

# How to Reduce Plastic Waste

Provided by your Recycling Block Captain, Fall 2013

Did you miss the **Plastics Recycling** or any other flyers?  
Download them at  
<http://tiny.cc/wpatcapt>

Our last handout focused on recent changes in plastics recycling and what recycling options currently exist (download it at <http://tiny.cc/wpatcapt>). But have you thought about how all that plastic and how it could be avoided in the first place? That's what this handout is all about. Reducing plastic waste benefits the environment even more than recycling and it can even save you money.

The following is a list of tips and tricks for reducing plastic in your life, compiled by several Corvallis residents. Not all things will work for you, but **we challenge you to check off at least 3 ideas to try over the next month.**

## At Home

- Rent or borrow instead of buying** - Seek out opportunities to rent a needed item, or borrow from family, friends, or neighbors.
- Reuse containers instead of buying new plastic storage containers.**
  - Use glass jars for storing perishables, leftovers, and bulk purchases.
  - Reuse plastic containers for leftovers or lunchboxes, or non-food items like planting garden starts, kids' toys, crafts, etc.
- Choose tap water over bottled.** Tap water is safe or safer than bottled water, costs less, and doesn't require millions of barrels of oil for its production.
- Make your own** - Make what you can at home to reduce purchasing packaged goods.
  - Grow your own vegetables, fruit or herbs.
  - Learn how to make a product you commonly buy. This could be homemade yogurt, bread, toothpaste, beauty products, household cleaners (e.g. bulk vinegar and/or baking soda), or anything else you'd like to try out! A quick internet search will turn-up recipes, guides and how-to videos.
- Try repair first, before replacing an item.**
  - Search the Internet for instructions and videos.
  - Attend a free Repair Fair offered by OSU during the academic year: <http://tiny.cc/repair-fair>.
  - Bring your broken item to a local business. Examples in Corvallis include, but are not limited to: A to Z Computer Appliance Repair, Bellevue Computer, Blackledge Furniture, Cell Phone Sick Bay, Chuck's Upholstery, Corvallis Bicycle Collective, Corvallis Sewing and Vacuum Center, Corvallis Technical, The Foam Man, Geeks N Nerds Computer Service and Repair, Mr. Fixit, and much more.
- Contact manufacturers about their packaging.**
  - Check company websites for feedback programs on packaging (e.g. Amazon Frustration-Free packaging <http://tinyurl.com/5zu8ze>).
  - Provide feedback to the Sustainable Packaging Coalition to influence retail/manufacturing business more broadly (<http://tinyurl.com/mfyp6he>).

## While Shopping

- Choose bulk** - Look in bulk before buying packaged goods.
  - Shop for bulk food items at:
    - » First Alternative Co-Op, 1007 SE 3rd or 2855 NW Grant
    - » Fred Meyer, 777 NW Kings Blvd
    - » Market of Choice, 922 NW Circle Blvd
    - » WinCo Foods, 2335 NW Kings Blvd
  - Shop for bulk non-food items:
    - » Pet supplies: Animal Crackers Pet Supply, 949 NW Kings Blvd; First Alternative Co-Op; PetCo, 2365 NW Kings Blvd; WinCo
    - » Hardware: Robnett's Hardware, 400 SW 2nd St
    - » Landscaping: The Bark Place, 6725 SW Philomath Blvd; ProBark, 5700 Reservoir Ave; Shamrock Landscape Supply, 4875 NE Hwy 20
    - » Cleaning and hygiene: First Alternative Co-Op
  - Bring your own container/bag for bulk items.
- Choose minimal packaging.**
  - When comparing products, choose the item with the least amount of packaging.
  - Choose larger packages over single-serving items.
  - Shop at Farmers' Markets.
  - Download online/digital media instead of buying CDs/DVDs.
- Choose durable.**
  - Replace single-use, disposable plastic items with reusable durable items.
  - Buy or make reusable bags for shopping, bulk items and produce.
- Buy used** - Shop at garage sales, on Craigslist, and at resale stores. See Corvallis Area Reuse Directory for a list of locations: <http://tiny.cc/2012directory>.

## Out and About

- Bring a reusable stainless steel water bottle**
- Bring your own reusable serving ware** - Tuck a durable fork, spoon, or spork in your backpack or bag.
- Bring your own reusable mug/cup** - Keep one in your car or backpack. Most drink shops offer a discount for using a reusable cup.
- Bring containers for leftovers when you eat out** - Eliminate the need for disposable to-go containers.
- Choose reusable containers in packed lunches** - Reduce the number of plastic baggies you use each week by opting for reusable glass, plastic, and metal food containers.



Guide created by the Waste Prevention Action Team of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition; printing sponsored by Republic Services of Corvallis. For more guides and info about the Recycling Block Captain program, please visit <http://tiny.cc/wpatcapt>.