

Reduce and Reuse Basics

The most effective way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place. Making a new product requires a lot of materials and energy: Raw materials must be extracted from the earth, and the product must be fabricated and then transported to wherever it will be sold.

As a result, **reduction and reuse** are the most effective ways you can save natural resources, protect the environment and save money.

BENEFITS OF REDUCING AND REUSING

- Prevents pollution caused by reducing the need to harvest new raw materials.
- Saves energy.
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change.
- Helps sustain the environment for future generations.
- Saves money.
- Reduces the amount of waste that will need to be recycled or sent to landfills and incinerators.
- Allows products to be used to their fullest extent.

TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE YOUR IMPACT ON THE PLANET

- **Help create a market** for recycled paper – buy recycled paper products made with post-consumer waste.
- **Recycle paper** to save trees from being cut down – this process reduces the amount of energy needed to produce more paper by about half and reduces air pollution emissions.
- **Use reusable dishware** and utensils rather than paper plates, cups or napkins. Choose “tree-free” paper products, such as those made from hemp.
- **Clean out juice bottles** and use them for water.
- **Donate extras** to people you know or to charity instead of throwing them away.
- **Purchase refillable** pens and pencils.
- **Repairing, donating** to a charity or selling items also reduces waste.
- **Reuse** boxes.
- **Reusing products**, when possible, is even better than recycling because the item does not need to be reprocessed before it can be used again.
- **Use cloth** napkins or towels.
- **Use durable coffee** mugs.
- **Use empty jars** to hold leftover food.
- **When shopping, purchase** items that can be reused.

WASTE REDUCTION TIPS & REDUCING HOLIDAY WASTE

- **Buy and use** only what you need.
- **Buy permanent** items instead of disposables.
- **Buy products** that use less toxic chemicals.
- **Buy products** with less packaging.
- **Buy rechargeable batteries** to accompany your electronic gifts and consider giving a battery charger. Rechargeable batteries reduce the amount of potentially harmful materials thrown away, and can save money in the long run.
- **Consider the durability** of a product before you buy it as a gift. Cheaper, less durable items often wear out quickly, creating waste and costing you money.
- **Give gifts that don't require** much packaging, such as concert tickets or gift certificates.
- **Send recycled-content** greeting cards to reduce the amount of virgin paper used during the holidays. You can also send electronic greeting cards to reduce paper waste.
- **Use your own camera** instead of a disposable one to reduce waste while capturing memories. Consider buying a digital camera so that you do not have to use film and only print the pictures you want to keep.
- **Wrap gifts in recycled** or reused wrapping paper or funny papers.



For a list of resources to reduce and reuse, visit the Good & Green Team web page:
<https://goodshepherdwareham.org/green-team/>