

This guide was prepared for participants at our July Green Drinks Plastic Free Workshop. GS is pleased to now share the information, tips and recipes more broadly.

## HIGH IMPACT CHANGES

The ABC TV series *War on Waste* has put our unsustainable habits under a national spotlight. If you are motivated to change your behaviour, then adopt one or more of these ideas for maximum impact.

- Switch your coffee cup, shopping bag, water bottle from single-use plastic to reusable.
- Learn about REDcycle and start recycling your soft plastics and packaging.
- Get food waste out of your rubbish bin anyway you can!

## A-Z ALTERNATIVES FOR PLASTIC FREE LIVING

Single-Use Plastic	Plastic-Free Alternative
Bin liner (plastic bag)	Line your bin with several layers of newspaper (see instructions below)
Deodorant	Make your own (MYO) (see recipe below)
Doggy doo bags	Folded up newspaper
Coffee cup (lid)	Request no lid / take a reusable cup
Gladwrap / cling film	Reusable container / aluminium foil / fabric wraps
Hair brush	Keep an eye out for wooden/bamboo hairbrushes
Nappies - disposable	Reusable cloth nappies
Pasta	Make your own, buy in bulk or look for cardboard-packaged pasta
Plastic bag	Arms /cardboard box / reusable bag
Plastic drink bottle	Reusable drink bottle
Plastic milk bottle	Look for milk in refillable glass bottles
Plastic straw	Lips or source metal, bamboo or glass straw
Sanitary pads	Make your own or buy washable reusable pads online
Shampoo	Solid bar shampoo
Tampons	Try menstrual cups
Toilet paper	Look for toilet paper wrapped in paper – Buy WGAC from <a href="#">GS store</a>
Toothbrush	Look for a wooden bamboo toothbrush
Toothpaste	Make your own (see recipe below)

## FOOD WASTE

When food is sent to landfill the lack of oxygen when it's decomposing results in it producing methane, a gas which is 20 times worse than carbon dioxide for the atmosphere. If that doesn't convince you to start composting, think of all the nutrients a compost system can put back into your garden (or someone else's!). Food scraps are food too, and they should always be fed to someone else, whether that's a pet dog, chicken, worm farm, or plants.

**Love Food Hate Waste Recipes** - Discover leftover recipes, filter by dietary type, difficulty and cooking time on their [website](#).

# WHAT TO REDCYCLE?

## The Comprehensive List Do the SCRUNCH test!



YES PLEASE!	NO THANKS!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biscuit packets (outer wrapper only)</li> <li>• Bread bags (without the tie)</li> <li>• Bubble wrap (large sheets cut into A3 size pieces)</li> <li>• Cat and dog food pouches (as clean and dry as possible)</li> <li>• Cellophane from bunches of flowers (cut into A3 size pieces)</li> <li>• Cereal box liners</li> <li>• Chip and cracker packets (silver lined)</li> <li>• Chocolate and snack bar wrappers</li> <li>• Cling Wrap - free of food residue</li> <li>• Confectionery bags</li> <li>• Dry pet food bags</li> <li>• Fresh produce bags</li> <li>• Frozen food bags</li> <li>• Green bags (Polypropylene Bags)</li> <li>• Ice cream wrappers</li> <li>• Large sheets of plastic that furniture comes wrapped in (cut into A3 size pieces)</li> <li>• Netting produce bags (metal clips removed)</li> <li>• Newspaper and magazine wrap</li> <li>• Pasta bags</li> <li>• Plastic Australia Post satchels</li> <li>• Plastic carrier bags from all stores</li> <li>• Plastic film wrap from grocery items such as nappies and toilet paper</li> <li>• Plastic sachets</li> <li>• Potting mix and compost bags - both the plastic and woven polypropylene types (cut into A3 size pieces and as empty of product as possible)</li> <li>• Rice bags - both plastic and the woven type (if large, cut into A3 size pieces)</li> <li>• Snap lock bags / zip lock bags</li> <li>• Squeeze pouches with lid on (e.g. yogurt/baby food)</li> <li>• Wine bladders - clear plastic ones only</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Please make sure your plastic is dry and as empty as possible.</i></b></p> <p>Check details at <a href="http://www.redcycle.net.au">www.redcycle.net.au</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic bottles &amp; containers</li> <li>• Any rigid plastic such as meat trays, biscuit trays or strawberry punnets</li> <li>• Adhesive tape</li> <li>• Balloons (of any kind)</li> <li>• Biodegradable/degradable/compostable plastics</li> <li>• Blister packs, tablets and capsule packaging</li> <li>• Blow up pools &amp; pool toys - plastic or PVC</li> <li>• Bread bag tags</li> <li>• Christmas tinsel and Christmas trees</li> <li>• Coffee bags</li> <li>• Cooler bags</li> <li>• Disposable food handling gloves of any variety</li> <li>• Drinking straws</li> <li>• Film negatives and x-rays</li> <li>• Foam or polystyrene of any kind</li> <li>• Foil / Al foil of any kind</li> <li>• Food waste</li> <li>• Glass</li> <li>• Laminated materials and overhead transparencies</li> <li>• Medical waste materials</li> <li>• Paper and cardboard</li> <li>• Paper post packs</li> <li>• Plastic/clear vinyl packaging from sheets and doonas etc</li> <li>• Plastic packaging that has contained meat</li> <li>• Plastic strapping used for securing boxes and pallets</li> <li>• Powdered milk packets, made of foil</li> <li>• Rubber, rubber gloves, latex</li> <li>• Tarpaulins</li> <li>• Tin cans</li> <li>• VHS Tape</li> <li>• Wet plastic materials as mould is a problem for us</li> <li>• Wine bladders - foil based</li> <li>• Wrapping paper and cardboard, ribbons or bows</li> </ul>

## BEESWAX WRAPS

For beeswax only wraps – Use 15g of grated wax. Melt in oven then iron to distribute evenly.  
 For wraps using beeswax, resin & oil - Combine 10g wax, 6g pine resin and 3ml Jojoba oil per fabric square, melt in oven, add to fabric and iron to distribute evenly.

Source: [www.agoodplacetostart.com.au](http://www.agoodplacetostart.com.au)

# RECYCLING CONFUSION & THE NEW RECYCLING LABEL



While Aussies like recycling, it can be quite confusing and complicated. The Australasian Recycling Label is designed to be easy to understand. It shows what needs to be done with each piece of a package to dispose of it in the best way. You will find this label on the packaging of participating brands.

Through a partnership with the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) and Planet Ark, more companies will adopt this labelling scheme – so look out for it when you shop.

## How to interpret the new labels?

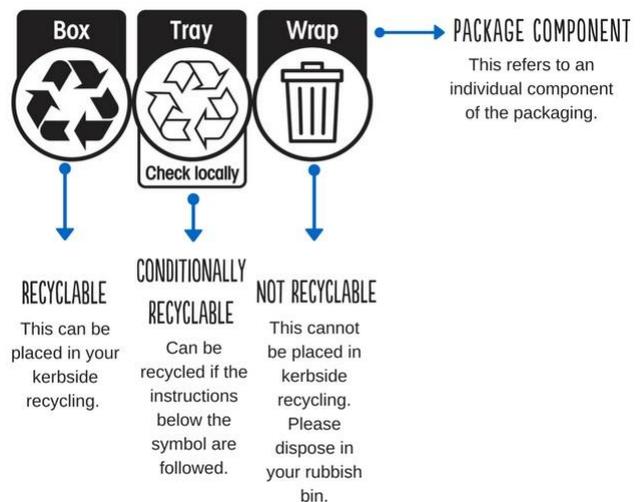
### Consider a box of chocolates



**The box** is cardboard and is therefore recyclable in your kerbside recycling.

**The tray** is made from a material that is accepted in kerbside recycling by many but not all councils. So you need to check with your local council to confirm.

**The cellophane wrap** is not recyclable so should be placed in your rubbish bin or REDcycle it.



To check local recycling options for these conditionally recyclable items go to [RecyclingNearYou.com.au](https://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au). The conditionally recyclable label can also have many instructions that help to ensure the material will be recycled when put into the kerbside recycling bin eg. Aluminium foil instruction tab will say 'scrunch into ball'. Source: Planet Ark, <https://planetark.org/recyclinglabel/>

## MAKE YOUR OWN (MYO) CLEANING PRODUCTS

There is really no need to purchase 'wonder' pre-packaged cleaning products. Try making your own with products you can buy in bulk, and usually in cardboard. You've probably got all the ingredients in your cupboard. **Source: Plastic Free July - [www.plasticfreejuly.org/cleaning.html](http://www.plasticfreejuly.org/cleaning.html) unless noted.**

- **Air freshener mist:** 2 tbs vodka or witch hazel, water, 10-15 drops of favourite essential oils, 100-400ml glass spray bottle. Add vodka or witch hazel to spray bottle, followed by oils and then fill with water. Use for toilet, bins, refresh room, linen. Lavender on pillows assists snoozing. Source: [Earth Love Gratitude](http://EarthLoveGratitude.com).
- **All purpose cleaner:** Fill an old spray bottle with vinegar and water. 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water.
- **All purpose cleaning spray:** ¼ cup vinegar, 1 tbs liquid castile soap (optional), 10 drops lemon essential oil, 10 drops tea tree essential oil, 10 drops Do Terra OnGuard essential oil, 300-500ml glass spray bottle. Add vinegar to spray bottle then essential oils and fill with water. Use as multi-purpose cleaner for kitchen and bathroom surfaces, tiles, cupboards, toys etc. Source: [Earth Love Gratitude](http://EarthLoveGratitude.com).
- **All purpose disinfectant:** Fill an old spray bottle with 3 cups of hot water, 3 teaspoons of borax and 10 drops of eucalyptus, lemon or lavender oil.

- **Clean a burnt fry pan:** Fill pan with a layer of water, add 1 cup of vinegar, bring to boil. Remove from heat and add 2 tablespoons of baking soda (note: it will fizz). Empty the pan and scour.
- **Clean microwaves:** Combine 1/4 cup of vinegar and 1 cup water in a microwavable container. Boil mixture for 3 mins. Let it stand in microwave for 10 mins. Wipe inside of microwave with a damp cloth.
- **Clean mirrors:** Pour a little vinegar onto a scrunched up sheet of newspaper and wipe mirror. Dry with a clean sheet of newspaper.
- **Clean toilets:** Sprinkle bicarb / baking soda into the bowl. Rinse with vinegar and scrub.
- **Cleaning rags:** Instead of buying cleaning rags wrapped in plastic recycle old towels, flannels and sheets that are well passed their used-by date. Cut them up, use, the wash!
- **Deodorant:** 6 tbsp coconut oil, 4 tbsp arrowroot powder, 2 tbsp bi-carb powder, 1 tbsp lemon juice. Mix bi-carb soda and arrowroot powder together in a bowl. Melt coconut oil in the microwave or saucepan and pour into dry ingredients. Add lemon juice or a few drops of chosen essential oils. Blend well. Decant into desired container (silicone ice cube moulds are best) before the mix hardens. Rub bar under arm or use a pea sized amount if in a jar. Source: [Plastic Free Bellarine](#)
- **Descal your kettle:** Half fill the kettle with water, drop a couple of slices of lemon and boil. Repeat once. Dry with a cloth.
- **Fabric softener:** Add one cup of white vinegar during the rinse cycle.
- **Facial scrub - Lemon Sugar Scrub** exfoliates and moisturises: ¼ cup coconut oil, ½ cup sugar\*, 2 tsp lemon juice. Melt coconut oil (if hard) in a microwave or saucepan. Pour into a bowl containing your sugar. Blend well. Mix in lemon juice. If the scent of lemon isn't strong enough, use more until you are satisfied. Store in a jar and use on face and body in the shower. If you have very oily skin, consider using less coconut oil and more sugar and vice versa for dry skin. \*Coarse sugars like white and raw sugar work best. Source: [Plastic Free Bellarine](#)
- **Make your drinking glasses shine:** Soak in a solution of vinegar and water. Dry with a cloth.
- **Remove rust (from tins):** Rub with a peeled potato dipped in bicarb / baking soda or salt.
- **Remove rust (from cutlery):** Polish cutlery with a paste of bicarb / baking soda and vinegar.
- **Remove soap scum from a shower screen (1):** Fill an old spray bottle with vinegar and spray the screen. Leave for 3-5 mins then wipe with a clean towel, scrubbing lightly.
- **Remove soap scum from a shower screen (2):** For stubborn screen stains squeeze some homemade toothpaste onto a sponge and scrub.
- **Soak and whiten nappies:** Dissolve 1/4 cup of bicarb / baking soda in warm water. Soak overnight. Wash nappies as normal.
- **Toilet bombs:** ½ cup citric acid, 1½ cups of bicarb/baking soda, 10 drops of Lemon essential oil, 10 drops of Tea Tree essential oil, 10 drops of DoTerra OnGuard essential oil & 10 drops of favourite scent essential oil (eg Orange, Lavender, Lemongrass etc). Mix dry ingredients and essential oils in a mixing bowl. Mist lightly with water so mixture sticks together. Push firmly into ice cube tray. Leave to dry for several hours or overnight. Store in airtight jar. Source: [Earth Love Gratitude](#).
- **Tooth powder/paste:** 5 tbs bicarb/baking soda, 5 drops clove oil, 10 drops sweet orange oil, 2-4 tbs coconut oil. Combine bicarb, clove oil and orange oil in jar. Seal with lid and shake vigorously. To make a paste, add coconut oil to the mixture. Source: *Waste Not*, [Erin Rhoads](#)
- **Unblock a drain:** Pour 1/3 cup of bicarb/baking soda into drain followed by 1 cup of white vinegar. Immediately seal the drain with the plug. Leave 1 hour and pour boiling water down drain.
- **Washing dishes by hand:** Add 4tbs of baking soda to the hot water.

- **Washing dishes in dishwasher:** Mix 1 cup borax, 1 cup bicarb / baking soda and 1/2 cup salt. Add 1 tablespoon of the mixture in the "soap/tablet" compartment. Add 1 tablespoon of vinegar to the "rinse agent" compartment.

## TERRACYCLE

### Diverting 'hard to recycle' waste from landfill

#### Where you can recycle other household products locally



<b>Optical</b>	Any brand contact lenses and blister packs. Drop off at Kevin Paisley: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waurn Ponds Shopping Centre (Shop 926)</li> <li>• Leopold Gateway Plaza</li> <li>• Westfield Shopping Centre (Shop 2234)</li> <li>• Geelong West Pakington Strand</li> </ul>
<b>Cosmetics</b>	Any brand lipstick, lip gloss, lip balm, mascara, eye shadow, bronzer, foundation, eye liner, lip liner, concealer. Drop off at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Eco, 112 Pakington St, Geelong West (rear of Gluten Free 4 U)</li> <li>• Blush Bar, 320 Pakington St, Newtown</li> </ul>
<b>Hair Care</b>	Any brand hair care - <b>tubes only</b> – hair gel, hair treatments, etc. All other hair care containers and packaging can go in your yellow kerbside bin. Drop off at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Eco, 112 Pakington St, Geelong West (rear of Gluten Free 4 U)</li> <li>• Blush Bar, 320 Pakington St, Newtown</li> </ul>
<b>Skin Care</b>	Any brand skin care - <b>tubes only</b> – lip balm, moisturiser, face & body wash, shaving product. All other skin care and personal care containers and packaging can go in your yellow kerbside bin. Drop off at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Eco, 112 Pakington St, Geelong West (rear of Gluten Free 4 U)</li> <li>• Blush Bar, 320 Pakington St, Newtown</li> </ul>
<b>Dental</b>	Any brand toothpaste tubes, toothbrushes, dental floss containers. But no electric toothbrush heads. Drop off at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Eco, 112 Pakington St, Geelong West (rear of Gluten Free 4 U)</li> <li>• Spring Creek Community Centre, Price St, Torquay</li> <li>• Parade Dental, 89 The Parade, Ocean Grove</li> <li>• Winchelsea Dental, 21 Hesse St, Winchelsea</li> <li>• Anglesea Recycling Centre, Great Ocean Road, Anglesea</li> </ul>
<b>Nespresso Coffee Capsules</b>	Drop off at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blooms of Lara, Six Ways Shopping Centre</li> <li>• Faggs Mitre 10, Barwon Tce, South Geelong</li> <li>• Faggs Mitre 10, Baines Cres, Torquay</li> <li>• Highton Village Florist, Bellvue Arcade</li> <li>• Pearl &amp; Boston, Pearl St, Torquay</li> </ul>
<b>Other Coffee Capsules</b>	Moconna, L'Or, Nescafe Dolce Gusto and Expressi aluminium capsules. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No drop off points in Geelong region. Return by mail only.</li> <li>• Expressi recycling currently on hold because of over-supply. Check TerraCycle website.</li> </ul>
<b>Other items</b>	Biros, Texas, Bottle-tops, Lids, Post-paks (paper with plastic lining). Drop off at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Eco, 112 Pakington St, Geelong West (rear of Gluten Free 4 U)</li> </ul>

Check details at [www.terraCycle.com.au](http://www.terraCycle.com.au)

# TYPES OF PLASTIC

## What's The Difference Between Degradable, Compostable and Biodegradable?

Trying to buy more eco-friendly products can be confusing. There is a common misconception that degradable or biodegradable bags are suitable alternatives to plastic bags. While they may sound environmentally better in reality they are more destructive. Recently, a Senate enquiry into the threat of marine plastic pollution in Australia found that the degradable bag option is equally as bad for the environment as regular plastic bags.

The report based on the Senate findings stated that, "While consumers might feel they are 'doing the right thing' by choosing biodegradable or degradable plastic, these products simply disintegrate into smaller and smaller pieces to become microplastic."

The inquiry also found that there is some serious confusion amongst the community surrounding the difference between bag types. It can be difficult to navigate the minefield of planet-friendly options, so here's our handy guide to help you separate what's truly eco from what to veto.

### Traditional plastic bags

How are traditional plastic bags detrimental to our environment? Let me count the ways. Single-use plastic bags have an average life span of 12 minutes, and worldwide we are using 2 million of these every sixty seconds.

Polyethylene bags are made from a non-renewable resource, and are incredibly harmful to the marine environment as they never biodegrade. Instead, they will simply break into smaller and smaller pieces over hundreds of years, inflicting untold amounts of damage to natural ecosystems.

### Biodegradable plastic bags

To put it simply, something is biodegradable when living things, like fungi or bacteria, can break it down. Biodegradable bags are made from plant-based materials like corn and wheat starch rather than petroleum. However when it comes to this kind of plastic, there are certain conditions required for the bag to begin to biodegrade.

Firstly, temperatures need to reach 50 degrees Celsius. Secondly, the bag needs to be exposed to UV light. In an oceanic environment, you'd be hard pressed to meet either of these criteria. Plus, if biodegradable bags are sent to landfill, they break down without oxygen to produce methane, a greenhouse gas with a warming capacity 21 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

### Degradable or 'oxo-degradable' plastic bags

Degradable items don't have living organisms as a crucial part of the breakdown process. Degradable bags cannot be classed as biodegradable or compostable. Instead, chemical additives used in the plastic allow the bag to break down quicker than a standard plastic bag usually would.

Essentially bags touted as 'degradable' are definitely not beneficial, and can even be worse for the environment! Degradable bags that disintegrate just become tinier and tinier pieces of microplastic quicker, and still pose serious threats to marine life. Microplastics enter the food chain lower down, getting eaten by smaller species and then continuing to make their way up the food chain as these smaller species are consumed.

Professor Tony Underwood from the University of Sydney described degradable plastic bags as "not a solution to anything much, unless we are quite happy to shift it all into particle-sized plastics rather than plastic bag-sized plastic."

### Compostable plastic bags

The word 'compostable' is incredibly misleading for the average consumer. You'd think a bag labeled 'compostable' would mean you could throw it in your backyard compost alongside your fruit and veggie scraps, right? Wrong. Compostable bags biodegrade, but only under certain conditions.

Compostable bags need to be composted in a specific composting facility, of which there are very few of in Australia. Compostable bags are generally made from plant material that return to base organic components when processed by these facilities, but the problem lies in the fact there are thus far only 150 of these facilities Australia wide.

### Can I recycle plastic bags?

Plastic bags, biodegradable, degradable and compostable bags cannot be placed in your standard recycling bin at home. They can severely interfere with the recycling process if they are. However, your local supermarket offers plastic bag recycling - look for the REDCycle logo (see note below).

### Which is the best bag to use?

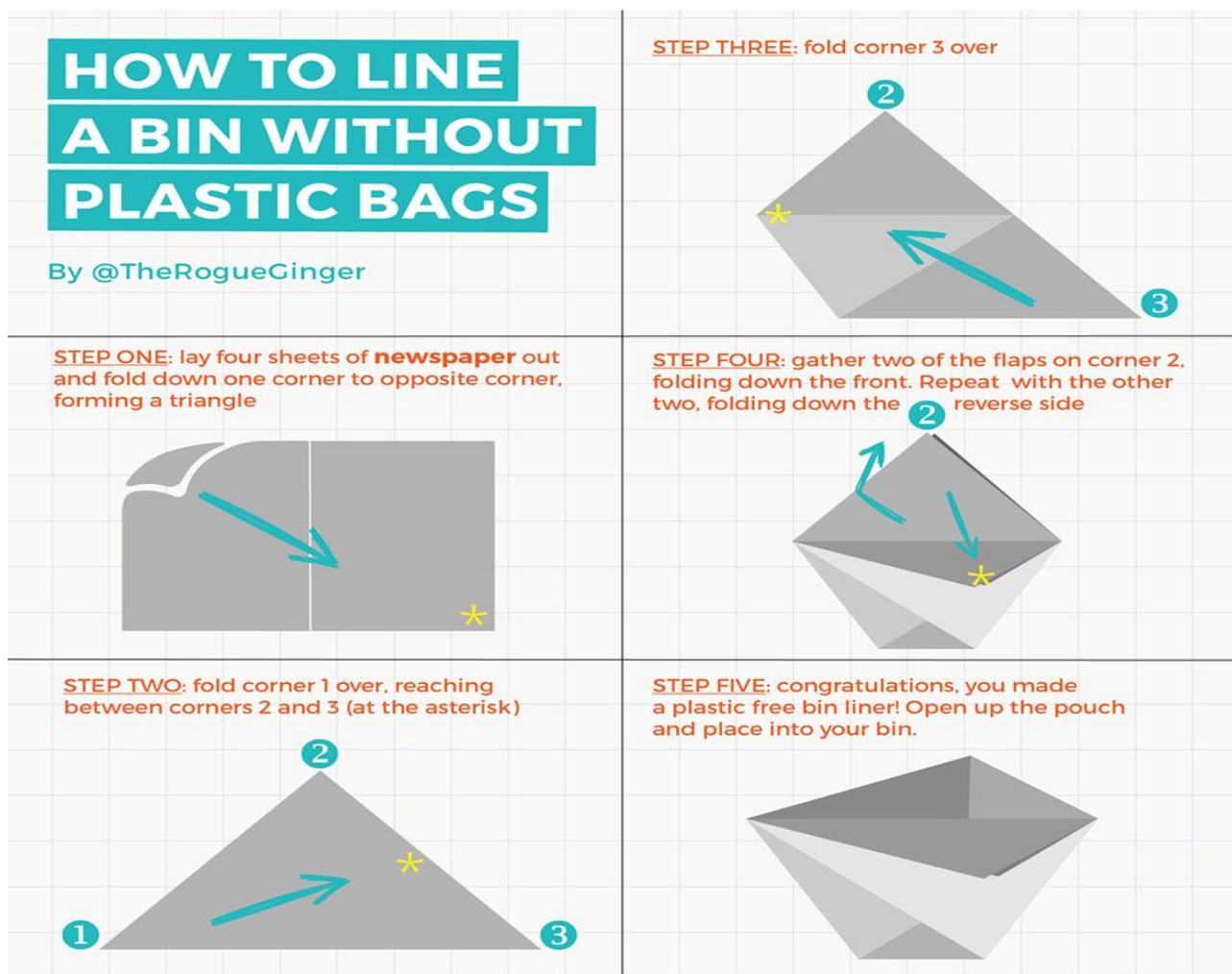
BYO bag is the best option. The labeling on plastic bags can be confusing and misleading, so bringing your own bag along will avoid disposing of a plastic bag incorrectly. We need to transition from relying on items of convenience, and instead focus on small actions that show care for the world we live in. Ditching single-use plastic bags of all kinds is the first step.

Source: 1 Million Women, [www.1millionwomen.com.au](http://www.1millionwomen.com.au)

**Note: REDCycle does not want biodegradable, degradable or compostable plastic bags for recycling – only polyethylene (See REDCycle Comprehensive List included).**

## NEWSPAPER BIN LINER

Plastic bags are not needed to line a bin. Newspaper is a great alternative for those that like to or need to line their bins. If you live in Australia, head to your local newsagents before they close on a Sunday and ask for the leftover weekend papers they have not sold. You should be able to get a bundle for free. Source: [Rogue Ginger Facebook](#)





Joining the challenge is quite simple

Choose to refuse  
single-use plastic  
during July



## REFERENCES AND USEFUL LINKS

ABC War on Waste, TV series - [www.abc.net.au/ourfocus/waronwaste](http://www.abc.net.au/ourfocus/waronwaste) and 40p [Action Toolkit](#)

A Good Place to Start website - [www.agoodplacetostart.com.au](http://www.agoodplacetostart.com.au)

Erin Rhoads website - [The Rogue Ginger](#) & her new textbook, *Waste Not*, available from [Booktopia](#)

Love Food Hate Waste - <https://lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

Planet Ark - <https://planetark.org>

Plastic Free Living A-Z Alternatives - [www.plasticfreejuly.org/a-z-alternatives.html](http://www.plasticfreejuly.org/a-z-alternatives.html)

ResourceSmart Schools Program - [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/School](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/School)

Sustainability Victoria - [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/You-and-Your-Home/Waste-and-recycling](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/You-and-Your-Home/Waste-and-recycling)

REDcycle - [www.redcycle.net.au](http://www.redcycle.net.au) and TerraCycle - [www.terracecycle.com.au/en-AU](http://www.terracecycle.com.au/en-AU)