

Environmental Tips

Reducing Your Single-Use Plastic Waste

- 1 Store leftovers in reusable containers.** Or cover with 100% natural and environmentally friendly beeswax wraps or recyclable aluminum foil.
- 2 Replace disposable plastic shopping and produce bags with your own reusable ones.** Washable cotton produce and shopping bags are available or skip bags altogether if possible.
- 3 If you are a coffee fan, purchase reusable K-cups** that, besides saving plastic, will also save you money. Use loose leaf tea with a tea strainer instead of teabags that are sealed with plastic. Compost the loose tea and coffee grounds in your compost bin.
- 4 Single-use plastic bottles have a big carbon footprint and most are not recycled.** Buy a good quality plastic, glass, or metal water bottle to be reused. Wash and refill after every use for handy rehydration and be sure to take a bottle with you when you go out.
- 5 Take your own reusable containers to the bulk food store.** Buying larger tubs (i.e. yogurt, sour cream) creates less plastic waste than smaller, single-use sizes, and it saves you money. The same savings apply for larger bags of snacks compared to the waste of the single-serving bags.
- 6 Take your own cup/mug to the office and encourage coworkers to do the same.** Strive for a Styrofoam free workplace by buying inexpensive, washable cups/mugs for guests or by asking guests to bring their own cup/mug to meetings.
- 7 When ordering take out, skip the extra plastic** by requesting that straws, silverware, and condiment and spice packets be left out. Use your own items instead.
- 8 Choose sturdy, washable plates, cups, and cutlery** for your next party to be used over and over. In the long run it will save you money and reduce your plastic or paper waste.
- 9 Purchase sustainable toothbrushes,** made of bamboo, cornstarch, metal, and recycled materials instead of plastic ones.
- 10 Glass jars are great replacements for single-use plastic storage bags.** They are easy to sanitize and are freezer safe. If freezing liquids, avoid overfilling the jar as this may cause it to break.

By *Beth Bollas*, Ohio State University Extension



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Tips for Teaching Sustainability to Kids

By Beth Bollas, Ohio State University Extension

- **Visit a local farm or farmer's market** to teach your kids about locally grown food. If you have space, start a simple vegetable garden at home.
- **Teach your kids to respect green areas**; do not litter or leave pet waste. Organize or participate in a local cleanup with your kids. It's a great way to teach children about civic responsibility.
- **Instead of screen time encourage green time.** Go on a bug hunt, investigate your yard with a magnifying glass or plan a nature scavenger hunt.
- **Spend time enjoying nature trails, beaches, and parks** to help your kids see value in protecting nature. Virtually explore places around the world to show how we are all connected.
- **Use natural soaps and cleaning products.** Fewer chemicals and toxins will go down the drain resulting in healthier rivers, lakes, and oceans.
- **Reusing can be a great lesson in producing less waste and protecting resources.** Together make something functional out of items that would normally end up in the landfill.
- **Buy fun, reusable water bottles** for each family member and ditch the single-use plastic bottles.
- **Pack lunches in reusable containers** and include a cloth napkin and utensils that can be washed.
- **Research what is recyclable in your area.** Create and label recycling bins with your kids and place them around your home.
- **Shop at thrift stores or organize a neighborhood swap event** for clothing and toys.
- **Reduce food waste.** As a family, preplan weekly meals and make a list before shopping. Use leftovers for lunch. Drying, canning, and freezing are all ways to make food last longer.
- **Learn about composting** and set up a compost bin for food scraps.
- **Take shorter showers and unplug electronics** (like chargers) unless they are in use.
- **Put your words into action** and let your kids see you making green choices.



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Ten Tips for Packing Waste-Free Lunches

By Laura M. Stanton
Ohio State University Extension



- 1 **Start with a reusable lunch box or bag.** Avoid single-use items like disposable plastic or paper bags. Personalize, monogram, or label your reusable lunch container and items so they do not get lost.
- 2 **Pack reusable utensils.** Avoid disposable plastic forks, spoons, and knives. Pack utensils made of durable plastic, bamboo, or stainless steel. Consider buying used utensils from a thrift store or using what you already may have at home.
- 3 **Scan your refrigerator and cupboards for appropriate lunch items** so you can stretch your food budget and reduce wasted food in your home.
- 4 **Use food storage containers made of cloth, durable plastic, glass, or stainless steel** that can be re-used. Avoid plastic baggies, plastic wrap, and aluminum foil. Use glass or ceramic containers to heat food items.*
- 5 **Drink from a re-fillable beverage container.** Avoid single-serving drink boxes, pouches, cans, and bottles. Filtered water in a reusable bottle is the healthiest and least expensive option. Skip the straw or purchase one that is reusable and can be cleaned after each use.
- 6 **Bring your own dips and condiments.** Single-use items are expensive and cost more money in the long run. Use small, reusable containers for salad dressings, ketchup, and other condiments and side dishes.
- 7 **Consider your napkin.** If you prefer paper napkins, purchase napkins that are made from 100% recycled paper. The most sustainable option is a cloth napkin. Remember to use environmentally safe detergent to wash them and line-dry to save energy.
- 8 **Compost fruit or vegetable scraps.** If composting is not currently offered, investigate what it would take to implement a composting program at home, school, or the office. Every item you compost makes a difference.
- 9 **Recycle what you can.** Check with your local waste hauler to understand what items are recyclable in your area.
- 10 **Host a waste-free challenge** at school, at your workplace, or in your home to see how small changes can lead to big reductions in waste.



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Making these small changes can make a big difference and help protect our environment. However, these changes can take time and money. If it seems too expensive, start small and recognize you will save money over time, especially if you ditch the more expensive, single-serve products and buy in larger quantities. For example, buying one large bag of pretzels and putting them in your own reusable containers is much cheaper than buying individual, single-serving bags of pretzels.

Remember you may have many of these reusable items or containers already so reuse what you have. If you need to purchase new items, consider buying from a local thrift store or zero waste store.

**Due to health concerns related to the chemicals used to make plastic, medical professionals and researchers suggest avoiding plastic to store, re-heat, or cook food.*

Phasing Plastic Out of Your Home

Sustainability in the Kitchen

By Jill Bartolotta, Ohio State University Extension, Ohio Sea Grant



PRODUCE



- Save rubber bands from produce instead of buying new rubber bands.
- Have a home garden or buy from a local farm to limit the amount of plastic packaging associated with your food.



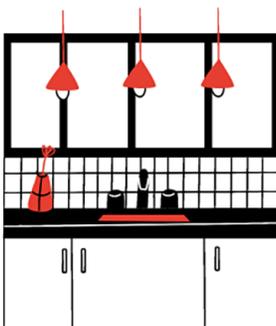
STORAGE

- Store leftover food in reusable sandwich bags and containers.
- Consider making your own items that come in non-recyclable containers, like yogurt and non-dairy milk.



WASTE

- Compost food scraps to reduce the amount of waste you create.
- Check with your local waste hauler or solid waste district to see which items you are allowed to recycle.



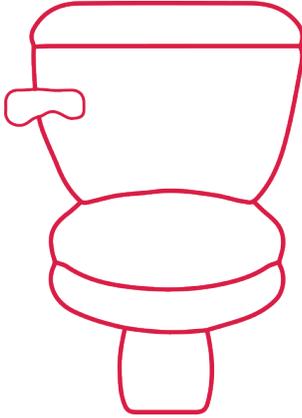
CLEANING PRODUCTS

- Cut sponges into smaller pieces to get more uses out of them.
- Use reusable cotton towels to clean instead of wipes or paper towels.
- Make your own cleaning products using vinegar and herbs.
- Purchase cleaning tabs or oils to which you add water to limit products bought in plastic bottles.

Phasing Plastic Out of Your Home

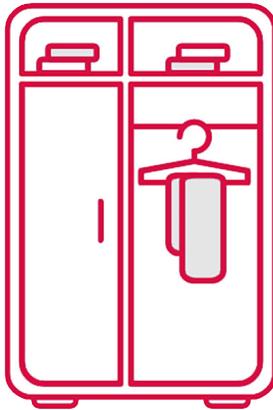
Sustainability Around the House

By Jill Bartolotta, Ohio State University Extension, Ohio Sea Grant



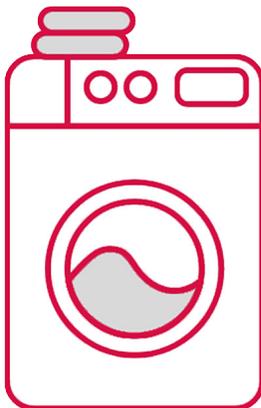
IN THE BATHROOM

- Use a bar of soap instead of body wash in plastic bottles.
- Use shampoo or conditioner bars instead of hair products in plastic bottles.
- Switch to a bamboo toothbrush.
- Use floss in glass or cardboard containers that have refill options.
- Switch to toothpaste bites instead of toothpaste tubes.
- Switch to reusable q-tips or makeup pads.
- Check the ingredients for all body care products to see if they have polyethylene or polypropylene in them. Avoid products with these ingredients.



IN THE CLOSET

- Fold clothes instead of hanging them to avoid needing to use hangers. Or use metal or wooden hangers.
- Buy clothing that is made from natural items like cotton or wool.
- Avoid synthetic clothing, which is made of plastic.
- If you wear a lot of synthetic clothing, wash it less, wash it in cold water, and install a microfiber filter in your washing machine.
- Buy clothing from resale stores, and donate unneeded clothes instead of sending them to landfills.



IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

- Use laundry tabs or soap berries instead of laundry detergent in a plastic jug. Or make your own!
- Install a microfiber filter on your washing machine.
- Clean your dryer lint tray regularly.

Plastic Free Vacation Tips

Sustainability While Traveling

By Jill Bartolotta, Ohio State University Extension, Ohio Sea Grant

IN THE HOTEL



- Bring your own bath products so you are not using single-use bottles from the hotel.
- Put the “Do Not Disturb” sign on your door so that your room is not serviced daily.



ON THE GO



- Bring your own reusable water bottle to refill instead of using single-use plastic bottles.
- Pack snacks in reusable containers or sandwich bags.
- Use a reusable cooler instead of a styrofoam cooler.



EATING OUT

- When going out to eat, refuse single-use items like straws and plastic cutlery.
- Bring your own container for leftovers.



TRANSPORTATION

- Use ride shares or public transportation if able.
- Use other modes of transportation, such as biking or walking, during your vacation to cut down on fossil fuel emissions.



LOCAL GOODS

- Take pictures to remember your trip instead of buying souvenirs, or consider buying non-plastic souvenirs.
- Support local businesses when visiting a new area.



THINGS TO DO

- Participate in an educational or stewardship experience on your vacation.





Reducing Plastic Waste When Boating

Use reusable containers to store any food and beverages you are bringing out with you on the water. Examples include reusable drinkware, cutlery, sandwich bags, and coolers.

Bring extra water in reusable bottles or jugs to avoid using disposable plastic bottles. If you are using any disposable cans or bottles, place these items in the recycling bin. Make sure to rinse and dry them first.

Use a mesh trash bag to contain any trash and store below deck or tie it down. Take all trash back with you and dispose of properly on shore. Do not dump anything overboard. Recycle any items that are able to be recycled.

Secure all items that will not be in use when underway. Carabineers or line are a great tool for securing items. Be mindful of wind as it may rip items out of your hand. Avoid eating or drinking while underway to prevent accidental littering.

Pick up any trash you see and dispose of it in a trash bin. Be careful if picking up sharp items. Make sure to place sharp items in a sturdy container before disposing of them in the trash bin.

When fishing, make sure lures are secured to fishing line to prevent loss and avoid cutting your line unless necessary. Remove fishing line as you see it. Store line in a container so it does not blow away.

If you smoke, use a smoking receptacle for used cigarette butts which are made of plastic fibers. Do not throw them into the water.

Consider using a reusable boat cover instead of shrink wrap when overwintering your boat or store your boat inside.

Always make sure your boat and the items aboard are secure when docking to prevent accidental loss of items.

Be prepared for large storms or flooding events and haul your boat out of the water if needed.

Power wash your hull over a tarp to prevent paint chips from entering the water. Do not wash paint chips into the nearby waterway.

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Ohio State University Extension
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Tackling Trash When Fishing

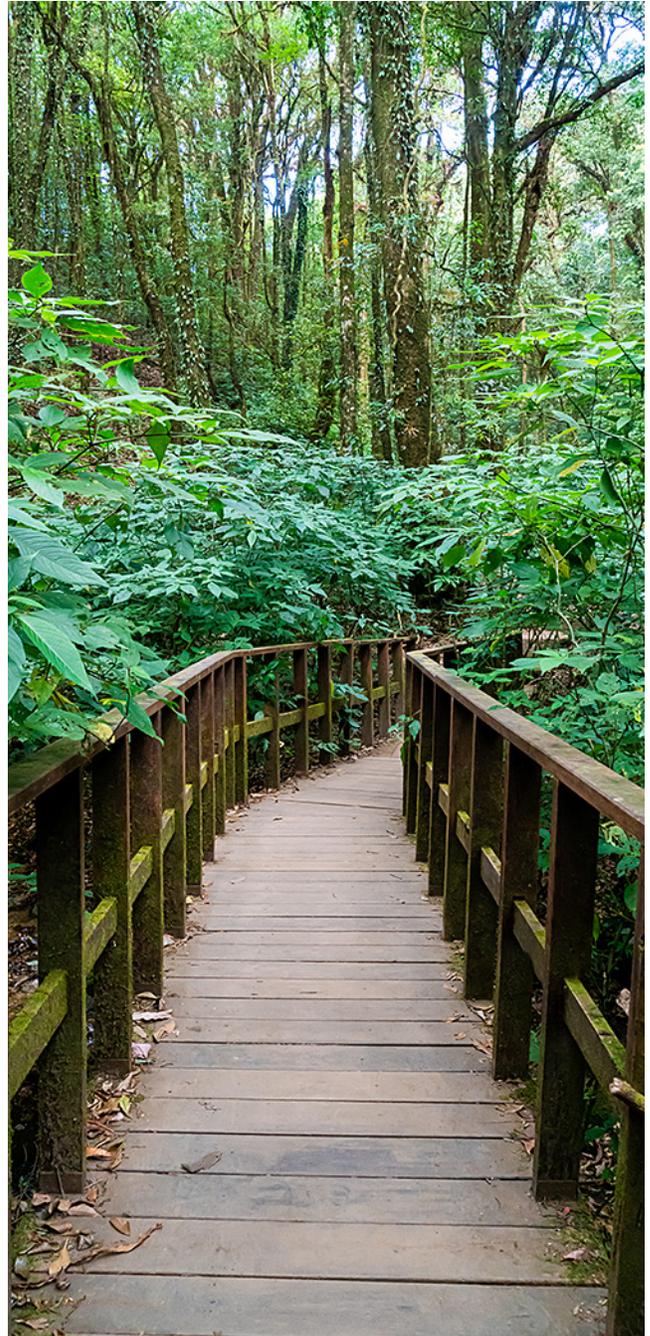
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- 1 Pack all your food and beverages in reusable bags or containers** to prevent accidental littering.
- 2 Bring water in a reusable water bottle** instead of using disposable plastic bottles. If you are using any disposable cans or bottles, place these items in the recycling bin. Make sure to rinse and dry them first.
- 3 Watch where you cast to avoid snagging your line.** If your line snags or breaks off, remember to remove from the environment and properly dispose of in a trash container. Remove any fishing line you find (yours or others) as it is the number one litter item entangling fish and wildlife in Ohio.
- 4 Use fishing line recycling bins when available.** Only place fishing line in these bins. Do not put your trash in them.
- 5 Lures, hooks, soft plastic baits, and lead weights are all harmful to the environment if left behind.** When no longer useable, dispose of in a trash bin.
- 6 Dispose of unwanted bait, packing materials, and containers in the trash** - do not dump them in the water or on land.
- 7 Pick up any trash you see and dispose of it in a trash bin.** Be careful if picking up sharp items like fishing lures. Make sure to place sharp items in a sturdy container before disposing of them in the trash bin.
- 8 Bring a bag or container with you to hold any trash you create** such as the small pieces of line you trim when tying knots and leaders. Dispose of in a trash bin.
- 9 When fishing from a boat, tie down items or store them properly** when underway to prevent accidental littering.
- 10 Educate others** so we can keep our favorite fishing spots trash free!

Trash Free Trails

By Jill Bartolotta, Ohio State University Extension, Ohio Sea Grant

- ✔ **Bring water in reusable water bottles** instead of disposable plastic bottles.
- ✔ **Pack hiking snacks** in reusable sandwich bags or containers.
- ✔ **Before you go out on your trip limit the amount of plastic packaging associated with your food.** This trick will lighten your load and prevent accidental littering. Buying in bulk helps reduce plastic packaging waste and it is cheaper.
- ✔ **Compact your trash,** taking up less space in your backpack and the trash bin.
- ✔ **Keep your camp area clean** preventing unwanted visits from wildlife and accidental littering.
- ✔ **Pack out all your trash and pick up litter as you see it.** Be careful if picking up sharp items. Make sure to place sharp items in a sturdy container before disposing of them in the trash bin.
- ✔ **Pack out all sanitary items** such as wipes, which are made of plastic fibers. Follow local guidelines on how to handle toilet paper waste.
- ✔ **Organize a trail cleanup** in your favorite park.
- ✔ **If you notice trash bins are overfilled contact park maintenance** to make them aware of the issue.
- ✔ **Share what you have learned** with others to keep our favorite hiking and camping areas trash free!



Celebrate Sustainably

By *Beth Bollas* and *Jill Bartolotta*, Ohio State University Extension and Ohio Sea Grant

Email invitations or use social media to invite guests. For printed invitations, make your own or buy ones printed on recycled paper. Encourage RSVPs to help buy the right amount of food and materials to limit waste.

Keep decorations minimal or look for things that can be used again. Old glass jars with flowers make beautiful centerpieces and holiday string lights make any party festive. Use a hole-punch to make your own compostable confetti from flowers or leaves.

Purchase a white cotton fabric table cover and provide fabric markers for guests to sign. Use it every year to create and provide a lifetime of memories.

Opt for reusable cups, plates, napkins, and silverware. Don't have enough of your own? Borrow from family and friends or check out thrift stores and flea markets. Another creative option: ask guests to bring their own supplies.

Buy food with limited plastic packaging. Purchase locally sourced produce and make your own food and desserts to cut down on packaging waste.

Make your own lemonade or punch and serve it in glass pitchers or a punch bowl. Serve water flavored with lemons, oranges, limes, or cucumbers in a drink dispenser instead of single-use plastic water bottles. Remember to compost the fruit afterwards or freeze to use in smoothies.

Pack leftovers in reusable containers and have a plan to use them after the party or send leftovers home with your guests. Use tools like Save the Food's Guestimator (savethefood.com/guestimator) to plan for the right amount of food and to reduce food waste.

Consider useful party favors or prizes. Small jars of locally made honey or jams, reusable water bottles or straws, small plants, and glass jars filled with candy are good options. For a child's party, consider a small craft as an activity that can double as a party favor.

Wrap gifts in newspaper, fabric, or place in gifts bags that can be reused. Make your own gifts or buy from a local artists or business. Gift experiences instead of items.

Provide clearly labeled bins (landfill, recycling, and compost) so that your guests can place items directly where they belong, saving you time after the party. Consider asking someone to monitor the bins to make sure items are placed correctly or sort waste after the party.



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