

REDUCE • REUSE • RECYCLE

by Jeanne Roy



WHAT TO DO ABOUT PLASTIC PACKAGING

If you are confused about what to do with plastics, you are not alone. Many plastic containers are marked with a number inside a triangle, which lead many consumers to believe the containers are recyclable. However, the number merely identifies the type of plastic. The symbol does not mean that the plastic can be recycled.

In the Portland Metro area, some plastic containers can be placed at the curb; others must be taken to a depot.

BOTTLES. The two plastic containers most commonly recycled in Oregon are the carbonated beverage bottle and the milk jug. Because of the five-cent deposit, beverage bottles get back to the stores. They may find their way into carpets, fiberfill, or clothing. Markets have also developed for milk jugs since they are so plentiful and easy to identify. They may be made into flower pots, pipe or toys. Other bottles accepted curbside are generally shipped to Asia.

Tubs, pots, and buckets are now accepted in all Metro-area curbside programs.

Bags can be taken to a New Seasons, Safeway, Albertsons, Fred Meyer, or Thriftway store, but their destination is uncertain.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

REDUCE. The best option is to avoid purchasing plastic packaging in the first place. Look for products in easily recyclable glass, metal and paper. Frequently you have a choice: When buying salad dressing, juice, and condiments, select brands that use glass containers. Even when plastics get recycled, it's generally only once, whereas paper has many lives, and glass and metal can be recycled forever.

RECYCLE. Place bottles, tubs, pots, and buckets in your curbside cart. Save other plastics for a trip to a depot. Call Metro, 234-3000, for updates on depots.

RESPOND. The company responsible for packaging is the one that chooses it. When you end up with packaging you can't recycle, send it back to the manufacturer. If that seems too radical, send a letter or make a phone call. Ask the company to switch to a recyclable package.

WHERE TO RECYCLE PLASTICS

Numbers 2, 4, and 5 tubs & bags

- Whole Foods stores in NE and NW Portland, Gresham, and Tigard
- New Seasons Markets in SW, SE, NE, and N Portland and Hillsboro

Numbers 1-7 except foam

- Far West Fibers
12820 NE Marx St., Portland
4629 SE 17th, Portland
10750 SW Denney Rd., Beaverton
6440 SE Alexander, Hillsboro
2005 N. Rosa Parks Way, Portland
1520 NW Quimby, Portland
341 Foothills Rd., Lake Oswego

Numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5 containers
(Last Saturday of the month)

- Garden Home Thriftway
7410 SW Oleson Rd., Portland, 10:00-2:00

Note that no one accepts foam.