

Home based toxic waste dumps!!! Is yours one?

Visualize a toxic waste dump – you’re likely seeing industrial complexes, effluent spilling from pipes, noxious fumes emitting from factory chimneys, and overflowing barrels with scary labels. Right!!! But have you thought about your very own home??? For some of us there is a toxic waste dump closer to home than most of us realize, in fact it is our home. Take a minute and look inside your kitchen and bathroom cupboards even your medicine cabinets at all the different cleaning potions that we have. Let’s not forget those things that we keep in our garage, gardening shed, workshop or even our vehicles. Looking in these areas you’ll likely find a toxic waste dump rivaling many chemical companies, just on a smaller scale.

Over time, we have the tendency to collect items such as paints, thinners, cleaners, pesticides, fertilizers, old fuel, bleach, and all sorts of other toxic substances which contain more environmental nasties than you can shake a stick at. It’s rather sobering when you put all this stuff in a pile, add it all together, and realize the amounts of these sorts of things that we actually store in our homes. Let’s say that there is just one gallon of these materials in the average home and that is probably a gross underestimation. Based on 2007 figures that there is over 115 million homes in the U.S. That equates into 115 million gallons of some sort of hazardous waste, or 2,091,000 – 55 gallon drums of toxic materials just lingering out there.

While prevention is always better than a cure, not many of us can claim to have a toxic waste free home. Even if you’re making the change to green products now, we still need to deal with the other stuff we have left. So what do we do with this stuff? It’s a tough question. There are very few “safe” ways to dispose of hazardous materials that won’t cause some kind of negative impact on the environment. The best thing you can do is contact your local MSU Extension Office (for Sanilac County call 1-810-648-2515) and ask them about hazardous waste disposal options.

All hazardous waste products received by their drop off locations are sorted and classified to identify the most appropriate method to safely recycle, treat, or dispose of certain wastes. As previously mentioned, prevention is better than cure. There are so many new “natural” alternatives available now that replace the many harsh chemicals that we use in our homes everyday. Take a moment and browse around www.greenlivingtips.com and you’ll find a stack of them.

Thank you,
Jerry R. Scott
Village of Lexington
MS4 Project Manager