

## Electronics Recycling Event, Oct 22nd.

Recycle your old electronics on Saturday, October 22nd from 9 AM to 2 PM. The drop off location is Alcatel-Lucent Technologies in New Providence. For directions and a list of acceptable items, visit the county web site at:

<http://ucnj.org/community/recycling/electronics-recycling/>

## Home Performance with Energy Star

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR offers "whole house" solutions to reduce both your energy costs and carbon footprint. Installing energy efficient upgrades through the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program in your home can save up to 30% on energy costs and increase the comfort, safety, and durability of your home.

New Jersey homeowners will have until December 31, 2011 to receive up to \$5,000 in financial incentives. That is up to \$1,000 more than previous offer! Homeowners also may qualify for 0% interest financing (up to \$10,000) when they have energy-efficient upgrades performed on their home.

**Do not miss this special fall offer to help you save money in your home!**

[Learn More](#)

## National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Saturday, October 29, 2011, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

The Drug Enforcement Administration has scheduled another National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, October 29, 2011, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. to provide a venue for persons who want to dispose of unwanted and unused prescription drugs. Unwanted prescription drugs may be dropped off at the Cranford Community Center, 220 Walnut Avenue.

[Learn More](#)

## Rake for the Planet

There just doesn't seem to be enough time in our day. We are working longer hours and our children are involved in countless activities such as sports, scouting or music lessons which keep parents running. Then there's the house and yard to maintain. With time being so tight, we welcome anything that helps complete our tasks faster. And now it's that time of year when we'll be faced with cleaning up mountains of leaves and many of us will rely on something that has defined mankind for the past 200 years, a machine.

For over 30 years, homeowners have been using gas-powered leaf blowers to clear debris from their lawns and gardens. The more power, the better! I once heard someone say with pride that his blower can move a pile of bricks. But this increased speed and efficiency has come with a price. Like many things in life, there is a tradeoff.

Here are a few things to consider when deciding if using a leaf blower is the best choice:

- The powerful air stream of a leaf blower can strip the land of topsoil, damage otherwise healthy plants by tearing leaves off branches and spread disease, insect eggs and weed seeds.
- The high-velocity air jets whip up dust and pollutants. The particulate matter (PM) swept into the air by blowing leaves is composed of dust, fecal matter, pesticides, fungi, chemicals, fertilizers, spores, and street dirt which consists of lead and organic and elemental carbon. This can result in health risks for people with asthma or other respiratory health problems.<sup>1</sup>
- The average blower measures 70-75 dB at 50 feet and can reach 90-100 dB at the operator's ear. This high noise level not only poses a danger to the operator but can be disturbing to your neighbors, some of whom may be ill or might work nights.<sup>2</sup>
- Emissions from the two-stroke combustion engine include liquid and solid particulate matter as well as gaseous carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a traditional gas powered lawn mower, which has a similar type engine, produces as much air pollution as 43 new cars each being driven 12,000 miles.
- Using gas powered blowers contributes to America's dependence on foreign oil.

Each of us must decide whether the price is worth the benefit. But what is the alternative? The answer is an old fashion rake. This inexpensive tool combined with a poly tarp may do the job as fast as a blower. Simply place your tarp on your lawn and rake the leaves on top of the tarp. Then fold and drag the tarp to the street and dump. Get the kids involved. They'll have fun and may learn a bit about the value of work. The exercise will do you good and your neighbors will appreciate the silence.

The Township of Cranford has taken steps to encourage a day without blowers. On October 11, resolution R-2011-334 was passed designating Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup> (zones 2 & 3) and Saturday November 5<sup>th</sup> (zones 1 & 4) as "Rake for the Planet" days. Based on your zone, choose this day to use man power instead of machine power. You may find that raking is really not that bad and it's a great way to reduce your carbon footprint. This is a voluntary program and you should consider your personal health and physical condition before deciding to participate.

If you do participate, visit [www.mygreencranford.org](http://www.mygreencranford.org) and complete the pledge form. Cranford's Green Team is interested in hearing from those of you who gave this a try. Our web site also provides a wealth of information on this issue.

Sources: 1. California Environmental Protection Agency 2. <http://www.nonoise.org/>