

Reduce & Recycle

The Connection

Excess waste from the overuse of disposable products and unsustainable landscape practices are rampant. The overuse of these resources and disposal of these items fills our landfills, degrades water and air quality, and causes deforestation. Additionally, many products such as paper products, are produced from the removal of our forests and account for as much as 26% of landfills. There are simple ways to combat this problem by adopting a waste management plan to reduce consumption, purchase recycled products, and increase recycling.

Take Action

Adopt the waste reduction and recycling plan and earn 1 acorn!

Acorns



Tracks



Instructions

- ☐ Implement the use reduction plan below
- ☐ Implement the repurpose and recycle plan below

Use Reduction Plan

Below you will find a set of steps to reduce the amount of water, plastic, and paper we consume. You must agree to each item to meet this goal. (Eartheasy, n.d.).

Reduce Water

➤ **Water in the Landscape:**

- ☐ I agree to primarily plant during the right time of year to save water during establishment: October-March for trees and shrubs, October - May for other plants (other than vegetable/herb gardens).
- ☐ I agree to water or irrigate before 9 am or after 6 pm to reduce water loss
- ☐ I will choose primarily drought tolerant-native plants and cultivars
- ☐ I will check the hoses, and irrigation system and promptly fix leaks

➤ **Water in the Building:**

- ☐ If I purchase a new clothes/dishwashing machine, it will be Energy Star rated
- ☐ I will replace my showerheads with water-saving low-flow designs
- ☐ I will install low-flow faucet aerators on kitchen and bathroom faucets with aerators rated 1.8 gallons per minute or less. This change from just your kitchen faucet is estimated to save 1,100 gallons annually (EPA, 2017).

★ More information on low-flow faucet aerators

www.conservationmart.com/blog/index.php/low-flow-faucet-aerators-cheap-way-to-save/

- ☐ I will use appropriate settings while washing clothes by adjusting the water level to match the size of the load or run full loads only. Additionally, I will avoid the permanent press cycle, which adds an extra rinse.
- ☐ I will practice responsible water use to clean dishes by only running the dishwasher when full. If there is no automatic dishwasher, I will wash dishes by filling up a sink basin and will minimize how long the faucet runs between washing individual dishes.
- ☐ I will check my pipes and appliances and promptly fix leaks
- ☐ If I purchase a new toilet, I will purchase a low-flow dual flush option.

- ☐ I will modify how much water my traditional toilets use by installing either a dual flush toilet converter or a water tank bank. A tank bank alone can save as much as 0.8 gallons per flush, a significant water use reduction as toilets use as much as 25% of total home water use. (Not applicable if a low-flow dual flush toilet is already installed).
 - ★ Video for installation of a dual flush converter:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMa8hur4XhM
 - ★ Video for installation of an adjustable toilet flapper and tank bank:
www.thespruce.com/how-to-convert-any-toilet-to-a-low-flow-toilet-1388727

Reduce Plastic

Plastic is hard to avoid in our everyday lives, but with some conscious effort, we can reduce how much plastic we use. 6 of the top 10 trash items encountered in the ocean, according to the 2021 coastal cleanup report were plastics with 2) Beverage Bottles, 3) Food Wrappers, 5) Bottle Caps, 6) Grocery Bags, 7) Straws, and 8) Take-out Containers (Ocean Conservancy, 2021). All of these plastics are single-use plastics that can be mostly avoided. You must agree to each item below to meet this goal.

- ☐ I promise to use reusable water bottles and avoid purchasing bottled water and beverages as the default.
- ☐ When choosing wrapped/pre-made food products I will choose compostable wrappings and bulk items that reduce packaging.
- ☐ I will use reusable grocery bags and should I still receive plastic shopping bags I will reuse or repurpose them, return them to grocery stores, or bring them to a special recycling center. The City of Atlanta's recycling program cannot accept plastic bags.
- ☐ I will not use single-use straws and will reduce the frequency of take-out containers by cooking more at home and, if able, bring reusable containers to store leftovers.
- ☐ I will switch to reusable containers such as pyrex, Tupperware, and reusable bags instead of plastic wrap and plastic lunch bags.
- ☐ I will not routinely use single-use plastic plates/cups/cutlery except when hosting an event and in such a case I will choose compostable products.

Reduce Paper

Paper has an obvious connection to trees. While paper products are a great solution to certain problems, especially when it is made of recycled paper, there are alternative options for some common uses of paper.

- ☐ I promise to always select “post-consumer waste recycled” paper materials when purchasing a paper product, as long as an option is available.
- ☐ I promise to stop using paper towels as the default at home by switching to kitchen rags, reusable cloth paper towels, and cloth napkins
- ☐ I promise to use a reusable cup/mug/bottle on the go
- ☐ I will not use single-use straws and will reduce the frequency of take-out containers by cooking more at home and bringing reusable containers for leftovers.
- ☐ I will switch to reusable containers such as pyrex, Tupperware, and reusable bags instead of plastic wrap and plastic lunch bags.
- ☐ I will not routinely use single-use paper plates/cups/cutlery at home except when hosting an event
- ☐ I will bundle my orders when purchasing online and choose shipping methods that allow items to be sent together.

Reduce Food Waste

The EPA estimates that one-third of all food in the US goes uneaten. In 2018 EPA estimated that more than 63 million tons of wasted food was generated in the US, and about 40 percent came from households (EPA, 2017) (EPA, 2022a) (EPA, 2022b).

- ☐ I promise to strive to buy only what is needed, eat what is purchased, and to avoid throwing away food.

Repurpose and Recycling Plan

Recycling and Repurposing Promises

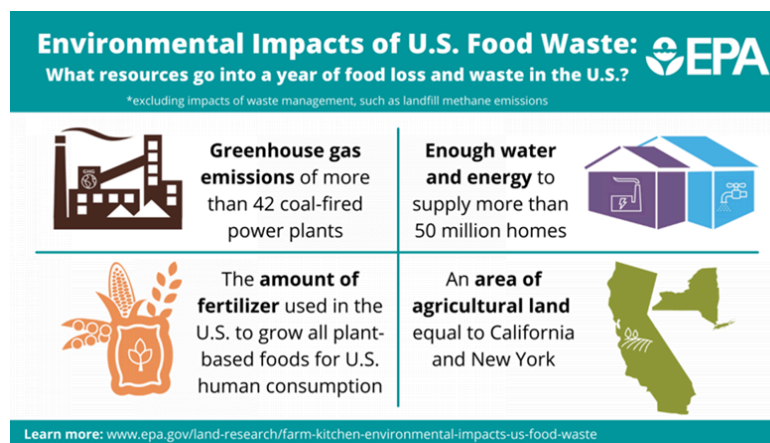
- ☐ I promise to recycle using my municipal recycling program and to follow all of the municipal recycling rules and best practices to avoid recycling contamination.
- ☐ I promise to recycle glass and plastic bags at bulk pick-up facilities such as CHaRM

- ☐ I promise to attempt to recycle or repurpose hard-to-recycle materials such as styrofoam, scrap metal, and electronics. For recycling help, recycling facilities, and collection options are listed below.

Preventing Food Waste

You can take the home-based challenge from the EPA to get a handle on what foods most frequently go to waste in your household!

- https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-02/documents/get_smart_ftgtw_2_1_2016_pubnumberadded_508.pdf



Planning & Shopping Tips

- Check your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry for ingredients and make a list of what needs to be used up before planning upcoming meals.
- Keeping a handy list of recipes that the household loves and is easy to make is useful when trying to quickly plan weekly meals and a shopping list.
- Use the list of what needs to be used up to help plan your meals, noting the amount of servings you need, and then buy only the things needed for those meals.
- Look for food items that are sold from bulk dry bins. This can save you money, reduce food waste, and packaging. Store food properly in airtight, labeled containers.
- Odds and ends of ingredients, leftovers, limp produce, etc. may still be fine for cooking. Try them in soups, stock, casseroles, stir fries, frittatas, sauces, baked goods, etc.

Storage Tips

- Most veggies stay freshest in the high humidity drawer of the fridge, particularly vegetables that are prone to wilting (e.g., leafy greens, carrots, cucumbers, and broccoli).

- Most fruits stay freshest in the low humidity drawer of the fridge, as well as vegetables that tend to rot (e.g., mushrooms and peppers).
- Some fruits release ethylene gas, making other nearby produce ripen more quickly. To prevent items from spoiling too fast, store these away from other produce (e.g., bananas, apples, pears, stone fruits, and avocados).
- To prevent premature molding, wash berries, cherries, and grapes until you're ready to eat them (not before).
- Freeze leftovers and freezable ingredients that will not be eaten in time. Label with the contents and the date. Prepared meals, breads, fruits, and vegetables all freeze well.
- Try your hand at regrowing food from scraps!
 - <https://foodrevolution.org/blog/reduce-food-waste-regrow-from-scraps/>

Municipal Recycling Resources

City of Atlanta

The City of Atlanta has rules on what you can and cannot put in your recycling bin. Placing items that are not accepted in your recycling bin will result in these items being trashed. Take a moment to review and familiarize yourself with Atlanta's rules.

What you can recycle in your City of Atlanta recycling bin

- **Aluminum cans**
- **Steel cans**
- **Magazines**
- **Newspapers**
- **Office paper**
- **Mail**
- **Boxes**
- **Cardboard**
- **Cartons**
- **Plastic Bottles** (soda, water, shampoo, detergent)
- **Caps** (only when cleaned and returned to the original bottle)
- **Plastic containers** (yogurt and butter tubs)
- **Shredded paper** (placed inside a paper bag or CLEAR plastic bag only)

What you cannot recycle in your City of Atlanta recycling bin

- **Glass Bottles and Jars** (*while you can place these in your recycling bin, the City of Atlanta currently landfills any glass until they come up with a solution for glass recycling*).

- **Plastic bags** (of any kind, including bagging your recycling)
- **Anything contaminated with food or liquid** (rinse all food containers well)
- **Clothing or textiles**
- **Chords, hoses, wires, or chains**
- **Tanks** (like empty gas tanks)
- **Wood**
- **Plastic furniture parts**
- **Scrap metal**
- **Styrofoam**

Best City of Atlanta Recycling Practices

- Do not bag up your recycling as the City of Atlanta does not accept any plastic bags
- Rinse all food items well to remove foods and oils. If an item is too contaminated it must be discarded or composted
- Remove tape off all boxes
- Flatten all mail, boxes, cardboard, and cartons
- Rinse all containers and bottles and replace the caps
- <https://www.atlantaga.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/43028/637021679012300000>

Other Municipalities

Adapted (Perkins, 2018)

- **Cobb County**
 - www.cobbcounty.org/?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=920&Itemid=3497
- **DeKalb County**
 - www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sanitation/why-recycle
- **Fulton County**
 - www.fultoncountyga.gov/inside-fulton-county/fulton-county-departments/real-estate-and-asset-management/solid-waste-and-recycling
- **Gwinnett County**
 - www.gwinnettcb.org/recycling/

Hard to Recycle Materials at CHaRM

While hauling recycling to a center is much less convenient than a curbside service, you

can recycle more items at a service center such as CHaRM and most of it is free! You can store your cleaned recycling and drop it off when convenient for you or think of doubling up with a neighbor and trading off drop-offs trips!

To recycle at CHaRM you must schedule an appointment through their online system. All it takes is a few clicks! Appointments are routinely open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 8 am - 2 pm. All materials must be clean, dry, and pre-sorted by material. Most items are free to recycle but for paid items, cash will not be accepted for payment. Venmo, Paypal, and credit cards are accepted. Adapted from (CHaRM, n.d.)

Schedule an appointment! www.livethrive.org/charm/book-an-appointment/

Items CHaRM Accepts

- **STATION 1:**
 - **Cardboard** (free to recycle)
 - **Styrofoam** (free to recycle): it must be clean and dry only and does not include packaging peanuts, black styrofoam, or styrofoam too soiled with food
- **STATION 2:**
 - **Bikes** (free to recycle)
 - **Musical Instruments** (free to recycle)
- **STATION 3:**
 - **Electronics** (free to recycle except \$20 per TV/Monitors) and includes any item that requires electricity or recycling
- **STATION 4:**
 - **Chemicals** (weighted with chemicals and first 25 pounds are free. From 26 - 100 pounds it costs \$0.25 per pound. From 101 pounds - 199 pounds it costs \$0.50 per pound. 200 pounds or more, \$0.75 per pound): any household chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, cleaners, and oils.
 - **CFL/Fluorescent Tubes** (First 2 are free then \$0.50 each additional)
 - **Paint** (weighted with chemicals and first 25 pounds are free. From 26 - 100 pounds it costs \$0.25 per pound. From 101 pounds - 199 pounds it costs \$0.50 per pound. 200 pounds or more, \$0.75 per pound): latex, oil, and aerosol
 - **Propane Tanks** (\$10 each)
 - **Shredded paper** (\$0.50 per pound)
 - **Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors** (\$5 each)

- **Thermostats** (\$5 each)
- **STATION 5**
 - **Mattresses** (\$15 per mattress or box spring)
- **STATION 6**
 - **Compost** (\$5 per 4 gallons)
 - **Cooking Oil** (free)
- **STATION 7**
 - **Tires** (first 2 are free then \$2 for each additional)
- **STATION 8**
 - **Household Donations** (free): must be in a reusable condition and includes clothing, sheets, towels, drapes, fabric, fabric scraps, plates, picture frames, books, games, toys, sports, and equipment.
- **STATION 9**
 - **Flat Glass** (free): these are flat glasses like window panes, furniture tops, shower doors, and windshields. Dinnerware, wine glasses, and microwave turntables are not accepted in flat glassware.
- **STATION 10**
 - **Appliances** (\$10 each): major appliances like washers, stoves, ovens, and water heaters. Refrigerators, wine coolers, and humidifiers are not accepted in appliances.
 - **Glass bottles and food-grade glass** (free): sort by color and all must be rinsed and dried.
- **STATION 11**
 - **Metals** (free): separated by type and includes cans/aluminum plus general scrap metal
- **STATION 12**
 - **Paper** (free): all paper, books, magazines, mail
- **STATION 13**
 - **Cigarette butts** (free):
- **STATION 14**
 - **Plastics** (free): Codes #1, 2, 4, 5, 6, plastic bottles, jugs, bags, film, and straws. Hoses, PVC, and tubing are not accepted in plastics.

Reuse and Repurpose Options by Material

Cardboard

It is possible to reuse cardboard in the garden through a method called sheet mulching or “lasagna composting”. Sheet mulching is using layers of cardboard, brown paper, paper bags, or newspaper on the ground then covered in mulch, woodchips, straw, leaves, or sawdust and left for some time before planting. This method helps shade out existing weeds and helps build up soil organic matter before planting. To see how this process is done check out the below tutorials:

- www.extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/soil-compost/sheet-mulching-aka-lasagna-composting-builds-soil-saves-time
- www.modernfarmer.com/2016/05/sheet-mulching/

Donation Items

Atlanta Green Theatre Alliance

Atlanta Green Theatre Alliance (AGTA) is the first Southern Chapter of the Broadway Green Alliance with a mission “to motivate, educate, and assist our colleagues in the Metro Atlanta theatre community to engage in more environmentally friendly practices. Our core values embrace Thoughtfulness, Community Equity, Sustainability, Green Innovation, and Empowerment.” AGTA operated The Shed, a space for Atlanta area artists to donate and collect materials for salvage and reuse located at South River Art Studios. If you have specialty construction materials (plywood, PVC, metal, plastic, miscellaneous) that might be useful for prop-building and art projects consider contacting the alliance to make a material donation.

- **Website:** www.atlantagreentheatre.org/agta-shed

Curb Alert and Charity

When performing spring cleaning or are no longer needing reusable items like pots, pans, tools, planters, clothes, etc. you can always post them up for free as a “curb alert.” Utilizing neighborhood groups and social sites you can post about your free items and let neighbors pick up your donations. Other than a curb alert, you can give to organizations that accept donations such as Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Atlanta Mission.

Scrap Metal

Other than recycling your metal you can also take metal to a scrap yard which will compensate you for the effort. The prices they will buy metal depends on the item, the size, the condition, and quantity but scrap metal facilities accept many different kinds of

metal, even some hard to get rid of appliances. Below are some scrap metal centers that will allow business from the general public:

- **Fulton Metals Recycling:**
www.fultonmetalsrecycling.com/iron-recycling/
- **M and M Recycling:**
www.mandmrecycling.com/scrap-metal-recycling-atlanta-ga
- **RCM Scrap Metal:**
www.rcmscrapmetal.com/scrap-metal-recycling-buyers-atlanta-ga
- **Schnitzer Steel:**
www.schnitzersteel.com/sell-to-us/general-public

From our Partner: Live Thrive Center for Hard to Recycle Materials

Live Thrive's The Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM) facility helps make our community a healthier place. 96% of all materials brought to CHaRM are recycled, re-purposed, or re-engineered and the few items that cannot have a second life are incinerated.

Website: www.livethrive.org

Recycling appointments: Tues, Thurs 9 am - 2 pm & Saturdays 8 am-2 pm

Address: 1110 Hill St SE Atlanta, GA 30315

Phone: 404-600-6386

Email: LT@LiveThrive.org

References

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Perkins, S. (July 3, 2018). Your county-by-county guide to recycling in metro Atlanta. Atlanta Journal-Constitution.
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Use for office. commercial
<http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/nationalgreenweeksub/waste-reduction-tips/tips-for-the-office.html>