

Plastic Facts

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I just visited my new favorite website, www.reusablebags.com to buy some reusable lunch bags and stainless steel water bottles, and as I was clicking on every part of their site (as I usually do!) I found some HORRIFYING facts about plastic bags and what they do to the earth. If this doesn't make you want to utilize reusable bags, I honestly don't know what will. And, by the way, if America is really serious about reducing our dependency on foreign oil, just take a look at how many million barrels of oil are used to make PLASTIC BAGS: 12 million. Come on, make an effort; Shoprite, Acme, and Walmart all sell reusable bags. Be patriotic, stop using plastic!

So here's the facts, courtesy of www.reusablebags.com

Introduced just over 25 years ago, the ugly truth about our plastic bag addiction is that society's consumption rate is now estimated at well over 500,000,000,000 (that's 500 billion) plastic bags annually, or almost 1 million per minute. Single-use bags made of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) are the main culprit. Once brought into existence to tote your purchases, they'll accumulate and persist on our planet for up to 1,000 years.

Australians alone consume about 6.9 billion plastic bags each year, that's 326 per person. According to Australia's Department of Environment, an estimated 49,600,000 annually end up as litter.

In 2001, Ireland used 1.2 billion disposable plastic bags, or 316 per person. An extremely successful plastic bag tax, or PlasTax, introduced in 2002 reduced consumption by 90%.

According to The Wall Street Journal, the U.S. goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually. An estimated 12 million barrels of oil is required to make that many plastic bags.

Four out of five grocery bags in the US are now plastic. According to the Wall Street Journal, Target, the second-largest retailer in the U.S., purchases 1.8 billion bags a year.

Plastic bags cause over 100,000 sea turtle and other marine animal deaths every year when animals mistake them for food.

In a dramatic move to stem a tide of 60,000 metric tons of plastic bag and plastic utensil waste per year, Taiwan banned both last year.

According to the BBC, only 1 in 200 plastic bags in the UK are recycled.

As part of Clean Up Australia Day, in one day nearly 500,000 plastic bags were collected. Unfortunately, each year in Australia an estimated 50,000,000 plastic bags end up as litter.

The average family accumulates 60 plastic bags in only four trips to the grocery store. Each high quality reusable bag you use has the potential to eliminate an average of 1,000 plastic bags over its lifetime. The bag will pay for itself if your grocery store offers a \$.05 or \$.10 credit per bag for bringing your own bags.

Windblown plastic bags are so prevalent in Africa that a cottage industry has sprung up harvesting bags and using them to weave hats, and even bags. According to the BBC one group harvests 30,000 per month.

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