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Yard Sale Finds: Trash To Treasure

By Abigail Beal

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The weather gets warmer and many of us know this means one thing: yard sales. If you are a crafter, yard sales can be great places to find someone else's castaways and turn them into your treasures.

As a person that loves to do decoupage, I am forever on the lookout for wooden boxes to decoupage. But remember that yard sale bargains can also inspire you to try a craft you haven't done before. A baby quilt I found made a great pillow, when I had little practice with sewing projects.

When looking for a find, what should you look for? If you can already imagine the object taking on a new life as something else, that's great. But there are plenty of things people have overlooked that with some time and imagination can be objects of beauty in your home.

If it is broken, do you know how to fix it? A dresser without knobs only needs new knobs but a dresser without a drawer is going to take some more work. Could you replace the dresser with a wicker basket you pull in and out? Could that drawer be replaced with a flat surface you could keep items like a handbag or shoes there? Start using your imagination and the solutions will come. Most objects can be recanted, repainted, repolished and reupolstered.

Sometimes with a trash to treasure project you may think it will become one thing and you change your mind halfway through the project. Be open to inspiration. Something may catch your eye and you choose to change the color scheme or the function of the craft.

Trash to treasure crafts can be very chic. Shabby chic as it is called is found in many decorating magazines. You are also doing something good for the environment, by reusing materials.

It is also important to know that not every trash to treasure project works and this doesn't mean it isn't successful. You may succeed in learning a new painting technique or something about quilting. Or you may learn something about what kind of project you do want to put in your living room, or what

you really want to create right now. Every project is part of your learning experience as a crafter and an artist.

Some great trash to treasure items include chairs, tables, dressers, vintage cocktail dresses, baby quilts, spools, jewelry boxes, suitcases, costume jewelry, dolls, picture frames, magazines, books and mirrors. You probably can find many more items that begin to inspire you to create something special.

The only challenge about becoming a trash to treasure crafter is then it becomes very hard to actually allow others in your home to throw things out! Happy crafting!

Abigail Beal a.k.a. the Gift-wrap Goddess teaches gift wrap in suburban New York. She is the author of 2 ezines: GiftWrapGoddessWraps and CreativeCraftsTeachers. To subscribe:

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Let's Go Shopping -- at Yard Sales!

By Cyndi Roberts

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In some areas they are mostly called garage sales, or rummage sales. Sometimes they are called yard sales. In Britain, I believe they have what they call "car-boot" sales.

Whatever the name, it is a fun part of a frugal lifestyle. Here are some of the ways I have found to save money by shopping yard sales.

Expecting your first child? Yard sales can be a great place to stock up on necessities. Everything from cribs to rocking chairs to bumper pads, blankets and clothing can be bought at much less than new prices.

Of course, you must use your good judgement as to safety and cleanliness issues.

If you have small children, be on the lookout for clothes in the next size your child will need. We all know how quickly children outgrow their clothes!

Clothes for older children can be picked up for a song, too.

Are your older children picky about brand names?
Do what I did—I told mine to think of these clothes as brand new, they've just already been washed a few times!

Found just the shirt or dress you need, but it has a stain on it? Here's a pre-soak trick to try:
Dissolve 1/2 cup of dry dishwasher soap in about a gallon of warm water. Add your garment and keep it submerged for 24 hours or up to 3 days. Do remember to test the fabric first.

Big money can be saved by buying toys and books for Christmas and birthday gifts at yard sales. Many sales will have brand new toys and games in the box at a greatly reduced price. If the boxes are not sealed, always be sure to check carefully and make sure all the pieces are included.

Toys to be repaired or refurbished are a big money-saver. Are your children ready for a bike? You'll find lots of outgrown

bikes at yard sales that just need a little cleaning up or maybe a coat of paint.

If you are a reader, as I am, you can save big bucks by buying books for next to nothing at yard sales. Even if you don't find a book you want to read yourself, if a book is very cheap, buy it and trade it for credit at the used bookstore!

Joke gifts for adults are another item to look for. Buying in the spring or summer means you aren't running around in December trying to find something suitable for that office Christmas party.

Always watch for gift wrapping supplies. Use your imagination! Grab that partial roll of wallpaper with border to match. Wrap a gift in the wallpaper and wrap a length of border around it; no need for ribbon or a bow!

Sometimes, you will even find actual wrapping paper and ribbon for sale at a yard sale. Never pass up a bargain.

Do you have a young adult going off to college next fall? Or one moving into his first apartment? Help out by looking for small appliances, sets of glasses, flatware, pots and pans or utensils. Then they won't be raiding your home for whatever they need!

Does your family love to work jigsaw puzzles? New puzzles can be

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pretty pricey—so just visit the yard sales. I've bought puzzles for as little as 50 cents and very seldom have I bought one that had any pieces missing.

"One man's trash is another man's treasure" is certainly true at yard sales. Some people just do not have the imagination to see the many uses of different items. Money-saving opportunities abound for those who are able to see potential in unlikely objects.

Cyndi Roberts is the editor of "1 Frugal Friend 2 Another" bi-weekly newsletter, bringing you creative, practical tips to help you with budgeting, cooking, shopping, parenting and much more as you strive to "live the Good Life...on a budget". To subscribe visit the "1 Frugal Friend 2 Another" website at <http://www.cynroberts.com>

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