

How to Recycle Plastic Shopping Bags

Plastic shopping bags are not only reusable but recyclable as well. With most big retailers offering drop-off bins, it's now easier than ever to do our part to help the environment.

Are Plastic Shopping Bags Recyclable?

Since the majority of curbside recycling programs don't accept plastic shopping bags, most people believe that they can't be recycled at all. Thankfully, most people are mistaken. When dropped off at the correct location, plastic shopping bags can be recycled and given a second life as "plastic lumber" that can be used to make benches, playground equipment, and even new shopping bags.



Where Can I Take Plastic Shopping Bags for Recycling?

Everywhere we turn we're being bombarded with plastic shopping bags. They give them to us at the grocery store, at restaurants for takeout, and at the checkout desk at the mall. No matter what we do, disposable shopping bags have become a part of our everyday lives. Thankfully there's hope. A new trend is growing among some retailers who collect these bags for recycling free of charge. These drop off bins are usually located at the entrance of most grocery store chains and major retailers.



Why Recycle Plastic Shopping Bags?

It's important not to forget the reason why we recycle in the first place. Because it takes so long to biodegrade, plastic has the unique ability to negatively impact wild environments around the world.



Marine Life

Over ten metric tons of plastic debris finds its way into our oceans every day. This can spell very bad news for marine life living in these waters for many reasons. Two of the most common include entanglement and ingestion.

Entanglement

Floating plastic appears virtually invisible to the marine life living in these waters. This leads to animals getting tied up in everything from plastic six-pack rings to fishing nets.

Ingestion

The often bright and shiny appearance of plastic causes many fish to mistake it for food. When fish consume plastic, their brains get tricked into thinking that they're full and, in turn, they stop eating, become severely malnourished, and often starve.

Life on Land

Waste doesn't have to travel across the world to impact wildlife. In fact, it doesn't have to leave our backyard. Something as simple as a peanut butter container or plastic shopping bag can get wrapped around an animal's body, impeding it from moving and eating.

Conserves Resources

Don't lose hope! The fact that you are reading this right now means that people are interested in helping the environment. Thankfully, there are plenty of steps you can take to ensure that you are doing your part to help the environment. A great first step is to do a little research and spread the word about recycling practices. It starts from the ground up with actions as simple as sharing helpful articles such as this to help spread the word.