

Dear Recycle Lady



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Dear Recycle Lady,

Can I put recyclable plastic film in curbside recycling? Trying to Recycle More

Dear Trying to Recycle More,

Plastic film (zip-lock bags, bubble wrap, and plastic wrap) can be recycled, but NOT in your curbside recycling bin. There are some very large cities that accepts plastic films at curbside, but locally, we do not. According to How2Recycle.com, almost all community curbside recycling programs in the US consider plastic films as a contaminant. Locally, plastic film is recyclable in drop-off bins at Kroger, Walmart, and Lowes. Pieces of plastic film that land in a recycling bin, end up in the landfill where they will decompose in 500-700 years!

Dear Recycle Lady,

Should I cut paper labels off plastic film before recycling? Plastic Recycler

Dear Plastic Recycler,

Paper labels need to be cut off plastic film, but plastic labels do not. Before recycling any plastic film, check to see if it has a #2, #4 or How2Recycle symbol on it. If not, put it in the trash. "When in doubt, throw it out." Some bags, wraps, and films have invisible ingredients in them that provide protections for the product; but these ingredients may be a contaminate in the film recycling stream.

Dear Recycle Lady,

In which recycle bin should I place brown paper bags for recycling. Tree Lover

Dear Tree Lover,

Brown paper bags, folded or crushed brown paper used in packaging, and brown mailers without a plastic bubble liner (called bubble mailers) go in the cardboard bin. Bubble mailers are not recyclable locally, even though they may have a label that says they are recyclable. Our buyers do not want them. Larger cities may have the specialized equipment required for recycling these bubble mailers into cardboard.

Dear Recycle Lady,

I think it is a little confusing to call an animal on the endangered list GOOD news. Doing so means that they are endangered and just two steps from extinction. My guess is that you meant that it is good because now they will have protections. Reader

Dear Reader,

Good point. It really isn't GOOD news that Monarch butterflies need protection. But, hopefully, being added to the endangered list will give them the protection needed to increase their numbers. The only plant that monarchs lay their eggs on is milkweed. When the eggs hatch, the larvae (caterpillars) feed on the leaves until they leave to form chrysalises. Perhaps, if everyone planted some milkweed plants, we could help the Monarchs along. Rising ocean temperatures, weather changes, use of pesticides, and loss of habitat have all contributed to the declining population of the Monarchs.

Kudos to the employees of the Greenbrier Recycling Center for the fresh paint, replacement of items used as examples, and new identity labels on all the bins. Well done!

Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com. Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.