

## Green Halloween

“Your World” article submission for October 22, 2007

Halloween may be a spooky holiday, but celebrating it does not have to be scary for the environment. The following tips will help to make this year’s Halloween an eco-friendly one:

- **Reusable Bags for Trick or Treating** - Cloth grocery bags or pillowcases are a great way to hold all that candy. You can make it even more fun for your children by letting them use non-toxic markers to creatively decorate the bags. This is a great alternative to plastic bags or the molded plastic jack-o-lanterns that are so commonly used, and then tossed after one use.
- **Homemade Costumes** – Instead of purchasing new costumes, be creative and make your own costume with old clothes and items from around the house, or try a thrift store or yard sale for materials. Designing and making your child’s own costume allows you and your child to go wild with your imaginations. After Halloween, store the costume for future use, or donate it to day-care centers or charitable organizations.
- **Compost Pumpkins** – If you don’t already, Halloween would be a great time to start composting! You can add post-Halloween jack-o-lanterns to your compost bin, along with the autumn leaves, food scraps, and other organic, biodegradable yard and household waste. Compost creates excellent soil for your garden. Please call Dan Moody at 734.222.3950 or visit Washtenaw County’s Environmental Portal website at [www.ewashtenaw.org/ep](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/ep) for information on how to purchase a compost bin and information book.
- **Walk Instead of Driving** – Instead of driving to far away neighborhoods to Trick or Treat, try sticking to neighborhoods within walking distance to reduce fuel consumption. Walking is much safer, too! If driving is absolutely necessary, plan to carpool with other families in the neighborhood.
- **No Littering!** – Please educate your children about the importance of not littering. Keep candy wrappers in the Trick or Treat bags until arriving back home, whereupon they can be tossed into the trash. To bring the point home even further, you can bring an extra garbage bag along Trick or Treating and pick up others’ candy wrappers from the ground.
- **Reuse Candy!** – Instead of throwing away excess candy after Halloween is over, store it in the freezer for next year.

Submitted by:

Noelle D. Bowman, Solid Waste Program Assistant

Washtenaw County Department of Planning & Environment

Phone: 734-222-6874

Email: [bowmann@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:bowmann@ewashtenaw.org)

Website: <http://recycle.ewashtenaw.org>