

Green Your Home: Improving Recycling and Reuse

Our fast-paced society is full of items to make our lives more convenient—from fast-food wrappers and cups to disposable shopping bags. But these convenience items, as well as all the other disposable items we use, can end up in landfills. It costs money to dispose of them and creates environmental problems.

Improving the way you dispose of waste is an important way you can help our environment. Reducing waste, reusing items, recycling, and composting save natural resources, energy, and

landfill space. Reducing waste can also save you money by lowering collection and disposal fees.

Use this chart to analyze how you are currently disposing of waste and whether items being thrown away could be reused, recycled, or composted. Place a checkmark ✓ to indicate what you currently do with each type of waste. Look at the “Comments” to see if there are ways you could make improvements. Finally, record your ideas under “Ways I Can Make Improvements.”

What We Do With Waste

Types of Waste	Mainly Recycled	Mainly Composted	Mainly Throw Away	Taken to Hazardous Waste Collection Site	Comments	Ways I Can Make Improvements
Mixed paper Includes white and colored paper, magazines, and newspapers					These items can be recycled. Most can also be composted if they are clean and cut into small pieces or shredded.	
Used paper product Includes used paper towels, tissues, cups, and plates					These items should not be recycled or composted because they can contaminate the recyclables and compost.	
Cardboard and poster board					These items are usually recycled, however, clean cardboard and poster board can be cut into small pieces and composted.	
Recyclable plastics Includes any plastic material that is accepted for recycling by your waste disposal company					Look for recycling symbols to help determine if the item is recyclable. Empty and rinse containers before placing them in the recycling bin.	
Glass bottles and jars					Glass containers used for food and beverages are recyclable. Empty and rinse containers before placing them in the recycling bin.	
Aluminum containers					Aluminum containers are recyclable. Empty and rinse containers before placing them in the recycling bin.	
Styrofoam					Styrofoam can only be recycled at special facilities. Contact your waste disposal company or local sanitation agency to find out how to handle it.	
Milk cartons					Milk cartons may or may not be accepted for recycling; check with your waste disposal company.	

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Green Your Home: Improving Recycling and Reuse (cont.)



What We Do With Waste (Continued)

Types of Waste	Mainly Recycled	Mainly Composted	Mainly Throw Away	Taken to Hazardous Waste Collection Site	Comments	Ways I Can Make Improvements
Food waste					Fruit and vegetable waste, as well as coffee grounds, tea bags, and egg shells can be composted. Keep meat, bones, grease, fats, oils, and dairy products out of the compost because they can turn rancid and attract rodents and other pests.	
Yard waste					Grass clippings can be left on the lawn after mowing to return nutrients back to the soil. Grass clippings, as well as dead leaves, twigs, and branches, can be composted along with food waste.	
Printer or copier cartridges					Printer and copier cartridges have to be returned to the manufacturer for recycling. Many manufacturers provide pre-paid shipping labels or have partner retailers where you can drop off cartridges.	
Computers and printers					Most computers and printers contain hazardous materials so these items do not belong in a landfill. Check with your local sanitation agency for ways to safely dispose of these items.	
Cell phones					Cell phones can be donated to various charities or recycled by returning them to cell phone manufacturers or wireless service providers.	
CFLs (Compact fluorescent light bulbs)					Compact fluorescent light bulbs must be disposed of properly because they contain very small amounts of mercury. Check with your local sanitation agency for the proper disposal method.	
Other: _____						