

ENVIRONMENT

HELPING OUT A BIT AT A TIME

IT IS NOT WASTE UNTIL YOU WASTE IT!!!

When we think of waste - also known as garbage, trash, litter, rubbish, refuse - we think of yucky, smelly, messy stuff. It's the junk we consider worthless, we throw it away. No one wants to think about it, much less deal with it.

Each week we put bins out by the side of the road and after the garbage truck takes it away, we don't think about it again: out of sight, out of mind. But where does it go? And what would happen if nobody came to take the rubbish away? How fast would our homes fill up with unwanted, stinky things? We'd be forced to think about it, constantly. We'd have to take a closer look.

And when we really look at what we throw away, we can see that most of our garbage isn't really garbage at all, but rather reusable, recyclable materials. The smelly, messy stuff (rotting food) is just a small part of our waste, much of this can be composted or feed to pets. Every garbage bag contains valuable resources and energy that we are throwing away.



WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Aside from all the wasted energy and valuable natural resources used to produce the materials we burn, dump and bury (often after only one or two uses!), waste disposal has significant impacts on the environment.

Burning or incinerating wastes causes air pollution and produces ashes that need to be carefully disposed of. Landfills take up an enormous amount of land; they are expensive to operate and it's very difficult to set up new sites (no one wants a landfill in their backyard); they can leak toxic chemicals and contaminate ground water and soil; and they release poisonous gases that contribute to global warming.



Rubbish is a huge problem because it consumes resources, pollutes our planet and a lot of it won't ever go away.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Since we all produce garbage, we are all part of the problem. But we can also be part of the solution. Of all the environmental issues we face today, garbage is one each of us can (and should) do something about. It's all about making wise choices.

The choices we make every day affect the amount and types of garbage we toss. When we rethink the way we live, reduce what we buy, reuse things instead of getting new ones, recycle and compost; we not only make less waste, we also save valuable natural resources and energy, and create less pollution.

Take responsibility for the waste you produce. Make a difference at home, school and when shopping. It's easy and every little bit helps!



REDUCE



REUSE



RECYCLE



Upcycling is the craft of turning waste materials into usable products like garden furniture from old wooden pallets or planters from old gumboots.