

Dear Recycle Lady



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Dear Recycle Lady,

Is there anything being done to solve the food waste problem you mentioned a couple weeks ago? We Can Do Better

**Dear We Can Do Better,**

Fortunately, there are several groups and organization working to solve this problem. One start-up in the U.S. is working towards making it easier to purchase misshapen or “ugly food,” produce that grocery stores won’t buy. Google Misfits Market for local information. Another company, [www.greatergood.com/silk-coating/](http://www.greatergood.com/silk-coating/) has developed an invisible, plant-based coating to make fruits last longer. California and Vermont now require supermarkets, small grocery stores and convenience stores to donate edible unsold food, instead of throwing it in the trash. Inedible food must be composted. In London, new “best by” labels on fruits and vegetables have been created to replace “date” labels in order to help consumers better understand what is edible. According to Digital Trends, garbage cans in Seoul, South Korea, automatically weigh food waste that is put in the trash and Koreans pay for what they toss. This became a necessary step as the country was running out of landfill space. Additionally, almost all organic waste in South Korea is turned into compost, animal feed or biogas. ReFed, a nonprofit focused on reducing food waste, estimates that at least 70% of restaurant food waste in the U.S. has been paid for, but not eaten. There have been reports in The New York Times of apps in Asia, Europe and the U.S. that offer discounts on restaurants’ food to be thrown out.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Why does the Recycle Center accept only bottles and jugs? Must laundry detergent bottles be rinsed out before recycling? Want to Recycle More Plastics

**Dear Want to Recycle More Plastics,**

The big reason the Recycle Center only accepts #1 and #2 bottles and jugs is that our buyers will only buy bottles and jugs. Any other plastics collected would be sent to the landfill as there is presently no market for them. Yes, laundry detergent bottles need to be rinsed out before placing it in the recycling bin. ( Readers, any ideas you could share on uses for the soapy rinse water?) According to [www.treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com), only 30% of the one billion laundry jugs that are used in the U.S. yearly are recycled. Thus, more than 700,000,000 plastic laundry jugs end up in landfills, rivers, and oceans every year! Fortunately, several alternative greener types of detergents and packaging are becoming available. Eco-friendly laundry soaps can now be found in the form of eco-strips, flakes, and powder. A home-made powder laundry detergent can be made with a grated bar of soap, a cup of borax, and a cup of washing soda.

Dear Recycle Lady,

All the flowers in my hanging baskets are now dead. What can I do with hanging baskets and flower containers? Can they be recycled? Gardener

**Dear Gardener,**

Used hanging baskets and flower containers are not recyclable at the Recycling Center. They are neither a bottle nor a jug! However, they can be reused, so check with close-by nurseries or stores that sell plants. Chances are they will thank you for your donation as baskets and pots can be reused

**to prepare their hanging baskets and flowers for sale next spring. Be sure to remove any soil in the baskets or pots before donating them. Potting soil is expensive, and it's an excellent addition to existing flower beds or to your compost bin or compost pile.**

Interesting Information: Over 2,500 years ago, seashells were used to brush teeth when the ancient Greeks crushed oyster shells into toothpaste as a cleaning abrasive, the same reason toothpaste brands add calcium carbonate today.

**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.**