

Dear Recycle Lady



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Dear Recycle Lady,

I have been painting my back porch and have several empty paint cans. Can they be recycled? What about spray cans of paint? Are they recyclable? Sprucing Up

Dear Sprucing Up,

To answer to your first question: no, paint cans cannot be recycled. Paint cans go into the trash, but before throwing it into the trash, be sure to follow the DEP and EPA recommendations for protecting our environment. If there is less than a couple inches of paint remaining in the can, let it dry out first, then put the can in the trash. If there is more paint than this left in the can, add some kitty litter, sand, sawdust or any absorbent material, to the paint and stir it in with the paint stirrer or spatula. Continue adding and stirring in the kitty litter until there is no liquid left. The paint should solidify in a few hours. Replace the lid and add to trash bag. Kitty litter is added because liquid paint is considered an environmental hazard. To answer your second question: yes, an empty spray can of paint can be recycled like any other spray can. Add it to the recycling bag or bin for steel cans.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Someone told me that cereal boxes could be recycled with office paper. This doesn't seem to make sense. Are they correct? Recycler

Dear Recycler,

Yes, you were given correct information, even though it sounds a little strange. Actually, cereal and toothpaste boxes, candy and frozen dinner boxes, shoe and tissue boxes and similar type boxes can be recycled in with office paper! They are all made of the recyclable material called paperboard. Defined as a material similar in shape and composition to paper, but generally thicker, stronger, and more rigid, paperboard is thinner than brown corrugated cardboard. Paperboard products are products we use every day; ones you may have previously put in with cardboard or in the trash. One website recommended tearing off a piece of a cereal box and using it as a guideline.

Dear Recycle Lady,

The is a new product I just heard about – Beeswax wrap. Do you know anything about it? A Reader

Dear Reader,

Beeswax wraps are a sustainable alternative to plastic wrap. They come in various sizes: small, median and large, as well a bread wrap that is 17' x 23". The wraps can be used to wrap food such as cheese, sandwiches, snacks, bread, or be placed on top of a bowl or jar as you would plastic wrap. However, they are not suitable for hot foods or meats. Just the warmth of your hands will mold and shape the wrap around the food or container. Wash the wraps in warm or cool water, dry and reused. Don't use hot water as that would melt the wax. The Beeswax Wraps are made with organic cotton, sustainable sourced beeswax and natural tree resin and can be purchased locally at Bella's in Lewisburg, located at 1017 Washington Street. A really wonderful new sustainable alternative to plastic.

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.