



## Facts and Figures to Make You Think

Through the following facts and figures, we hope you will be inspired to take responsibility in your daily life.

- Packaging adds 29 million tons of non-biodegradable waste to landfills every year. 11.8% of all US annual municipal solid waste is plastic.
- Only 5.7 % of all plastics are recycled every year.
- 72% of Americans do not know plastics are made from petroleum and 40% believe petroleum plastics will biodegrade at some point. (*Insight Marketing and ADM study, April 27, 2007*)
- 10% of U.S. oil consumption - approximately 2 million barrels a day - is used to make plastic. (*Insight Marketing and ADM study, April 27, 2007*)
- Plastic does not biodegrade, but instead goes through the process of photo degradation, where it turns into plastic dust. (*Waste study, Agalitta Foundation for Marine Research*)
- Disposable Item Time in Months to Biodegrade (*from www.worldwise.com*)

### Recology Solutions products 2-3 (when composted properly)

- Cotton rags 1-5
- Paper 2-5
- Rope 3-14
- Orange peels 6
- Cigarette butts 12-144
- Paper milk cartons (plastic coated) 60
- Plastic bags 120-240
- Leather shoes 300-480
- Nylon fabric 360-480
- Tin cans 600-1200
- Plastic 6-pack holder rings 5400
- Glass bottles 12 million
- Plastic bottles Forever



**Companies that manufacture petroleum-based plastic products dominate the disposable packaging industry. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that each year, Americans discard about 14.4 million tons of plastic making up 8% of total waste. Much of the container and packaging waste ends up in landfills, which produce methane, a greenhouse gas that is blamed for contributing significantly to global warming. Methane is considered to be 23 times as harmful as carbon dioxide as a contributor to greenhouse gasses.**

- In the U.S., 4.39 pounds of trash per day and up to 56 tons of trash per year are created by the average person.
- Only about one-tenth of all solid garbage in the United States gets recycled.
- Every year we fill enough garbage trucks to form a line that would stretch from the earth, halfway to the moon.
- Each day the United States throws away enough trash to fill 63,000 garbage trucks.
- Almost 1/3 of the waste generated in the U.S. is packaging.
- Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour.
- Every year, Americans make enough plastic film to shrink-wrap the state of Texas.
- Americans throw away enough aluminum cans to rebuild our commercial air fleet every three months, and enough iron and steel to supply all our nation's automakers every day.
- Throwing away one aluminum can wastes as much energy as if that can were 1/2 full of gasoline.
- In the U.S., an additional 5 million tons of waste is generated during the holidays. Four million tons of this is wrapping paper and shopping bags.
- Americans receive almost 4 million tons of junk mail every year. Most of it winds up in landfills.
- Americans toss out enough paper & plastic cups, forks and spoons every year to circle the equator 300 times.
- The average American office worker goes through around 500 disposable cups every year.
- Nearly 44 million American workers purchase or eat lunch out every weekday.



- As of 1992, 14 billion pounds of trash were dumped into ocean annually around the world.
- Forty-three thousand tons of food is thrown out in the United States each day.
- Sixty-five billion aluminum soda cans are used each year.

**Landfills and Waste (Clean Air Council - [www.cleanair.org/Waste/wasteFacts.html#landfills](http://www.cleanair.org/Waste/wasteFacts.html#landfills))**

- Landfills continue to dwindle in number. In 1979, there were an estimated 18,500 landfills in the nation. In 1988, there were 8000 landfills, in 2005 there were 1654. *(EPA figures)*
- Seventy percent of U.S. municipal solid waste gets buried in landfills
- 108,234 tons of waste per day is incinerated.
- Each American exerts three times as much pressure on the natural environment as the global average.

**America is home to 5% of the world's population, yet it consumes 1/3 of the Earth's timber and paper; making paper the largest part of the waste stream at 37.5% of the total waste stream.**