



Plastic Bags and Our Environment: What You Can Do to Help



Facts About Plastic Bag Use

- The United States goes through about 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually; over one trillion are used world wide.
- About 1 million plastic bags are used every minute.
- The average family accumulates 60 plastic bags in only four trips to the grocery store.
- On average, plastic bags are only used for 11 minutes.



Environmental Impacts

- Only 1-3% of the plastic bags used worldwide are recycled.
- If you placed one year's worth of plastic bags end to end, they would go around the Earth almost 36,000 times.
- Plastic bags don't biodegrade, they break down into smaller toxic bits contaminating soil and waterways.
- It takes about 1,000 years for polyethylene plastic bags to break down.
- An estimated 12 million barrels of oil is required to make 100 billion plastic bags.



What You Can Do

- Bring your own reusable bags each time you visit the grocery store or farmers market.
- Sturdy cloth bags make the best shopping bags; each high quality reusable bag has the potential to eliminate an average of 1,000 plastic bags over its lifetime.
- Plastic produce bags can be reused as many as 50 times, and can be rinsed clean and dried.