

Waste Reducing Tips in Your Home

Every purchase you make will eventually require disposal. A household which reduces waste in the home helps protect the environment. Waste reduction is as important as recycling in saving natural resources, energy, reducing pollution and disposal cost and areas. Without careful management, the impacts on our environment and way of life will be long-lasting.

Shop selectively

- Rethink your purchases – only buy what you need.
- Reduce the amount of packaging you buy, reuse what you can, and recycle the rest.
- Look for products without packaging – fresh produce for example.
- Avoid individually wrapped portions such as cheese slices and poppers.
- Favour products with a high recycled content.
- Buy in bulk.
- Choose rechargeable batteries and long-life bulbs.
- Avoid disposable products such as razors. Instead use ones that can be reused.
- Buy recycled paper toilet paper.
- Is it reliable? Can it be restored or refilled and last for longer?



In the home

- Use re-useable, re-sealable containers for lunch and leftovers.
- Use old tooth and hair brushes to clean with (such as bathroom grout and shoes).
- Instead of paper or plastic, use ceramics and china.
- When spring cleaning or moving, have a garage sale or donate items to charities rather than throwing them out.
- Store household items like buttons and screws in reusable glass jars and bottles.
- Recycle your used bulbs through Hawkesbury Council's Chemical Cleanout service.
- Use matches instead of disposable lighters.

Out and about

- Don't use plastic straws, even at restaurants.
- Use a re-useable mug, and ask your favourite coffee shop if they will offer you a discount.
- Bring your own 'doggy-bag' - many are made out of polystyrene.
- Ask restaurants not to pack you disposable cutlery.
- Drink freshly-squeezed juice, rather than have the packaged variety.
- Avoid chewing gum. It is a synthetic plastic aka rubber.
- Return your plastic berry containers to the market - they can often refill them for you.

Food waste

- *FACT: Food and garden organics waste in the Hawkesbury accounts for between 40 – 50% of waste sent to landfill.* Much of this food is edible and costs the average household \$1000 a year.
- Plan your meals in advance..
- Prepare a shopping list and only buy what you need (after checking it isn't already in your pantry).
- Cook less.
- Store your food appropriately - in sealed glass containers for cereals.
- Avoid buying frozen, ready-made food: the packaging is often plastic and is not good for you.
- Make sure your fridge is working properly. Check that the seals are tight and the temperature is right. This will save you money on electricity as well.
- Overripe fruits can be used in smoothies or pies. Wilting vegetables are great for soups.
- Save your leftovers as the base of your next meal.
- Rotate your cupboards and fridge after shopping.
- Set up a compost bin for unavoidable waste such as fruit and vegetable peelings.
- Find out if a local farmer collects food waste to turn into compost or pig food.
- Use your senses before throwing something away, not just the best before date.



In the garden

- Grass clippings
 - Leave them on the lawn: recycles nutrients
 - Mulch: combine with leaves and mulchy-type materials
 - Compost
- Use the base of 2-litre soft drink bottles, egg cartons and aluminium cans for seedlings.
- Use old tires cut in half as flower planters.
- Make a compost bin or a worm farm:
 - Can include:
 - Grass clippings
 - Yard trimmings (old plants, wilted flowers, small prunings)
 - Leaves
 - Vegetable and fruit scraps
 - Coffee grounds and filters
 - Tea bags
 - Stale bread
 - Eggshells
 - Wood chips and sawdust from untreated wood
 - Do not include:
 - Meat, fish and poultry (including bones)
 - Food sauces
 - Fats, grease and oils
 - Dairy products
 - Invasive weeds
 - Treated wood
 - Pet waste
 - Charcoal and ashes
 - Non-organic material: plastic, metal, glass etc



Community effort

- Don't use a plastic bag if you don't need it - plastic bags can take 1000 years to biodegrade.
- When spring cleaning or moving, have a garage sale or donate to charity. Reuse old clothes as cleaning rags.
- Rent or borrow seldom used equipment.
- You can donate old eyeglasses to places that sell new ones, such as OPSM. They will be redistributed in third world countries.
- Shop ethically as every purchase makes an impact and your dollar is your vote.
- Say no to junk mail: add a sticker to your letterbox to reduce paper wastage. Contact the Distributions Standards Board on 1800 676 136 for a free "No Advertising Material" sticker.
- Cancel deliveries of phone books to your home through Directory Select.
- Donate containers from margarine, ice-cream and egg cartons to your local schools or childcare for reuse in craft activities.
- Donate books and magazines to schools, hospitals or charity book stores.
- Borrow books from the library or buy them second-hand instead of buying new ones.
- Write to the manufacturer of your favourite product if it doesn't come in recyclable or re-useable packaging.
- Put paper towels out of easy reach so they will be used only when needed. Set up a countertop or wall holder for sponges, rags and cloth towels.
- Buy beverages in returnable or recyclable containers (glass, plastic milk and water jugs (HPDE), plastic soda bottles (PET), and aluminum).
- Buy concentrated products to reduce packaging. Examples are concentrated fruit juice, laundry detergent, fabric softener and window cleaner.
- Avoid buying packaged foods with disposable, non-reheatable microwave dishes. If you must buy them, the dishes can be re-used as picnic plates, plant saucers or pet dishes.
- Letters and envelopes that are printed on one side can be re-used as shopping lists.
- Use carpools or public transit to extend the wear of cars and tires and reduce car maintenance wastes such as used oil.
- Use plug-in appliances instead of those that operate on batteries. Rechargeable batteries are the largest source of cadmium in the municipal waste stream.
- Bar soap generates less packaging waste and is less expensive than liquid soap in plastic bottles with pump dispensers.
- Take proper care of shoes and clothing and repair them to extend use.

