



Sustainability Newsletter

January/February 2015

What is Zero Waste?

Zero waste is a philosophy and way of life centered around waste prevention—meaning no garbage goes to the landfill. In the 3Rs hierarchy, priority is placed on reduce before reuse and recycle. Zero waste suggests that the entire idea of “waste” should be eliminated, and instead, waste should be thought of as a potential resource with residual value. Thinking about living a zero waste lifestyle forces people to take a look at what they really need, and provides a closer look into the inefficiencies that exist in the modern day consumption of material goods.

REDUCE

Reuse Recycle

It's not about recycling—it's about avoiding having to recycle.

In our society, waste is a result of the use of resources in products with little to no use, no market value or with hazardous properties. By reducing or eliminating waste, we can help solve problems including polluted water systems, plastic in the ocean, and toxic chemicals in food and beauty products. We can help reduce litter and beautify natural areas. We can become more self-sufficient by making our own products instead of buying them and learning skills that our society has begun to forget. Even if you are not quite ready to take on the challenge of a fully zero-waste lifestyle, there are many simple changes you can make to reduce waste.

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Benefits of Living a Zero Waste Lifestyle

- Requires far less raw materials
- Creates far less environmentally degrading garbage
- Challenges people to be creative by using what they have and making their own
- Using less “stuff” means spending less money on things that are not needed
- Eating habits become healthier as a result of buying less pre-packaged and processed foods
- People are exposed to less chemicals due to making their own cleaning and personal products
- Puts people in touch with natural cycles, such as composting and gardening
- Creates a closed loop cycle of products and materials that can be used again and again
- Encourages people to source local ingredients
- Promotes product design that considers the whole life cycle of a product

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www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter



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How to Reduce Waste

1. Eliminate as many “disposables” as you can:

- Ziploc Bags, plastic wrap, wax paper and tin foil
- Paper Towel/paper napkins
- Disposable plates/cups/cutlery

Instead, use glass or stainless steel containers to store food. Swap paper towels for reusable rags and use cloth napkins instead of paper ones. Use ceramic plates and glass cups instead of disposables.

2. Compost your food scraps. This is one of the easiest ways to cut down on your garbage. It doesn't require much space and can be done year round.

3. Shop with reusable bags and containers and buy in bulk. You can prevent a lot of waste from entering your home by refusing packaging at the store. Use reusable mesh bags for produce or leave it loose. If your grocery store will allow it, fill up glass mason jars with bulk goods like flour, sugar and dried fruits. Other people seeing you do this may be inspired to try it themselves.



4. Make certain products from scratch so you can avoid packaging all together. Yogurt, bread and granola are easy to make on your own, as are many cleaning products (see page 3). Try your hand at growing your own vegetables in the garden.



5. Buy only what you need. Don't give in to deals like “buy one, get one free” if you really don't need another one.

6. Replace paper coffee filters with a reusable mesh filter, or use a French press (and compost the grounds of course).

7. Buy good quality products that will last, and can be repaired or upgraded if need be. Try your hand at fixing things before throwing them out and replacing them with new ones.

8. Make due with the food that you have on hand, rather than running to the grocery store to get special ingredients. Get your creative juices flowing!

9. Say no to a straw at restaurants. Alternatively, you can purchase stainless steel straws, which can be used over and over again.

10. Bring your own “doggie bags” to the restaurant for taking home leftovers. Don't worry about getting weird looks from other patrons.

11. The most important part of reducing waste is *committing* to it. If you forgot your reusable bags in the car or at home, go back out and get them, or only buy what you can hold in your hands. Ask the post office to stop junk mail from your mailbox. Pay more for a higher quality or even a used item, even though you know you can get a cheaper (and lower quality) one. Compost food scraps even though it is a stinky process. Don't get a drink from the coffee shop if you didn't bring your reusable mug, or sit down and enjoy it in a “to stay” cup. Over time it will simply become habit and you won't have to think about it.



Making your own Cleaning Products

With a handful of natural ingredients, you can make a plethora of cleaning products!

What you'll need:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Water | White Vinegar |
| Castile Soap (solid and liquid) | Essential Oils |
| Washing Soda | Empty Containers and Jars |
| Baking Soda | Empty Spray Bottles |



All Purpose Cleaning Spray

In this recipe, the castile soap acts as a surfactant, lifting out dirt and grease while the essential oils add natural antibacterial and antiviral qualities.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp castile soap
- 10-20 drops essential oil (lemon or tea tree)

Directions:

1. Using a measuring cup and funnel, pour the water into a spray bottle and then add the castile soap.
2. Choose one or a combination of essential oils and add them to your spray bottle. Then shake the bottle to incorporate the essential oils and soap. Label with a permanent marker.
3. Store the bottle out of direct sunlight or heat, which can change the chemical constituents in the essential oils.

To use, spray any areas that need to be cleaned and wipe with a damp cloth. For tougher cleaning jobs, like grout, use a toothbrush or scrub brush.

Glass Cleaner

Ingredients:

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 3 drops essential oil (optional)

Directions:

1. Mix ingredients and put in a spray bottle. Spray and wipe clean with a microfiber cloth.

Carpet Freshener

Ingredients:

- 2 cups baking soda
- 10-20 drops essential oil

Directions:

1. Mix ingredients and put in a mason jar with a shaker top. To make your own shaker top, simply drill holes in the top of a canning lid.
2. Sprinkle on carpet, let sit for 15 minutes. Then vacuum up.

Powdered Laundry Detergent

Castile soap is a natural cleaning agent, baking soda and washing soda help remove dirt and stains, and Epsom salts soften the water. Essential oils add a bit of your favourite scent.

Ingredients:

- 1 bar of castile soap
- 1 cup washing soda
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 1/4 cup Epsom salt
- 10-20 drops of your favourite essential oil (lemon or lavender are nice)

Directions:

1. Finely grate the castile soap into a bowl. Mix in the washing soda, baking soda and Epsom salt. Add in the essential oil and stir to combine.
2. Store in an airtight container.

This recipe can be doubled or tripled for a larger batch. Use 1 tablespoon for regular loads and 2 tablespoons for large or heavily soiled loads.

Canadian Lentils



Lentils are a variety of legume that is packed with fiber, protein, iron, and vitamin B, while also being low in fat and calories. Although often used in exotic dishes, lentils are grown right here in Canada. Canada is the largest exporter of lentils into the global marketplace, with 99% of the crop being grown in Saskatchewan.

Lentils are incredibly versatile—they can be used in a variety of dishes, from soups and salads to sweet baked goods. Bonus: they are also cheap! Dried lentils can cook up in no time at all—they don't require soaking like dried beans do. The most common lentils you will see at the grocery store are red split lentils and whole green lentils.

Cinnamon Applesauce Oatmeal Muffins with Lentils



Ingredients

1/4 cup dry red lentils
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup oats
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp salt
1 cup applesauce
3/4 cup yogurt
1/4 cup canola oil
1 large egg
1/2 cup raisins

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a small saucepan, cover the red lentils with water by about an inch, and bring to a boil; simmer for 15-20 minutes, until the lentils are very soft. Drain well in a sieve and set aside.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the flour, oats, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; set aside. In a medium bowl, stir together the applesauce, yogurt, oil and egg. Add to the dry ingredients along with the cooked lentils and stir until almost combined; add the raisins and stir just until blended.
3. Divide the batter among 12 muffin cups. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until golden and springy to the touch. Cool on a wire rack.

Curried Red Lentil Dhal



Ingredients

2 cups basmati rice
3 cups water
1 tsp salt
1/4 cup butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1 Tbsp cumin
3 Tbsp curry powder
6 cups water
2 cups red lentils
2 Tbsp frozen ginger, grated
1 cup cilantro, freshly chopped

Directions

1. Cook rice according to directions. Begin dhal by tossing butter into a medium saucepan over medium heat, swirling gently until it melts and begins to steam and foam. Watch butter as foam subsides and the butter begins to brown. Continue swirling pan gently, watching the color until it becomes golden brown and fragrant. Immediately toss in chopped onions, lowering temperature.
2. Stir cumin and curry powder into onions and butter. Continue stirring for a few minutes. Add water, lentils, and ginger to the pot. Bring sauce pan to a full boil then lower heat to maintain a slow, steady simmer.
3. Continue cooking until lentils are soft, about ten minutes. If you prefer a smoother sauce, feel free to puree further with an immersion blender, in a stand blender, or in food processor.
4. Spoon dhal over cooked rice, garnish with fresh cilantro, and serve.