



Extension News Column

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative Extension Service, www.uaf.edu/ces/fycit@uaf.edu, 907-474-5211, FAX 907-474-6885

Contact: Debbie Carter, information officer, 907-474-5406, dscarter@alaska.edu

Author: Roxie Rodgers Dinstel, Tanana District Extension Faculty, HHFD, 907-474-2426 or rrdinstel@alaska.edu

In Fairbanks, the weather is getting warmer, and garage sales are starting to pop up. Most of the time when shopping at garage sales, it is nice to take a leisurely stroll, looking for nothing in particular.

Sometimes, however, if you need something specific, plan to make the most of your garage sale shopping day. Here are a few tips to make your garage sale shopping trip a success.

Make a list. Yes, that's right. Just like at the grocery store, a list will keep you focused on what you're looking for, whether it's furniture or books.

Map out a route. The night before you head out, take a look at the local newspaper. Find one or two garage sales that you feel you want to hit first, because the ad says they are offering what you are looking for. From there, map out a route, taking into account the garage sale start times. You'll save time and gas if you know where you're going next.

Carry lots of change. I know it's hard to believe, but sometimes the people throwing the garage sale forget to make sure they have enough change. It prevents those "what do we do now?" moments that can derail a purchase.

Don't be afraid to bargain. Some people might get offended, but you have nothing to lose by asking, "Will you be willing to take \$x.xx for this?" In the worst case, they won't accept it. In the best, you get your price.

I also like to carry batteries with me. When buying electronic equipment, it's important to make sure it works. Usually the person holding the sale will have an outlet available to test electric items, but sometimes they won't have batteries for battery-operated items. If you carry your own batteries, you'll never have to wonder if something works. You can test it yourself.

When you shop garage sales, you need to pick your shopping time wisely. The earlier you go, the better the selection; the later you go, the more likely you can bargain and get the best prices.

Allow yourself a certain amount of money to spend and stick to it. Overspending takes away the sense of accomplishment you get by saving money.

To avoid filling up your own house with more clutter and items you won't use, always ask yourself if you will be able to use the item you are purchasing.

Now for the ultimate garage sale! UAF sponsors the Really Free Market on Saturday, May 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Say you have just a few items — not enough to have a garage sale — but you still want to get rid of the stuff. Bring it to the Really Free Market. Drop your items off across from the Patty Gym on the morning of May 21 from 8 to 10 a.m. and shoppers will come get it — for free. No money exchanged, but you can clean out your garage and get rid of all those items you just don't have room for. So, be sure to plan ahead and gather those things in your house that need to find a new home. The ultimate shoppers will love getting your stuff. For further information, check on the website at www.uaf.edu/summersessions.

Roxie Rodgers Dinstel is a professor of extension on the Tanana District Extension Faculty. Questions or column requests can be e-mailed to her at rrdinstel@alaska.edu.