

Top 10 Ways to Reduce Your Plastic Use

- 1.** Single-use plastic bags. Carry reusable bags with you everywhere! Refuse a bag if only buying an item or two. Use paper lawn and leaf bags for your yard debris.
- 2.** Water and drinks in plastic bottles. Stop buying bottled water (unless there's a contamination crisis!) Choose aluminum or glass for soda or other beverages. Keep a refillable bottle handy.
- 3.** Single-use produce bags. You can bring your own produce bags or not use them at all if buying a couple of apples or tomatoes. Avoid buying pre-packaged fruits and vegetables if possible.
- 4.** Plastic detergent bottles. Buy detergent in a box or in super-concentrated form to reduce packaging. Other cleaning products can be homemade, using bottles you already have.
- 5.** Bring your own bottle or mug to the coffee shop instead of getting a to-go cup. They won't mind, really.
- 6.** Take-out containers. Don't be afraid to bring your own container for restaurant leftovers. If that's too embarrassing, patronize restaurants that use sustainable packaging. Call ahead and find out!
- 7.** Plastic silverware. Unfortunately, those plastic forks and spoons are not recyclable. Ask restaurants not to pack them in your bag automatically, and keep some travel cutlery handy.
- 8.** Reuse and recycle the plastic you have! This includes taking gardening pots back to the garden store, donating clear clamshells to farmers' markets, reusing bread bags, yogurt cups and even those ziplock bags that many frozen products come in.
- 9.** Avoid single-serving cups such as fruit cups, yogurt cups, pudding cups. Buy in bulk and pack your kids' lunches and your own using reusable containers.
- 10.** Buy used. This avoids so much packaging that comes with new products, whether it's clothing with plastic tags, electronics packed in Styrofoam or anything displayed in those impenetrable molded plastic wrappers!
- 11.** Here are several contenders that didn't make the top ten: Straws. Small in terms of the bulk waste they produce, but easy to avoid and critical to keep out of the oceans. Disposable razors, disposable lights, mylar balloons, bubblewrap, and cheap toys and trinkets are all things that have sustainable alternatives.

THANKS FOR DOING YOUR PART TO REDUCE PLASTIC USE AND HELP OUR PLANET!

The Sierra Club Falls of the James Group (Richmond, Virginia area) is working to reduce plastic use locally through its "Skip the Plastics RVA" committee. Find out more and get involved at www.sierraclub.org/virginia/falls-james.

