

Earth Day inspires people to reuse stuff

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

What would you do with a stack of old tires? How about a heap of plastic bags? Can a pile of junk become a gold mine?

Inspired by a drive to recycle and powered by imagination, inventors and artisans are finding unusual uses for other people's discards. They're mining the dump and making treasure out of trash.

On Friday, millions of people around the globe will celebrate Earth Day, not so much as a holiday but as a reminder that most resources are finite.

"Reuse, repurpose, recycle" has become a mantra as "green" goes mainstream. For some people, it represents opportunity, too.

Clinton Watson and Mark Platt are prime examples. In their Applegate workshop, discarded tires find new uses as garden art and home products.

Flowerpots, fountains, mirrors, chalkboards, dog beds, chandeliers. These low-tech products give new life to old tread.

"When I cut open a tire, I'm inspired," Watson said. "It's like opening a gift."

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