



Think Globally. Act Locally!

Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Re: Plastic Free July



Plastic Free July® (www.plasticfreejuly.org) is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution – cleaner streets; oceans and communities.

Plastic Free July is part of the Plastic Free Foundation, which was started by Rebecca

Prince-Ruiz and a small team in Western Australia in 2011. Today, it is global in reach.

Plastics have, for many decades, been the epitome of a modern, convenience society. Their use is everywhere. However, increasingly, attention has been turning to the problem of plastic pollution.

The first commercially successful man-made polymer (many parts) was Celluloid, which was patented in the USA in 1869. The first truly synthetic (man-made) polymer was Bakelite; patented in 1907 in the USA.

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) was developed accidentally in 1872. Since then, a wide range of plastics have been developed.

Production of plastics before World War Two was very limited. Prior to 1950, the cumulative global production was somewhere between 4 and 8 million metric tons; most of which occurred during the Second World War.

In 2017, annual global primary plastic production had reached 438 Million metric tons, whilst the global plastic waste generation in 2017 was estimated at 380 Million metric tons; of this, only 70 Million metric tons was recycled. The remainder was either discarded or incinerated. That means 310 Million metric tons entered the environment in some form in 2017.

To give some idea of the amount (in weight) of plastics produced and disposed of, consider that the maximum weight of a blue whale has been calculated at 199 metric tons, whilst at Nimitz-class aircraft carrier weighs between 90 000 and 100 000 metric tons.

Part of the attraction of plastic, of course, is its durability. As such, most plastics are very difficult to breakdown under natural conditions. Estimates range from 20 years to over 1000 years, and whilst a number of microorganisms have been found to breakdown plastic, this research is still in its early stages. So, the vast majority of plastics are still lying around somewhere.

Therefore, reducing plastic consumption is imperative. There are many actions besides recycling of plastics that can be taken. Some of which include:

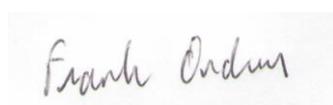
- Drink from reusable coffee cups or dine-in.
- Clean your teeth with plastic-free toothbrushes (although the bristles are usually still plastic)
- Replace single-use sanitary items with reusable menstrual cups and specific 'period' underwear
- Plastic-free party decorations – consider making reusable decorations rather than using balloons and party poppers.
- Change from liquid soap to bar soap. If using liquid soap, buy refillable soap to replenish them. Or, if you wish, make your own soaps, shampoos, and cosmetics.
- And many more....

There are so many ways to reduce and eliminate plastic from everyday life; whether that be at home; at work or business; or whilst at leisure. Afterall, most of these everyday issues existed before plastics became widely available.

More broadly, encourage your supply chains to reduce or eliminate plastic wherever possible. If planning an event, look for reusable materials and vendors who promote sustainable environmental practices. For example, request that vendors provide reusable cups; look for alternatives to plastic wrapping and limit the amount of 'throwaway' freebies.

Put pressure on suppliers to make 'quick-win' changes: for example, encourage bakeries to use cardboard bread bag ties instead of plastic, and ask them if they can put the bread in paper wrapping rather than plastic.

Check out the Facebook page for further information:
www.facebook.com/PlasticFreeJuly



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