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February 2015 EcoFacts



Plastic Bags



Plastic Bags

Find them in trees, bushes, oceans and rivers, and soaring through the sky on a windy day. Plastic bags are a frustrating form of litter that blocks drainage ways, gets snarled in machinery and farming equipment, and is hazardous for wildlife. Many aquatic and land animals swallow or become entangled in plastic bag litter. Plastic bag recycling is also problematic. In automated Materials Recycling Facilities (MRFs) loose bags bind up sorting equipment, increasing labor and equipment repair costs.

What Can You Do?

First, Refuse. Then, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle . . . in that order!

- Refuse: if the clerk puts your purchase in a plastic bag, say "no thanks"

- Reduce: use fewer bags or bring your own reusable bag
- Reuse: reuse your bags at the store or as trash can liners, donate bags to dog parks, and better yet, use a durable bag designed to be reused
- Recycle: bring your plastic bags to a participating grocery store for recycling

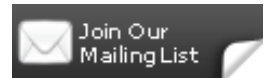
Policy

Hundreds of cities and counties across the U.S. and the globe have passed ordinances to ban plastic bags. www.plasticbaglaws.org has more information on bag bans and fees. In 2001, the Republic of Ireland instituted a "PlasTax" at 15 cents per bag to deter shoppers' careless use of plastic bags. Plastic bag use was reduced by over 90% in Ireland in the first year. Over nine million dollars annually are collected by this tax and used to fund environmental programs.

Visit www.wastecapne.org for all the information you need for recycling in Nebraska.



WasteCap Nebraska
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