

Recycling Tennis Balls in St. James – RecycleBalls



Have you seen the green tennis ball recycling containers hanging on the back of our court fences at Founders and Seaside? If not, please look for them, and put your used but no longer useful tennis balls into the bins.

The BCTA spearheads our tennis ball recycling efforts in St. James with a number of our residents volunteering to collect the used balls and assure they are appropriately put to another good use. Some balls go to the Brunswick County Schools for use under legs of desks and chairs, and some go to local animal shelters (the dogs love them). A majority have recently been, and will continue to be, sent to a tennis ball recycling facility. For 2019 over 10,000 balls have been sent to the RecycleBalls non-profit recycling facility by the BCTA.

If you have a large number of balls that need to be recycled, you can contact Jim Parker. He will gladly take the balls and assure that they are sent for recycling. Contact via e-mail: park.mail.1952@gmail.com

RecycleBalls is a non-profit organization in South Burlington, VT that recycles the entire tennis ball. They provide shipping boxes with mailing labels so that we can conveniently forward our used balls for recycling. Once at their facility, the balls are fed into a machine that grinds the ball and separates the felt from the ground rubber. The so-called "play-it-green" machine uses a one-of-a-kind recycling process where tennis balls are dumped into one end, torn apart until 99 percent of the felt is removed, with the remaining rubber ball reduced to a fine crumb. The fuzz and what they call "green gold" micronized rubber are each spit out from opposite ends of the machine.

The "Green Gold," ground-up recycled balls without the yellow fur, can be used for purposes such as the bases of signs, components in tennis court surfaces and stucco products. Research is being done to enable use of it in components of shoes. Their latest use for the entire tennis ball (rubber crumb and felt) is utilization as horse turf in arenas. The material is ideally suited for horse footing by binding the sand to

create a nice rubbery compound for the arena surface. As for tennis courts surfaces, it is estimated that a single Laykold tennis court surface contains rubber from up to 10,000 recycled balls.

Repurposing the felt is still a work in progress. There are prototypes of a teddy bear and small pillow, it is part of the horse turf material, and there are thoughts of creating fabric to make t-shirts and possibly use as insulation.

For general information, it is estimated that there are 120 million tennis balls sent to landfills each year. RecycleBalls is making an impact, as they now receive approximately 8,000 to 10,000 balls each day, 5 days a week. That equates to around 2,500,000 per year. With their network of entities sending balls for recycling expanding quickly, that number should increase significantly. We can do our part here at St. James.

To see the “play-it-green” machine in action, click on this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/recycleballs/videos/2324071651202971/?v=2324071651202971>

PLEASE THINK OF RECYCLING YOUR OLD TENNIS BALLS. It can keep thousands of balls out of the landfill – just from St. James. Thanks.

To learn more about the RecycleBalls non-profit here are some links.
Local TV coverage of their operation via this link:

<https://www.wcax.com/content/news/RecycleBalls-534859261.html>

Website link: <https://www.recycleballs.org/>

Click on the “media room” tab for a wealth of information on this organization