

# YARD SALE SAVVY

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*“That man is the richest whose pleasures are the cheapest.” Henry David Thoreau*

**Objective:** Learn how to turn household goods into profit. Topic deals with tips on organizing the home, recycling unused goods, how to supplement income, and how to organize and plan a yard sale.

**Getting Started:** Give a copy of the participant handout to each group member. Have on display the following items: calendar, pen, notebook, and any other items on the checklist.

## Introductory Questions...

- ▼How many of you have ever attended a yard sale?
- ▼Do you enjoy them?
- ▼How many different names can you think of for a yard sale?
- ▼What are the values of such sales?

**Introduction:** Everyone loves a bargain. People are willing to walk a mile for one, or rise at dawn for one, or spend themselves into debt for one. Yard sales attract consumers who love to buy used or secondhand goods for both their economic and historical values. Rummaging provides a great educational experience! It teaches children how to search for bargains and how to get the most for their money. Rummaging expeditions to yard sales, flea markets, and thrift stores sometimes double as a history lesson. Many items youngsters have seen only in pictures and museums can be found at secondhand marketplaces. Rummaging is also an excellent way to entertain children. Young friends are eager to accompany older, experienced rummagers because kids think the oldsters “get all the neat stuff.” Yard sales can provide a wealth of information--helpful hints, advice, and bits of information ranging from recipes to shingling a

house to which doctor is the best in town. Almost anything you want to know can be learned at a yard sale. It’s a great network for communications.

When is the best time to have a yard sale? When junk takes over your house!

## Common Yard Sale Terms:

*Bargain* - something purchased at a reasonable price for you. But remember, a bargain is only a bargain if you need it and can afford it!

*Collection* - three or more of the same item, or theme items.

*Junk* - items that have lost their value to the owner and could be recycled into profit.

*Junkers* - people who make a fine art of stockpiling others’ throwaways.

*Rummagers* - people who shop for secondhand treasures.

*Rummaging* - the act of searching for treasures in secondhand marketplaces.

*Secondhand Marketplaces* - can be referred to as yard sales, garage sales, tag sales, barn sales, rummage sales, estate sales, moving sales, flea markets, and thrift stores. Whatever the vernacular for this type of sale is in your region, the meaning is the same--a place to rummage for bargains or secondhand treasures.

## Organizing Your Yard Sale

- ▼How many of you have had a yard sale?
- ▼How many of you have these items in your homes? (show your display of scissors, pens, tape, notebook, calendar)

If you have these items, then you are on your way to having your own yard sale.

Make a checklist using the list below (and the expanded one in the WL); discuss the various steps.

Set date (allow at least two weeks for planning)

Check newspaper for big events that may cause conflicts

Check your homeowner's policy for liability against accidents

Call neighbors for permission for parking (may add goods for selling)

Gather items (basements, attics, closets, cupboards, drawers, garages)

Place items in one location

Clean items (neatly folded and pressed)

Gather supplies you may need--marking pens, scissors, transparent tape, masking tape, price tags, pocket calculator, change from bank, receipt book, wrapping and sacking--newspapers or rags for padding, brown boxes, plastic shopping bags

Move items into the showroom - yard, garage, basement

Display and price items properly (see list in WL; get members to share secrets)

Advertise - classified ads, posters, signs, example ad, 1-2 weeks ahead

Street and yard signs - bold letters, place in key locations

(If time, you may want to ask members to write an ad.) Use this as an example:

YARD SALE - 2 SYCAMORE STREET  
 CLEAN CLOTHES, ANTIQUES  
 FURNITURE, HOUSEWARES  
 AND MUCH MORE

FRI AND SAT, APR 20-21 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
 CASH ONLY

DIRECTIONS: LAST HOUSE ON THE STREET

Prepare pot of coffee with disposable cups for customers

Dress comfortably - good shoes

### **Cleaning Supplies and Tools**

What makes a successful yard sale is having a variety of merchandise and making certain that the merchandise is clean and ready for use. Your WVU Extension Service county office is a good source of information on cleaning and repairing

various surfaces. The staff can supply you with many tips for cleaning items with everyday household products. Often these remedies can be much cheaper than buying a commercial cleaner.

(Experiment with some of these cleaning solutions and demonstrate their use during your presentation.)

*Household bleach* - disinfects glass, plastic, and most other surfaces. Not recommended for wood or wicker.

*Rubbing alcohol* - removes glue residue from high-gloss ceramics.

*Hair spray* - can be used to remove marking pen prices from glass. It also works well for removing glue residue left by masking tape and for removing ink from fabrics.

*Dusting spray* - removes marking pen ink from glassware and tins.

*Damp cloth dipped in baking soda* - sometimes removes ink or crayon marks from walls and other surfaces.

*Lemon oil* - restores the beauty of old objects; works best on old and new finishes, ceramics, plastics, and wood. Not recommended for clear glass because it leaves a greasy film.

*Furniture polish and cleaner* - can be used on plastics, ceramics, and wooden treasures.

*Brass and copper cleaner* - wash and rinse object thoroughly. Make a paste by combining one tablespoon flour, one tablespoon salt, and one tablespoon white vinegar. Scrub the treasure with the paste and rinse. Or dip a cut lemon in salt and rub on brass surface; rinse completely.

*Peanut butter* - will remove tape residue from smooth surfaces. Rub a small amount on surface and wipe away with paper towel; repeat as necessary.

*Cider vinegar* - works well for removing rust from pots and pans.

*Soap and water* - works well on baskets. Swish baskets in tub of sudsy water; use stiff brush to remove patches of soil; rinse immediately with cool water. Shake to remove excess water and place in brown bag to dry.

*Cornstarch* - works well for dry-cleaning stuffed animals. Rub into pile and let stand overnight. Take animal outside and shake loose the cornstarch; brush with stiff brush.

**Insurance:** Do not ignore the possibility that someone could be injured while visiting a garage sale on your property. To decrease that risk, be sure sale treasures are arranged with plenty of space for shoppers to move around comfortably without risk of tripping over items or having items fall on them. Check with your insurance company to make sure you have adequate liability coverage through your homeowner's policy. If you have a yard sale infrequently for the purpose of getting rid of unneeded items, your homeowner's or renter's policy will likely cover you. If, however, you stage frequent sales that become significant money raising events, your policy probably will not cover you. Nor are policies likely to cover garage sales for entire neighborhoods or organizations selling at flea market sites.

#### **Treasures that will sell...**

- \* old magazines
- \* entire wall groupings or accessory displays
- \* genuine Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls
- \* red glass
- \* cut-glass treasures
- \* miniatures
- \* costumes
- \* seasonal produce
- \* bike and automotive parts
- \* clear glass, star-shaped candle holders
- \* small plastic pails
- \* interesting colors and texture combinations
- \* single pieces out of a set
- \* good, sturdy wire hangers
- \* yarn
- \* replacement casserole lids
- \* expandable peg racks
- \* figurines

- \* candle rings
- \* old toys
- \* record albums
- \* promotional items
- \* costume jewelry

Can you think of any others?

#### **Record Keeping - Journal**

If you are a junker who lives for yard sales, keeping a journal of your purchases serves many purposes. Your journal should include:

- \* detailed description of object
- \* date of purchase
- \* price paid
- \* where it was bought
- \* why it was bought
- \* interesting conversations about the piece
- \* flaws when purchased
- \* cleaning techniques used
- \* repairs made
- \* photograph of object
- \* estimated age
- \* reasons for thinking object is valuable
- \* places where similar objects are for sale and prices they ask

#### **Remember Your Yard Sale Manners**

- \* limit customer access to just the showroom (no public restrooms or telephone)
- \* be friendly and polite; acknowledge that you know customers are there
- \* be cheerful and have a good time; it makes shopping fun for the buyers
- \* be in control; negotiate prices, but be firm
- \* be prepared to feel sadness when treasures sell
- \* be positive about the merchandise; catty comments can be taken the wrong way
- \* only display items that are for sale
- \* reduce prices at the end of the day

Rummagers love bargains! Treasures are fun to buy when they are low in price and high in quality!

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