



Packaging Waste

In 1960 the United States produced 26 million tons of packaging waste. By 1995 we were producing 65 million tons! Even with the upswing in recycling over the last 35 years this demonstrates an increase of 37 million tons of waste a year.

How to reduce the amount of packaging used and measures to insure that what we use is reusable first and then recyclable is a major task for the new century. The EPA estimates that 1/3 of all the solid waste generated comes directly from packaging materials. The breakdown of the packaging materials that end up in the landfill is: 33% paper & gray board, 25% plastic, 16% wood, 15% glass, 7% metal and 4% composites.

One of the most difficult areas to implement change in is the food industry. The increased consumption and availability of "packaged" foods and take-out has helped to double the waste stream volume. Packaging is not all bad. It has helped to make fresh produce available in off seasons and has been a factor in food contamination. But over packaged products are becoming the norm. Read boxes carefully to see what you are getting.

Packaging uses many natural resources, causes air and water pollution and wastes valuable land-fill space. It is often unnecessary. The only way to start eliminating it is from the grass roots level. Refuse what you do not need. Think before you purchase. REUSE!! Let companies know that you do not want their product to come wrapped up in a lot of stuff and help them to realize how much over packaging costs them.

What can YOU do to help decrease packaging waste?? Be a Waste-Buster and try a few of these out.

- * Bring Your Own Reusable produce bags to the store. Also bring your own cloth grocery sacks.
- * Bring your own drink mug.
- * Buy in bulk
- * Do not use packaging peanuts. Try crushed newspapers.
- * Eat out at fast food places less.
- * Pay attention to which fast food places you frequent. Some have cut back on packaging and use materials that contain post-consumer recycled materials
- * Do not allow stores to wrap, box or bag items if unnecessary.
- * Think of ways to reuse packaging.
- * Tell suppliers if they have over packaged a product. This works. I wrote to one company about a plastic toy that had been wrapped in plastic and grayboard and then placed in a box. I calculated the cost of packaging verses the actual toy and found that the packaging cost 65% of the toy cost. They eventually changed to a plastic tube and eliminated all the rest. They also sent me a gift certificate for another toy.

Most importantly, THINK before you buy.

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Manzanita: Mother's Nature Juice Bar, Bayside Gardens, Cassandra's, Manzanita News & Espresso, Pacific Coast Books & Coffee, & Nehalem Bay Video

Nehalem: Mermaid Cafe

Rockaway: Sharkey's

Tillamook: Rainy Day Books

Pacific City: The River House

Oceanside: Ocean Side Espresso

Lincoln City: Trillium Natural Foods, Driftwood Library, & Eats 'n' Stuff

Newport: Oceana Natural Foods, Don Petrie's Italian Food Co., Café DIVA, Cosmo Café, Bookmark Café, Newport Bay Coffee Co., Cuppatunes, Bay Latté, Ocean Pulse Surf Shop, Coastal Coffee Co., & Canyon Way

Eugene: Book Mark, Café Navarra, Eugene Public Library, Friendly St. Market, Happy Trails, Keystone Café, Kiva Foods, Lane C.C., Light For Music, New Frontier Market, Nineteenth Street Brew Pub, Oasis Market, Perry's, Red Barn Grocery, Sundance Natural Foods, U of O, & WOW Hall

Corvallis: Not Necessarily the News, & The Environmental Center

Salem: Heliotrope, Salem Library, & The Peace Store

Astoria: KMUN, Columbian Café, The Community Store, The Wet Dog Cafe & Café Uniontown

Seaside: Buck's Book Barn, Universal Video, & Cafe Espresso

Portland: Laughing Horse Bookstore, Act III, Barnes & Noble, Belmonts Inn, Bibelot Art Gallery, Bijou Café, Borders, Bridgeport Brew Pub, Capt'n Beans (two locations), Center for the Healing Light, Coffee People (three locations), Common Grounds Coffee, East Avenue Tavern, Food Front, Goose Hollow Inn, Hot Lips Pizza, Java Bay Café, Key Largo, La Patisserie, Lewis & Clark College, Locals Only, Marco's Pizza, Marylhurst College, Mt. Hood CC, Music Millenium, Nature's (two locations), NW Natural Gas, OHSU Medical School, Old Wives Tales, Ozone Records, Papa Haydn, PCC (four locations), PSU (two locations), Reed College, Third Eye, TransCentral Library, & YWCA

The Dalles: Klindts Bookseller

Hood River: Purple Rocks Art Bar & Cafe

Ashland: Garo's Java House, The Black Sheep, Blue Mt. Cafe, & Rogue River Brewery

(Out of Oregon)

Longview, WA: The Broadway Gallery & Carat Patch

Long Beach, WA: Pacific Picnics

Naselle, WA: Rainy Day Artisty

Nahcotta, WA: Moby Dick Hotel

Duvall, WA: Duvall Books

Bainbridge Island, WA: Eagle Harbor Book Co.

Seattle, WA: Elliot Bay Book Co., Honey Bear Bakery, New Orleans Restaurant, Still Life in Fremont, Allegro Coffeehouse, The Last Exit Coffee House, & Bulldog News

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