



For George Gardner, owner of Gardner Foreign Auto Parts, Inc., recycling doesn't end when he leaves work.

## GREEN SCENE

### Gardner And The Environment Win Again

**G**eorge Gardner, owner of Gardner Foreign Auto Parts, Inc. in Pompano Beach, Fla., is not in the business of auto recycling just to win awards. He wins awards because recycling is part of his daily life and has been for at least 25 years. On April 29, 2009, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners named Gardner Foreign Auto Parts a 2008 Emerald Award Winner for Environmental Excellence. This prestigious award is one of the top environmental awards for the state of Florida. But, it is not a first for Gardner Foreign Auto Parts, just the most recent in a continuous string of awards. In 2003, the business won its first Emerald Award and earned Florida Green Yard status in 2007, to name a few.

Gardner Foreign Auto Parts has won more environmental awards

throughout the years than George himself can even recall. Going green was not a move he did for recognition, but more because he is a true environmentalist and cares about the planet he leaves behind. "Everybody has to chip in and keep their little piece of the Earth clean," he stated.

George's wife of 39 years, Del, said she simply would not work at a "junkyard" which provided him another incentive to go green.

"I refused to work with him unless the place looked decent," Del explained. "She kind of pushed me," George admitted. It was Del's initial push that got George to think green, but he takes great pride in making sure his facility stays green.

Gardner Foreign Auto Parts operates on just 1.3 acres using an open-air racking system to keep

things in order. For chemical containment, the lot has a berm and drums (all properly labeled, of course). Waterproof battery boxes and concrete keep spillage from seeping into the ground and eventually the groundwater.

In addition, George recycles everything he possibly can. Fuel is rescued from cars and used in delivery vehicles; antifreeze is bottled and given to whoever would like to have it.

George credits his tidy facility for his success in winning environmental awards. Del explained they cleaned up and then the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) came in, not the other way around, "We were way ahead of the game," she said.

Pompano Beach doesn't have a city recycling program so George takes the business' other recyclables home to West Palm Beach. By his estimates, he takes home 382 pounds of paper, 50 pounds of aluminum cans and 1,870 pounds of plastic containers, per year. He also takes home 70 - 80 glass beer bottles collected from cars and the neighborhood every week. He said he usually fills seven recycling bins at his house every Saturday. "I just don't want it in the landfill," he said.

Del added that George's commitment goes as far as stopping along the road to take something recyclable from someone's garbage drop off and adding it to his own recycling just to keep it from filling the landfill.

George said he mentions his green efforts in the business' phone advertisements, on the web site (GardnerAutoParts.com) and on the delivery trucks. ☐

BY RACHEL BROPHY

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