

# We All Pay for Plastic Bags...



Plastic grocery and shopping bags may offer short-term convenience, but they have long-term costs. Not only do single-use bags require resources such as petroleum and natural gas to manufacture, their disposal presents a number of problems as well.

## Why aren't plastic bags recyclable in Portland's blue roll carts?

Plastic bags create major problems at recycling facilities. They jam and shut down machinery, **accounting for almost a third of labor costs.** Plastic bags that get mixed with other recyclables also contaminate the end materials, lowering their quality and value. The problem of plastic bags in our curbside recycling system means higher collection rates for Portlanders.

## Polluting our environment



Plastic bags are extremely lightweight and can act like balloons blowing out of garbage trucks and landfills. These flyaway bags litter our parks and trees, enter storm drains and can eventually end up in rivers and oceans where they break into small, toxic bits.

Plastics have found their way into all five of the world's major ocean current systems and are one of the most common types of litter found on Oregon's beaches. Sea animals often mistake plastic particles for food, causing harm to the animals and potentially affecting the seafood we eat.

## Right bag, right place

The Oregon DEQ estimates that Oregonians used approximately 100,000 tons of plastic film in 2009, and only a very small percentage of single-use plastic bags are actually recycled. Reusable bags are a simple way to reduce your need for single-use plastics—and they are easy and fun to use.

But even if we use reusable bags for our groceries and errands, produce, newspaper, and other plastic bags are part of our everyday lives. When you do have plastic bags, we recommend recycling them in designated bins at most grocery stores. Portlanders are great recyclers, but we need to take the next step by switching to reusable bags as part of our daily routines, and properly recycling single-use plastic bags.



Photo: Sally Painter

Portlanders are using reusable bags in a variety of styles and sizes to go to the library, thrift shop and the farmer's market.



## Here are a few tips to remember your reusable bags for your next shopping trip:



- ▶ Return bags to your bike or car.
- ▶ Store bags near your house keys.
- ▶ Put a reminder on your grocery list.
- ▶ Grab a "Got Bag?" window cling from the BPS outreach staff at any of the summer events listed on page 1.

## Did you know?

The environmental benefits far outweigh the costs when you reuse durable bags. It takes natural resources and energy to make reusable bags, but you only have to reuse a bag made from recycled polypropylene (#5 plastic) 11 times before you make up for the environmental costs of using a one-time, throw-away bag.

## Tell us what you're doing!

Lots of Portlanders are choosing to bring their own bags. Reusable bags come in a variety of styles and sizes—and they're not just for groceries anymore!

Join us on Facebook and tell us – where does your bag go?  
[www.facebook.com/gotbag](http://www.facebook.com/gotbag)



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# Portland Curbsider

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability • Sam Adams, Mayor • Susan Anderson, Director

Summer 2011

## Community Events Calendar: Summer 2011



### Good in the Neighborhood

**Saturday, June 25, 12 – 9:30 p.m.**  
King School Park,  
NE 6th Ave. & Humboldt St.

### Sunday Parkways North

**Sunday, June 26, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.**  
Route connecting Peninsula, Arbor Lodge, Kenton, and McCoy Parks, plus the Willamette Bluff.

### Sundown at Ecotrust Summer Concert Series

**Thursdays, June 30 – July 28, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.** 721 NW 9th Ave.

### Mississippi Street Fair

**Saturday, July 9, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.**  
North Mississippi Ave.  
from Fremont St. to Skidmore St.

### Sunday Parkways NW/Downtown

**Sunday, July 24, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.**  
Route connecting downtown, Old Town/Chinatown, Pearl District and Northwest neighborhoods.

### East Portland Expo

**Saturday, July 23 and Sunday, July 24, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.**  
Ed Benedict Community Park,  
SE 100th Ave. & Powell Blvd.

## Update on the Curbside Composting Pilot

For the past year, 2,000 Portland households have been composting their kitchen food scraps in their green Portland Composts! roll carts as part of the Food Scrap Curbside Collection Pilot.



## Great job, less garbage!

Our data shows pilot households are diverting nearly 50 percent of their food scraps, which is turned into a valuable compost product. Plus, garbage from participating households has dropped nearly 30 percent!

For the pilot households, curbside food scrap/yard debris pick-up increased to once-a-week and garbage pick-up moved to every-other-week. Even with every-other-week garbage collection, only 60 percent of the garbage containers collected in the pilot areas were full.

The Food Scrap Curbside Collection Pilot is the first step towards citywide composting. With good reports from participating pilot households and substantial reduction of garbage, the pilot will continue until the new system is rolled out citywide, sometime in the coming year.





# Beyond the curb:

Best recycling options for non-curbide plastics



**STYROFOAM™ BLOCKS** (No food-related Styrofoam™)  
Total Reclaim: 6427 NE 59th Pl. @ Columbia Blvd.  
\$5 per load  
Call 503-281-1899 or visit [www.totalreclaim.com](http://www.totalreclaim.com) for more information and hours.

## PACKAGING PEANUTS

Many mailing/shipping businesses reuse polystyrene packing peanuts. Some may also accept clean and dry cornstarch peanuts.



## RIGID PLASTICS AND PLASTIC BAGS

Far West Fibers has four Portland area locations:  
4629 SE 17th Ave. | 12820 NE Marx St.  
1520 NW Quimby St. | 2005 N Rosa Parks Blvd.  
Call 503-643-9944 or visit [www.farwestfibers.com](http://www.farwestfibers.com) for more information and hours.

## Non-curbide Recycling Questions?

Contact Metro at 503-234-3000 or visit [www.oregonmetro.gov/recycling](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/recycling).



## FreeGarden™ Earth Compost Bins

\$45

**Includes:** 10.6-cubic-foot capacity, door at base for easy collection of finished compost and rodent-resistant floor.

Available year-round at **MetroPaint Store on Swan Island, 4825 N Basin Ave.**  
M-F 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
SAT 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

To help ensure equal access to City programs, services and activities, the City of Portland will reasonably modify policies/procedures and provide auxiliary aids/services to persons with disabilities.  
Call 503-823-7700 with such requests.

## PORTLAND PLAN UPDATE

**THANKS FOR ALL THE INPUT** you've given as we develop the Portland Plan, a long range plan for Portland's growth and development for the next 25 years.

**NEXT STEPS?** The draft Portland Plan will be published in July, so you can check it out and share your comments at [www.pdxplan.com](http://www.pdxplan.com).

The draft plan will be presented to the Planning and Sustainability Commission this fall, and then the final Portland Plan will be voted on by City Council in early 2012. With integrated strategies focused on improving jobs, education, equity and our neighborhoods, this strategic plan will become the City's roadmap for 2035, and will set priorities for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.PDXPLAN.COM](http://WWW.PDXPLAN.COM)



## 2011-2012 Curbside Collection Rates



Every year, the City sets residential garbage, recycling and yard debris collection rates based on a thorough evaluation of what it costs to provide these services to residents.

Starting on July 1, 2011, rates for all Portland residential customers, including food scrap pilot households, will increase due to higher costs for landfill disposal and increased fuel and equipment costs, including less-polluting trucks.

Most residents will see an increase about of about 60 cents (2 percent) on their monthly bill. If you have questions about your rate or service level, please contact your garbage and recycling company.

For your garbage and recycling company's name and phone number, to view rates, and to access the new Curbside Collection E-schedule, visit: [www.portlandonline.com/bps/carts](http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/carts) or call 503-823-7202.

# PORTLAND RECYCLES!

## Curbside Recycling Guide

### MIX THESE ITEMS TOGETHER IN THE BLUE ROLL CART



#### ACCEPTED



#### NOT ACCEPTED



NEWSPAPERS  
MAGAZINES  
CATALOGS  
PHONE BOOKS

Include ads, inserts, postcards and miscellaneous paper.

Do not include rubber bands or plastic bags.



CARDBOARD  
MILK CARTONS  
DRINK BOXES

Flatten cardboard boxes.

Do not include wax-coated cardboard or pizza boxes.

Do not include plastic straws that come with drink boxes.



SCRAP AND SHREDDED PAPER

Scrap paper includes: junk mail, envelopes, office paper, greeting cards, paper egg cartons, paper tubes, wrapping paper and cereal boxes. Place shredded paper into paper bags.

Do not include bath tissue, paper towels, freezer boxes, coffee cups or paper coated with food, wax, foil or plastic.



PLASTIC TUBS AND BOTTLES

Tubs include: yogurt-type containers (6 ounces or larger), rigid plant pots (4 inches or larger) and buckets (5 gallons or smaller). Bottles (6 ounces or larger) have a neck that is smaller than the base. Rinse containers.

Do not include lids. Do not include bottles that have come in contact with motor oil, pesticides or herbicides.



METAL CANS

Cans include: aluminum, tin and steel food cans and empty, dry, metal paint cans. Rinse food cans to remove food particles. Place metal lids inside cans and crimp closed.

Do not flatten.



AEROSOL CANS

Cans must be empty.

Do not include plastic caps. Do not flatten or puncture cans or remove nozzles.



ALUMINUM FOIL

Remove food from foil. Crumple into loosely-packed balls.

Do not include metal that has plastic, food, or other non-metal materials attached.



SCRAP METAL

Include scrap metal that is smaller than 30 inches in any direction and less than 30 pounds.

Do not include light bulbs or lids.

### GLASS

Place in yellow recycling bin. Bottles and jars only. Mix all colors together. Labels are OK.

Do not include light bulbs, drinking glasses, flower vases, broken glass or lids.



### MOTOR OIL

Put in a clear plastic bottle with a screw-on lid. Don't mix with other liquids. Place next to roll cart or bin.

