

Dear Recycle Lady



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When I get a package that has Styrofoam peanuts in it, I put this packing material in a bag to save it. I reuse the Styrofoam peanuts when I send a package out. What's even better is I read about a company that makes popcorn to use as packing material. Individuals can also use popcorn as packing material. Using a hot air popper is recommended because it doesn't use oil and the popcorn will be clean. Happy Recycler

**Dear Happy Recycler,**

**I'm happy to hear that you are reusing the Styrofoam peanuts and your suggestion to use air-popped popcorn as packing material is a great idea. If you find that you have more Styrofoam peanuts than you can use, they can be taken to PostNet on US 219 North. They reuse them for the packages they ship. They also accept plastic "pillows" and bubble wrap. The less all of these products are used, the better for the environment and Styrofoam is one of the worst contaminants. Because of its light weight, it is often blown by the wind into bodies of water causing problems for the marine life. Also, Styrofoam doesn't ever decompose. It stays in the environment for hundreds of thousands of years and it crumbles easily into small pieces, making it more likely that birds and fish will eat it. Three cheers for Maine and Maryland that have banned the use of Styrofoam and the other states that are in the process of doing so. I hope West Virginia will consider banning it also.**

Dear Readers,

Once again, I must fine tune information sent out earlier as I found additional information on the web for checking to see if a box is paperboard or cardboard. Simply look at the back of the box. If the back looks like poster board, it is paperboard. If the back is brown, it is cardboard. If an item tears really easily, it is cardboard, as paperboard is stronger and more rigid.

Dear Recycle Lady,

I just read an article about using banana peels as a fertilizer for plants. I know used coffee grounds can be recycled into an excellent fertilizer, so why not banana peels. I think I will give them a try. How do I prepare them? Gardner

**Dear Gardner,**

**Good question and a great way to recycle banana peels. Banana peels are 25% phosphorous and 42% potassium, so they are not only good for us, they are also good for plants. I found some instructions online that are pretty simple. If your peels are dark, cut them into small pieces and place them in a glass container. They can be put in whole, but cutting them up shortens the soaking time and allows more peels to be put in one container. Add enough water to barely cover the peels and let sit for three or four days in a shaded area. Then, pour the mixture through a sieve into another glass container and you have a colored liquid that can be poured on your plants. If your peels are still yellow, they will take closer to a week to make good fertilizer, particularly if you place them in the water whole. I would love to hear from anyone who tries this. What were the results? Do you have any helpful hints for other readers?**

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