com or send us a postcard by **Friday, November 9th** with your best answer (address to right).

NEXT ISSUE: Your questions, our answers. Write to the address below with anything you want to know—please just try to keep it Public Works related: roads, streets, traffic lights, signs, mowing, ditches, canals, culverts, wastewater, water, service lines, garbage, street sweeping, water conservation, environmental concerns... Ask us any weird question you'd like. The best questions will be published in our March mail-out, 2008. Send your inquiries below:

City of Plant City Public Works

Attn: Shawna Himelright

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Thanks to Ms. Sharron Garrison, Utilities Operations, for this great idea!