

SUSTAINABILITY TIPS

Brought to you by the
Portola Valley Sustainability Committee

Single Use Plastics

Three hundred million tons of plastic is produced each year worldwide and half is for single use. We now know that 10% or less of plastic is actually recycled (mostly types #1 and #2). Read [How Big Oil Misled The Public Into Believing Plastic Would Be Recycled](#), and learn [why](#). Plastic items mostly end up in landfill or discarded into the ocean, persisting for decades.

But there are things you can do! Reducing your plastic use is *the* most effective way to avoid creating plastic waste and minimizing the impacts of plastic production:

- There are companies emerging in the Bay Area that will refill your containers of cleaning supplies – laundry detergent, dish soap, hand soap, etc. – thus keeping those big plastic bottles out of landfill. Try refilling at Byrd's Filling Station in San Mateo, Country Sun in Palo Alto, or Fillgood in Berkeley. Or consider a refilling service like Blueland or Grove Collaborative.
- Making simple swaps, like reusable water bottles and coffee cups, can spare the environment [hundreds of pounds of plastic each year](#). Select food (cream cheese, dairy, soft drinks) sold in glass, cardboard, or aluminum containers rather than plastic. Use biodegradable trash bags and compostable plates and utensils if they must be disposable.
- Buy reusable silicon storage bags instead of plastic zip lock bags. New ones are sturdy, reusable, and washable. In the meantime, washing and reusing your existing plastic zip lock storage bags reduces the production of hundreds of new plastic bags a year.
- Carry your own washable/reusable shopping and produce bags and use your own (washable) containers for bulk items. Even grocery stores like Whole Foods will weigh and mark your containers brought from home.

- Consider your clothing choices and choose natural fibers instead of polyester or mixed fabrics.

Each of us making small changes can make a difference to our community and our planet, and these changes will soon become new habits and examples for our friends and our children.