

2 Plastic

THE FACTS

There are 7 main types of plastics, which are produced from a combination of over 200 polymers. This makes the recycling of plastics very difficult.

Plastics have increased in popularity over recent years. In fact, the world's annual consumption of plastics is thought to have increased from 5 million tonnes in the 1950's to nearly 100 million tonnes today.

The most common use of plastics in this country is packaging and it is estimated that the UK alone generates nearly 3 million tonnes of plastic waste every year.

HOW IS PLASTIC RECYCLED?

Plastics are taken to a material recycling facility (MRF) where they are sorted into various grades, which are shredded into small flakes and run through a cleansing process.

These small flakes are then melted down and processed into granules, which can then be used to make new plastic objects, such as drain pipes and garden furniture.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Use one of the local recycling centres, there a number with plastics bank facilities that will take any type of plastic bottle.

For your nearest site, a full list is available in the Recycling Directory or on our website. Please squash the bottles and remove the lids, as they are made from a different type of plastic and contaminate the load.

Of all the materials recycled nationally, plastic is the most difficult due to its high volume and light weight. This makes it very expensive to collect and transport. In addition, the market for plastic reprocessing is limited to a few specific types of plastic.



For further information about Recycling and Waste Reduction please call the Recycling Hotline on 01483 445 084

Other plastic items, such as plastic bags, food packaging and polystyrene, are not yet recycled on a large scale as the costs of collection and sorting currently outweigh the value of the material collected, and the reprocessing facilities for these types of plastic are very limited.

It is very important that we think about trying to reduce and reuse our plastic waste. An easy example is plastic milk bottles, you could use your local milk man instead as glass milk bottles are reused about 40 times before being recycled.

To avoid using plastic bags at the supermarket, invest in a “Bag for Life”, which can be reused over and over again.

Try and avoid excess packaging by choosing loose fruit and vegetables.

Large plastic milk bottles can be reused as tealight candle holders in the garden, cut off the tapered top of the bottle and wash. Put some sand in the bottom and place the tealight on top. Put in the garden and light, the soft light looks great and no one can tell what they used to be – as long as you remove the label! (Not advisable indoors or around small children).

DID YOU KNOW?

One medium Fleece jacket can be made from 25 large plastic drinks bottles.

On average UK shoppers use 8 billion plastic bags per year, that's 134 bags per person.

RECYCLING.

It's not a load of rubbish.



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