

## Tips for a Successful Yard Sale

*By J. Lennox Scott*

Yard sales are not only a great way to clean out your garage while making some extra cash, they are also a great way to turn what you consider your trash into someone else's treasure—the ultimate in recycling. If you choose to host a garage sale, there are a few things you can do to maximize the investment you make in it.

The key to a successful yard sale is making sure everyone knows you're having one. There are a myriad of websites dedicated to helping you advertise your garage sale—some of them will even loan you free yard signs. Many local newspapers devote entire sections to yard sale announcements. Community gathering places, such as grocery stores, often contain a bulletin board where you can post information about your yard sale. Neighborhood signage is also important. Good, sturdy, bright signs will direct bargain hunters to your yard—but be aware of neighborhood or municipal ordinances that prohibit signage in certain places.

As you are assembling the items you'd like to sell, be sure you get approval for the things that aren't technically yours. You may think your kids are too old for stuffed animals, but selling a sentimentally important teddy bear without permission could lead to many tears and, possibly, large arguments. Also, if you are selling clothing, make sure you go through all of the pockets to ensure you aren't selling coins, cash, or receipts with credit card numbers on them.

When pricing items, many garage sale veterans use a “one-third as much as it costs new” formula. This is a good starting point, but try to be objective about your things. Some will sell for much more than that—particularly if they are in their original packaging—but some won't sell for even a fraction of their original price.

Though many yard sale attendees will be prepared to haggle, an easily seen price tag is still appreciated. Label larger items with larger price tags, and include more information about them than just the price if appropriate.

Timing is everything, so choose your yard sale weekend thoughtfully. Though you may love the idea of hosting your sale over a three-day weekend, holiday weekends tend not to attract as many buyers. And be prepared for early and eager customers. If you say your sale starts at 9:00 a.m., you can be reasonably sure there will be buyers there much earlier than that.

At the end of your yard sale, make sure you take down all of the neighborhood signage. Then all that's left to do is sit back and enjoy the hard-earned cash and extra storage space.

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