

Recycling - Statistics Page:

A study by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides some amazing statistics about the vast amount of recyclables that Americans throw away. Perhaps this information will help you to decide where to place that next empty aluminum soda can or to determine how many hard copies of that document you really need.

TRASH

The average American throws away 4 to 5 lbs. of weight to throwing away 300,000 elephants per day. Americans throw enough trash away each year to cover 1,000 football fields...30 stories high. A staggering 2/3 of the useable landfills in the U.S. have been filled up since 1980.



ALUMINUM



Recycling aluminum saves 95% of the energy it would take to manufacture aluminum from scratch. Throwing away one aluminum can wastes as much energy as if the can were half full of gasoline (regular unleaded.) Americans throw away 35 billion aluminum cans a year enough to rebuild the commercial air fleet four times over. Recycling all the aluminum thrown away would save energy equal to 150 Exxon Valdez oil spills.

PAPER

95 acres of virgin forest are cleared every minute around the world to manufacture paper goods. For every ton of paper manufactured from recycled pulp, 17 trees are saved. One ton of recycled paper results in 35% less water pollution, 74% less air pollution, and half of the energy and water necessary to produce virgin paper. It would take = million trees to produce America's newspapers every Sunday if no recycled paper was used. 11.5 billion Kilowatt-hours of energy and 1.8\$ billion would be saved if all paper had 50% recycled content.



PLASTIC

Americans go through 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour (enough said!)



GLASS

Americans throw away enough glass bottles and jars, uncrushed, to have filled the World Trade Center buildings in New York City every two weeks. Every new glass container made contains 30% recycled glass.

STEEL/TIN CANS

For each ton of steel cans recycled, 2,500 lbs. of iron ore, 1,000 lbs. of coal and 40 lbs. of limestone are saved. For every pound of steel cans recycled, enough energy is conserved to light a 60-watt light bulb, continuously, for more than one day.

OIL



One pint of used oil can produce an oil slick of an acre in size. Re-refining used oil saves 42,000 barrels of oil per day and could reduce petroleum imports by 25.5 million barrels per year.

How Long will our Trash be Around?

Orange and Banana Peels: up to 2 years...



Plastic Coated Paper: 5 years...

Plastic Bags: 10-20 years...

Plastic Film Containers: 20-30 years...

Wool Sock: 1-5 years...



Nylon Fabric: 30-40 years...

Cigarette Butts: 1-5 years...



Leather: up to 50 years...

Tin Cans: 50 years...



Plastic Six-Pack Holders: 100 years...

Aluminum Cans & Tabs: 500 years...

Glass Bottles: 1000 years...



And the winner is...



Plastic Bottles and Styrofoam... INDEFINITELY!