



## SINGLE USE PLASTICS

- TELL:** All plastics break down and go into our water and ultimately the seafood we eat. Great Pacific Garbage Patch - YouTube videos talk about the Save Our Seas Act.
- DO** Talk about the Save Our Seas Act.  
Buy and carry reusable straws.
- EASY ACTION:** Make your meetings green!  
No Styrofoam or plastic cups > bring a mug.  
No water bottles > bring a pitcher.  
No plastic stirrers > bring spoons.  
Talk with your favorite restaurant, club or deli about “punting the plastic.”
- SHARE:** Silicone straws make great gifts! <http://nymag.com/strategist/article/best-reusable-straws.html>  
Ending the ocean plastic crisis together <https://4ocean.com/>  
How 4 Oceans got started <https://4ocean.com/about/>  
Great Pacific Ocean Patch loaded with fishing gear. <https://tinyurl.com/y6mxtvq7>

<http://www.plasticfreechallenge.org>

Single-use plastics, or disposable plastics, are used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. These items are things like plastic bags, straws, coffee stirrers, soda and water bottles and most food packaging.

We produce roughly 300 million tons of plastic each year and half of it is disposable! World-wide only 10-13% of plastic items are recycled. The nature of petroleum based disposable plastic makes it difficult to recycle and they have to add new virgin materials and chemicals to it to do so. Additionally, there are a limited number of items that recycled plastic can be used.

Petroleum based plastic is not biodegradable and usually goes into a landfill where it is buried, or it gets into the water and finds its way into the ocean. Although plastic will not biodegrade (decompose into natural substance like soil,) it will degrade (break down) into tiny particles after many years. In the process of breaking down, it releases toxic chemicals (additives that were used to shape and harden the plastic) which make their way into our food and water supply.

These toxic chemicals are now being found in our bloodstream and the latest research has found them to disrupt the Endocrine system which can cause cancer, infertility, birth defects, impaired immunity and many other ailments.

We produce hundreds of millions of tons of plastic every year, most of which cannot be recycled. It's obvious that we need to use less plastic, move towards environmentally sustainable products and services and come up with technology that recycles plastic more efficiently.



## HEALTHY YARD CHALLENGE

- TELL:** Pesticides kill pollinators.  
Round up and other chemicals can affect your health.
- DO** Adopt alternatives.
- EASY ACTION:** Spray with dish soap and water.  
Neem Oil for certain bugs.  
SAFER brand products are organic.
- SHARE:** Plants that repel insects: marigolds, borals, citronella.  
Exhibit pollinator plants at your club meetings.

### PLANT FOR POLLINATORS

Support bees and butterflies by planting native plants that are both pollen and nectar producers.

**Perennials:** Amsonia, Columbine, Virginia Bluebells, Woodland Phlox, May Apple, Black eyed Susan, Violets (allow in lawn!)

**Vines:** Coral Honeysuckle

**Shrubs:** Chokeberry, Clethra (Sweet Pepper Bush), Oakleaf Hydrangea, Mountain Laurel, Virginia Rose

**Trees:** Serviceberry, Redbud, Dogwood, Silverbell, American Holly, Sweetbay Magnolia, Sourwood, Oaks (most are pollen producers and host hundreds of beneficial insects)

### PROTECT OUR WATERSHEDS, OUR RIVERS AND OUR DRINKING WATER

Pledge not to use chemical fertilizers, synthetic pesticides, weed killers except on rare occasions, to resolve an infestation or to improve habitat for native plants and wildlife.

Non-source pollution into our rivers comes through storm water runoff. Lawn and garden chemicals, and dog poop funnel into this storm water runoff. Pick up after your dog, even if it goes in discreet spots like ivy or the bushes.

Do your part to reduce storm water runoff at your home, consider installing a rain barrel, a rain garden, a native plant bed, a permeable patio or a permeable driveway.

<http://www.jamesriverassociation.org/>



## CLEAN RECYCLING

- TELL:** China is refusing our dirty recycling.  
The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the size of Texas and Montana combined.  
1/3 of all recycling in the US has been deemed contaminated.  
Dirty recycling is more expensive and inefficient.
- DO:** Call Earth911 for local recycling options.
- EASY ACTION:** RINSE, sort, separate, REPEAT.  
Avoid the “Oops” Sticker!
- SHARE:** Recyclable rules for your community.

As Americans, we need to accept the challenges of reducing our waste production by avoiding excessive packaging and embracing smart recycling practices.

Recycling is one tool for waste management, but “it’s complicated.” Whether your community has curbside recycling or a community deposit site, it’s important to keep recycling streams as “clean” as possible to keep economic value in the materials.

Recycling depends on commodity markets which are local and vary considerably. Cities often accept more types of materials due to economies of scale in sorting and selling the products. Smaller communities may not generate enough of a particular material to make it worth a hauler’s effort.

### FACTS

- Aluminum cans have a very high value. Aluminum is taken to foundries where it is re-melted and poured into ingots for manufacturing.
- Tin cans have low economic value and are often contaminated with food residue. However, they are easy to separate at a facility because they are magnetic.
- Glass containers are heavy and sadly low in value. Weight makes transportation costly. Unless there is a glass foundry nearby, glass is often put in landfills. It can be re-melted and is best when sorted by color.
- Plastics have to be carefully sorted because each resin has its own physical properties. Plastic composite lumber companies can use a variety of plastics, but transportation can be impractical. Reducing the volume of plastic waste is a growing worldwide concern.

## ORGANIC LAWN CARE

- Let grass grow to 4", cut to 3" and leave clippings to retain H<sub>2</sub>O & nitrogen
- Overseed to outcompete weeds
- Water judiciously 1" in early morning
- Core aerate every year to allow oxygen to enter soil and relieve compaction
- Add clover for the nitrogen and bees
- Fertilize with clover & clippings only
- Compost tea to supplement soil and to keep pH between 6 & 7
- Corn Gluten for pre-emergent weed control
- Reconsider weeds. Better to walk on dandelions than on toxic chemicals. Keep your family and your pets' paws safe.

## ORGANIC GARDEN CARE

**Create healthy soil:** start composting (provides beneficial microbes); mulch suppresses weeds and retains moisture (use only organic mulch and compost); avoid products with Milorganite (a biosolid derived from wastewater sludge containing toxins and chemicals).

**Feed plants:** spring and fall; use granular organic fertilizers like Plant-tone, Holly-tone and Chickity Doo Doo; use fish emulsion and seaweed for potted plants.

**Water:** adjust sprinkler system to the weather and temperature; use a drip irrigation system.

**Plants:** purchase plants grown without systemic insecticide.

**Links:**

<https://eartheasy.com/yard-garden/non-toxic-pest-control/>

<http://www.rodalesorganiclife.com/garden>

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

**Pesticide and fungicide alternatives:** homemade insecticidal soaps, vinegars and oil; products made by Safer; strong spray of water; horticulture & neem oil; uncoated aspirin and water for "black spot"

**Avoid systemic insecticides:** poison to beneficial bugs, wildlife, chickens & pets

**Mosquito control:** plant citronella, marigolds, catnip; burn citronella candles; eliminate standing water.

**Weeds:** hand pick when they are little; horticultural vinegar instead of Roundup (banned in Europe and NY State)

**Danger of pesticides:** no safety studies on cumulative exposure; proven endocrine disrupters for wildlife. Fish are showing inter sex characteristics from pesticides.

## FACTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- Paper is graded by cleanliness, lack of oil contamination, color and length of fiber. High-grade office paper is of highest value. Dirty and mixed paper is of lower value.

## TO DO

A quick rinse to clean containers is effective in removing food residue and keeping value high. Keep the stream “clean” by sorting containers with only one type of material. Remove plastic tops from paper cartons, metal tops from glass containers, or aluminum seals from plastic containers.

Plastic bags and other types of plastic film should never go into a curbside recycling bin because they get tangled in the gears of the sorting machines. They do have some value and should be bagged together and deposited at a collection bin at most grocery stores.

Batteries, electronics, light bulbs, phones, electric cords and appliances can also be recycled. Sites vary by community. A good source of information on the ever-changing world of recycling is <http://www.wm.com/thinkgreen/what-can-i-recycle.jsp>.

Buy only what you need and choose products with long lifetimes. Think about products and containers you buy. Can you choose beer in cans? Can you buy grains and nuts in the bulk food section? Can you carry your reusable water bottle? Can you purchase products with recycled content? Try to dig deeper and learn the specifics of how and where your community recycles.

*Information abridged by Carol Carter from a report by Catherine Nicholson, Garden Club of America.*