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## How to host a successful yard or garage sale

BY LOCKIE HUNTER • CITIZEN-TIMES CORRESPONDENT • PUBLISHED MAY 3, 2008 12:15 AM

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**ASHEVILLE** – One of the biggest challenges of holding a thriving yard sale seems to be deciding on which items to part with. The most successful sales are often the ones that are prompted by an event.

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While some sellers have difficulty parting with their possessions, Kim Murray, of Asheville, had no problem choosing items to sell. She was very motivated, as she is expecting her first child and "making room."

"I want to sell everything," she said.

An upcoming move is another great motivation to sort through the attic and basement. Heavy or bulky items are expensive to move and may be best sold if you are not planning on keeping them in your new place.

Cheryl Postlewaite, of West Asheville, just bought a new home and "needed to unburden. To make life less complicated, I decided to get rid of stuff," she said. "Books are especially expensive to move."



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An array of clearly tagged items twinkle in the early morning light. - **Special to the Citizen-Times**

### Strategies

When considering items to sell, you may be advised to think outside of the norm. Murray was selling flats of flowering phlox. The plants looked inviting at the sale, adding an element of color.

Aesthetic arrangement can be as essential as the items themselves. Placing items on long, low tables where each piece can be picked up and examined by the buyer may allow for increased sales. If you have many items of clothing for sale, consider hanging them on a portable clothes rack. Bigger, brighter items, such as vibrantly colored children toys, can be placed in front on the lawn to attract the attention of passing motorists.

Keep in mind that a little preplanning and organization may go a long way. Consider the entire day and plan on contingencies.

Spring in Western North Carolina brings with it unpredictable weather. Murray had many items spread out on the ground near her garage, but there was a plan to bring them under cover in poor weather.

Murray notes that though "the rain held some people off; I made sure we had something covered. I knew it was going to rain."

A successful sale may well have items displayed outdoors to attract traffic but may also have a small structure or tent in case of inclement weather.

Another element of organization is labeling. Tagging the item clearly with the suggested price allows the buyers to browse at their leisure.

"Keep all tags" Murray advises.

During the sale be certain to have plenty of change on hand, both small bills and many coins.

Postlewaite "always has change. It's my own little cash register," she notes, gesturing to a well-organized

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container.

### Advertise

The decision to advertise may affect your turnout. A few lines in the local paper listing the time and place may drive significant traffic to your home. Be certain to note the start time or you could have people on your doorstep at dawn.

"We had people here at 5:30 in the morning," notes Murray, although she specified in the newspaper ad that the sale began at 6 a.m.

Postlewaite's ad specified "no early birds" and also had the striking wording of "too much to list!"

Other sellers often list a few items such as appliances, baby items and furniture to whet the appetite of the buyers.

Prior to the big day, be certain to posts signs clearly marking the path to the location of the sale. Bright signs in neon colors attract interest and are easy to spot for buyers seeking out your location.

### Leftovers

After a successful sale, there may still be several objects that did not catch anyone's eye.

To relieve yourself of carrying it back inside your home, consider having it trucked away by one of the many local groups that would benefit from your unsold merchandise.

"Freecycle is coming to haul it all away with a truck" says Postlewaite. "I told them there were yard sale leftovers, free at 1:30."

Habitat for Humanity may also be interested in "leftovers," especially household items, and the Goodwill Agency is always looking for quality objects.

Postlewaite's cry of "rescue me. I have too much stuff," may be easily addressed as she sells most of it, and then gives the leftovers away to a good home.

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