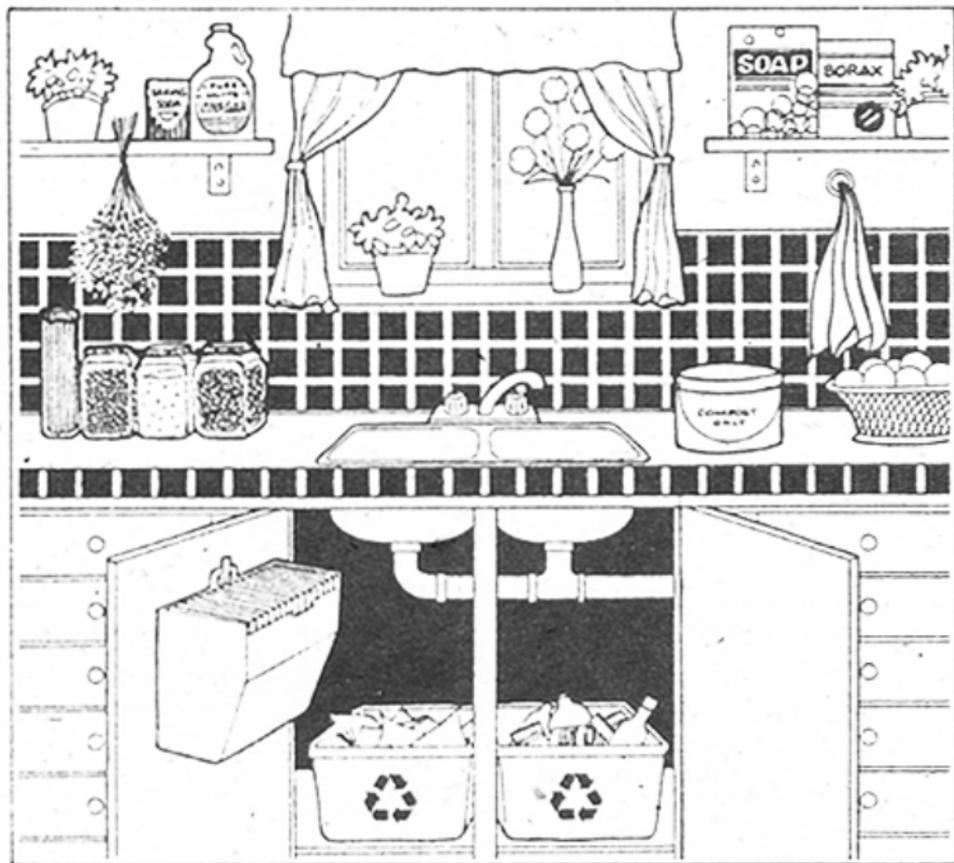


GOING GREEN

How To Reduce Your Garbage



- Setting Up and Operating a Home Recycling System
- Taking Recycling Beyond the Household
- Green Shopping
- Safe Cleaners

GOING GREEN

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR GARBAGE

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Everything we throw away has come, in some way, from the earth's resources. Throwing these resources away is an option we've chosen in the past. But growing landfills are reminding us that these resources are not infinite, and we must take care to develop alternatives to waste — such as recycling, reusing, and reducing everything we use.

Ideally, a recycling system will "close the loop". This means paper will be recycled into paper, glass into glass, a can into a can, rather than being turned into an inferior (and possibly polluting) product such as fuel pellets.

New information is being discovered about recycling daily, along with new information about the damage we are doing to the planet. If we can see our home or workshop or school as a microcosm of the planet, we can start to see the process of waste we are all a part of, and we can be empowered by our ability to make changes.

1. REDUCE

The most important of the Three R's. If we can become aware of how much we buy that we don't need, and make an effort to reduce that amount, we're already a long way along the road to less garbage. Here are some things you can do:

- Avoid over-packaged items; buy items with recycled or recyclable packaging.
- Don't buy disposable items (razors, pens, diapers).
- Buy in bulk.
- Use energy efficient light bulbs — some power companies offer rebates for energy efficiency, and information on ways to conserve energy.
- Don't use the dishwasher unless it's full. Hand-wash large pots and pans.
- Use reusable cloth bags for shopping.
- Buy food in bulk. Reuse jars to store bulk food.
- Make your own cleanser out of just a few ingredients. (see recipes under HOUSEHOLD CLEANSERS)
- Use cloth towels for mopping up, cloth handkerchiefs instead of kleenex, cloth napkins at the table.
- Think about what you really need. Don't go shopping just because you're bored. Make something, or fix something instead.
- Shop at second-hand stores.

2. REUSE

Before you throw it away, think if it can be reused somehow.

Try reusing:

- Envelopes, paper (use both sides, make recycled paper at home), egg cartons (either buy refillable egg cartons, or use them for starting seedlings, arts and crafts), clothes (take reusable clothes to the Salvation Army or consignment stores), yoghurt and cottage cheese containers, and jars (for storage of food and/or items such as buttons, mails etc.).
- Keep a box of clean rags made from T-shirts, pajamas, diapers, for kitchen clean up, etc.
- Plastic bags, rinse out and hang to dry. Put produce bags in your cloth shopping bag for your next trip to the store.
- Trade magazines and/or newspapers with a friend — donate magazines to clinics, hospitals, day care centers.
- Carry your own mug with you.
- Take used furniture etc. to second-hand stores or the Salvation Army, or have a garage sale.
- Use 100% post-consumer, recycled, unbleached paper. Use both sides. Unbleached computer paper is becoming more available and more competitively priced.

3. RECYCLING

The first thing to do is find out what can be recycled in your community. Some municipalities have drop-off centers; others have curb-side pick-up. Call City Hall or County offices to locate depots, and/or pick-up schedules. If you don't have a recycling system in place in your community, get involved and work on a solution.

YOU CAN RECYCLE:

GLASS —

BOTTLES OR GLASS CONTAINERS:

- Wash or rinse.
- Remove plastic or metal (put metal in metal containers).
- Separate by color of glass.
- Don't break.

Don't include: Pyrex, window glass, ceramics, lightbulbs (some recyclers now take these items separately.)

- Return refillable glass to stores, rather than sending them to be crushed and melted down. Close the loop.

METALS

TIN CANS

- Rinse. Peel off labels (easy if wet. Recycle labels in mixed paper).

- Remove both ends and flatten (check with your collection company- some prefer unflattened) Insert ends into flattened can.

ALUMINUM CANS

- Return for deposit. If not redeemable, treat as tin cans (some collectors prefer aluminum separated from tin).
- Aluminum cans, aluminum foil, pie plates can be recycled.

PAPER

NEWSPAPER

- Can include all pulp items. Telephone books if you cut off glued binding.

CARDBOARD

- Can include corrugated cardboard boxes, corrugated packaging, cereal boxes (remove wax lining), brown pags, backings from notepads, pizza boxes if clean (ask for wax paper top and bottom). Break down cardboard boxes to reduce bulk.

HIGH GRADE MIXED PAPER

- Can include office bond, looseleaf paper, photocopy paper, envelopes (plastic window removed), index cards, manila folders.
- Some places pay for this in large quantities. If you work in an office, it may be possible to add your supply from home to the office supply, and have it picked up there.

LOW GRADE MIXED PAPER

- Can include magazines, gift wrap, glossy paper, fax paper, white paper bags, and any highly colored paper.
- This paper has little value as of yet. Magazines, gift paper, paper bags can all be reused before sending off for recycling. *NOTE: remove coils and paper clips. Staples are ok.*

WHITE GOODS

Refrigerators, stoves, etc. can be recycled.

MOTOR OIL

- Many service stations will accept motor oil for recycling.

YOU CANNOT TRULY RECYCLE PLASTIC

Fossil Fuels are used in the manufacture of plastics and synthetics; are transported at great risk to our waterways; and are polluting when burned or recycled.

As plastic can only be recycled a few times, its unnecessary consumption is discouraged. Even though more types of plastic are becoming recyclable, there are still not many plans for collection, transportation, storage or processing in place. Plastic and polystyrene present a danger to fish, sea mammals, reptiles, and birds. Producers of polystyrene are still using ozone depleting blowing agents (HCFC-22 or halons), or blowing agents that contribute to the Greenhouse effect.

- Purchase products in glass and in bulk.
- Wash plastic bags and hang to dry for reuse.
- Avoid disposable plastic items (pens, diapers).
- Carry cloth shopping bags, and even cloth produce bags.

YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING SYSTEM

Meet with your family to discuss setting up a system that is easy, neat, clean and efficient.

Involve your children. Label the containers clearly — it helps visitors, as well as family members.

Come up with your own ideas on how to cut down household wastes.

If your community has a pick up system, stomp down tin and plastic containers to reduce bulk — put small jars inside larger ones.

If you have no pick-up system, you will need to set up your own system. Get together with neighbors and design a solution.

For your home system:

Use several small containers instead of one large one. (baskets, paper bags, plastic crates, boxes...):

1. A plastic container for organics. It's nicer if it has a lid.
2. One for unrecyclable waste - perhaps a paper bag.
3. One for metals.
4. One for glass.
5. A space for cardboard (save packing boxes for further use).
6. A container for low-grade mixed paper (perhaps a nice basket where the mail gets sorted).
7. A container for high grade mixed paper (in a convenient location, near the computer if you have one).
8. A container for newspaper. Tie with string, or fill a paper grocery bag when you have a stack.
9. An appropriate sized and child-proof container for toxic items and waste.

If you have no room in your house, use one container

for dry recycleables, and sort once a week into containers kept elsewhere, such as the porch, the garage, the storage room.

OTHER RECYCLABLES

Call your county or city recycling office for a list of places which take and even pick up other recyclable items (furniture, appliances, mixed paper, clothes, etc).

TOXIC WASTE

Solvents, furniture strippers, old asbestos, empty paint cans, nail polish and remover, batteries, old medicines etc.

- Handle with caution.
- Don't mix anything, especially chlorinated products.
- Keep liquids in original containers.
- Store for toxic collection day in your community (or lobby actively for it). Some communities have hazardous waste drop off days.
- Stop putting it into your garbage right away!

4. COMPOSTING

- Almost any organic materials can be composted, from kitchen waste to yard waste, but it's generally recommended that you not put meat products in, because they may attract animals. And fats do not break down very well.
- Kitchen waste includes: coffee grounds, tea leaves, floor sweepings, ashes from wood fires, cotton, and hair.

- An enclosure is more effective and neater than a loose pile. Be wary of plastic cones which promote rotting rather than decomposition. Its important to have air circulation in the pile.
- The process will be faster if the waste is in smaller particles. Cut or shred the ingredients.
- Grass clippings help prevent rotting.
- Add materials such as soil, manure, straw and leaves to speed the process.
- Turn the pile often, by slicing the pile and turning each slice.
- During dry weather it may be necessary to moisten the pile.
- In areas where raccoons, skunks, and rats are a problem, it's a good idea to construct a rodent-proof compost bin.
- When compost is ready for use, apply to the soil in a layer of one to three inches.
- If you can't compost, maybe you have a neighbor who can, or you can start a community compost and garden!

5. HOUSEHOLD CLEANSERS

(from Greenpeace's "Stepping Lightly on the Earth — Everyone's Guide to Toxics in the Home")

Avoid phosphates and toxic chemicals. Use your common sense. Are you putting something down the drain that you wouldn't want in your water supply? Read labels of cleaning solutions.

ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER

Mild Mixture:

1 gallon (4L) hot water

1/4 cup (50 ml) sudsy ammonia

1/4 cup vinegar

1 Tablespoon (15ml) baking soda

For a stronger cleaner, double everything but the water.

NOTE: Never mix ammonia and bleach - a toxic gas is produced.

LAUNDRY

1/3 cup (80ml) washing soda (sodium carbonate)

Add to water as machine fills.

Add clothes. Add 1 1/2 cup soap flakes. If the water is hard, add 1/4 cup (50ml) soda, or 1/4 cup (50ml) vinegar during the first rinse.

BATHROOM

For bathroom cleaning use a firm, bristled brush with either baking soda and hot water, or the mild, all-purpose cleaner. Bathroom cleansers often contain chlorine, one of the most dangerous chemicals found in municipal sewers.

DISHES

Use pure soap flakes (ie. Ivory Soap Flakes) instead of detergents. Add vinegar for tough grease.

MIRRORS, GLASS

Wash with soap and water, rinse with a vinegar/water solution, 1:4. Dry with cloth, or crumpled newspaper.

6. EFFECTING CHANGE

The focus of the environmental movement has turned to the home. Fingers which originally pointed at polluting industry have traced the consumption of the the products back to individual consumers. This is not an accusation, but an acknowledgement of power. We can vote with our dollars, refusing to buy products that pollute the environment or use valuable resources wastefully. We can communicate with retailers and manufactures about our concerns. They will listen. We can write letters to politicians and make sure we know the views of the people we are voting for in municipal, state and national elections. We can continue to educate ourselves about the state of the planet, and what we can do to help.

7. RESOURCE LIST

BOOKS

Home Biology — Simple and Practical Ways to Green Your Home. Keren Christenson

50 Things You Can Do To Save the Earth

50 More Things You Can Do to Save the Earth

50 Things Businesses Can Do to Save the Earth. The Earth Works Group

The Recyclers Handbook - A Simple Guide for Everyone

1001 Ways You can Heal the Earth. Jeremy Rifkin

Nontoxic, Natural and Earthwise: How to Protect Yourself and Your Family from Harmful Products and Live in Harmony With the Earth. Debra Lynn Dadd

How to Make the World a Better Place: A Beginner's Guide to Doing Good. Jeffrey Hollander, The Earth Works Group

OTHER VIDEOS FROM BULLFROG FILMS

Recycling is Fun 12 minutes, grades K-4. The basic whys and hows of recycling for elementary ages.

Journey of the Blob 10 minutes, grades K-6. See the water cycle.

Organic Gardening: Composting 10 minutes, grades 3-adult. Shows how to make a compost heap, and why.

The White Hole 10 minutes, grades 5-adult. An animated film that reminds us that there is no "away".

Waste 29 minutes, grades 7- adult. An overview of all the sorts of waste we produce and consume.

Recycling: Waste into Wealth 29 minutes, grades 5-adult. Illustrates the various types of community recycling programs.

8. JOINING A GROUP

One result of becoming aware of the environmental effect of our individual lives, is that we become more aware of the problems in the big picture. That can be overwhelming. It can help to join an environmental group, and become part of the growing movement towards a green society.



The Tomichich family proves what one family can accomplish in the fight to save our environment. Their popular workshop on living in a "green" household has helped hundreds of people put their environmental concerns into action. Their message: "You can do a lot when you take it a step at a time".

GOING GREEN is a step by step guide to reducing the "unfriendly" impact of your household on the environment. The Tomichich family workshop, as well as interviews with experts from Ruth Lotzkar of the Environmentally Sound Packaging Coalition, to members of the Environmental Youth Alliance, help cover the basics from how, to why ...

GOING GREEN

22 minutes VHS

Produced by Rhea Productions

Grades 5-Adult

Environment, Community, Home Economics

BULLFROG FILMS

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