

Garbage & Trash

"Global solid waste generation is on pace to increase 70 percent by 2025, rising from more than 3.5 million tonnes per day in 2010 to more than 6 million tonnes per day by 2025. An Olympic swimming pool holds 2,500 tonnes. That's 2,400 pools filled. Every. Single. Day."

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/10/30/global-waste-on-pace-to-triple>

While the numbers vary based on the source, tossing 1.3 billion tons of trash each year is a whole lot of trash. And the trend keeps increasing. The USA is the undisputed leader in trash generation, producing about 228 million tons in 2006 and 254 tons by 2013. With a population about 4 times as large, China trashed 190 million tons in 2013.

Most Americans are oblivious to the trash generation problem since it gets taken away very efficiently. We are charged a flat rate for our trash so we can dispose as much as we want, whereas utilities such as gas, water, and electricity are charged on usage. But what are we supposed to do with all this trash? Where is the best place to dispose of it? How do we not use as much?

TRASH TALK

Based on a variety of research and professional experience, agreement on the hierarchy of green ways to dispose of food goes like this, from least green to most.

- *Not-so-green:* Throwing it in a trashcan headed for the landfill.
- *Light green:* Running it through the sink disposal, from which it then heads to the wastewater treatment plant. **NOTE – DO NOT PUT ANYTHING THAT IS NOT BIODEGRADABLE FOOD! NO TRASH!**
- *Green:* Toss it in your compost bin for efficient composting.
- *Greenest Ever:* Reduce the amount of food we waste in the first place! Globally we waste about a third of



our food every year. Talk about an environmental footprint.

Garbage Disposal Do's

- *Keep it clean. Pour in a little dish soap and let it run quickly with cold water after washing dishes.*
- *Run it regularly. Frequent use prevents rust and corrosion, assures that all parts stay moving and prevents accumulations resulting in blockage.*
- *Grind food waste w/ a strong flow of cold water. Why cold? It will cause any grease or oils that may get into the unit to solidify, so that they can be chopped up before reaching the trap.*
- *Grind certain hard materials such as small chicken and fish bones, egg shells, small fruit pits, etc. A scouring action is created by these particles inside the chamber that cleans the walls.*
- *Cut large items into smaller pieces. Put them in one at a time instead of trying to shove a large amount in at once.*

Garbage Disposal Don'ts

- Don't grind glass, plastic, metal or even paper, anything combustible, or cigarette butts.
- Don't pour in grease, oil or fat. Grease will slowly accumulate and impede your disposal's grinding ability as well as clog drains.
- Don't use hot water. Hot water will cause grease to liquefy and accumulate, causing drains to clog.
- Don't grind extremely fibrous material like corn husks, celery stalks, onion skins, and artichokes. Fibers from these can tangle and jam the garbage disposal motor and block drains.
- Don't turn off the motor or water until grinding is completed. When grinding is complete, turn off the garbage disposal first. Let water continue to run for at least 15 seconds, flushing out any remaining particles. Then turn off water.
- Don't put in too many potato peels. The starches in the potatoes will turn into a thick paste and may cause blades to stick.
- Don't put in large amounts of food. Feed food in small quantities with the cold water running; this helps the food scraps flow down freely through the drain pipes and plumbing.
- Don't put in expandable foods. Foods like pasta and rice expand when you add water in a pot; they do the

If you have ideas about green initiatives for SPEC Services to consider, please submit your ideas to the Green Team! Contact Greg Lilliston for more information (GLilliston@SPECservices.com)

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same thing once inside your pipes or disposal and are the cause of many jams and clogs.

- Don't grind large animal bones (beef, pork etc.).
- Avoid putting in coffee grounds. They won't harm the garbage disposal and they'll actually help eliminate odors. However, they can accumulate in drains and pipes, causing clogs. Best to avoid.
- Don't use harsh chemicals like bleach or drain cleaners. They can damage blades and pipes. Borax is a natural sink cleaner and sanitizer that effectively works on odor-causing mold and mildew that accumulates in garbage disposals.

<http://www.horizonservicesinc.com/reference/tips-articles/plumbing-drain-cleaning-garbage-disposal-dos-donts>

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- *Set Up Your Own Compost*
 - Innovative companies are creating in-house composters capable of 24-hour composting. <https://www.zera.com/>
- *Reduce Your Overall Waste*
 - Use Reusable Bags Whenever Possible
 - Choose Returnable, Reusable, or Refillable Over Single Use
 - Avoid Individually Wrapped Items
 - Be Aware of Double Packing
 - Purchase Concentrated Soaps/Detergents
 - Reduce Unwanted Mail
 - Shop Second-Hand
 - Purchase Recycled Items
 - Buy in Bulk Instead of Single Serving
- *Demand Less/Different Packaging*
 - Provide Comments/Feedback to Mail Order Items Sent in Excessive Packaging
- *Support Waste Reduction Efforts*
 - Print Double Sided When Possible
 - Bring Your Own Utensils (Including Straws)
 - Bring Your Own Water Bottle/Coffee Cup
- *Choose Products with Environmentally Responsible Packaging*
 - Choose packaging that is already Recycled or can be Reused or Recycled.
- *Recycle – See Below*

RECYCLING & CORRECTION

The blue recycling containers under your desk and in conference rooms ~~are for mixed paper ONLY.~~ **CAN BE USED FOR ALL RECYCLING!!** Building management switched disposal companies so now the blue containers can recycle all items.

YES! PLEASE RECYCLE!

- Empty Aerosol Containers
- Newspapers
- Paper Board, Cardboard (Cereal & Cracker Boxes, 6-Pack Cartons, etc.), Corrugated Boxes
- Paper Grocery Bags
- Magazines & Glossy Paper, Any High Grade/Uncoated Paper, Binder/ Notebook Paper - Any Color, Telephone Books
- Junk Mail, Stationery & Envelopes
- Aluminum Cans, Foil, Trays, Tin & Bi-Metal Cans
- Any Color Glass Bottles & Jars (Empty & Rinsed)
- All Plastic Food Containers #1 & #2
- Plastic Bottles & Containers – Shampoo, Detergent, Bleach, Milk, Soda, Water & Aspirin Containers, etc.
- Microwave Food Trays & Frozen Food Boil-In-Bag Pouches



NO! IT IS NOT RECYCLABLE!

- Food Waste Including Fast Food Wrappers
- Ovenware & Scrap Metal Waste
- Ceramic Pottery, Cups, Dishes & Drinking Glasses
- Plastic Wrap, Paper Plates & Soiled Paper
- Frozen & Microwave Food Boxes
- Wax Cereal/Cracker Box Liners
- Gummed or Glued Bindings
- Paper Towels, Napkins, Tissue paper
- Adhesive Backed or Sticky Notes
- Aluminum Foil Boxes
- Styrofoam
- Books

REMEMBER, IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER