

You can recycle plastic bags too!

As you may have noticed in other recent articles done by the Sustainable Marshfield Committee, we are focusing on improving our local recycling efforts. We all can do a little better job in the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' department so here's some help. We are burying an awful lot of stuff that should be recycled. Here's another opportunity to recycle.

One item I have always struggled to recycle is plastic bags. They are everywhere and used by everyone. They are produced by using petroleum, a finite resource, and they seem difficult to recycle. I even read that in the 'paper or plastic' discussion plastic was the better choice because it takes less energy to recycle than paper but that didn't help me figure out what to do with the growing mountain in my closet.

It turns out that curbside recycling of plastic bags is not a very effective collection system. The bags get dirty, blow around and are difficult to handle. It takes a real lot of them to make a ton and the whole waste collection industry is based upon tons collected.

In generic terms plastic packaging is referred to as plastic film. This includes all plastic bags, packing pillows, and all plastic film that is wrapped around things in shipping.

There is a solution recycling this material. In 2012 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) partnered with the American Chemistry Council's Flexible Film Recycling Group (FFRG) and Green Blue's Sustainable Packaging Coalition (SPC) to create a plastic film recycling initiative called Wisconsin **WRAP** (Wrap Recycling Action Project). This is a state wide initiative to help us all do a better job of recycling more plastic film which is found in nearly every business and household.

On a personal level the best thing for me is the website:

www.plasticfilmrecycling.org

I can go there, enter my zip code and find all the businesses in my area that will take my plastic bags! In Marshfield the list includes Pick 'n Save, JCPenney, Target and Wal-Mart. Festival was also recently added to the directory.

These businesses have learned that it's more cost effective to recycle their plastic film than to pay to haul it away and bury it. They have also graciously set out bins in the front to collect our bags which will really free up some space under the plastic bag mountain in my closet.



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