

### Helpful Hint: Skip the straw

The New Jersey shore has banned plastic straws from being given out with drinks. We can go farther by not accepting plastic straws at the local restaurants we eat at. Just say “Skip the straws please.” We can bring reusable stainless steel or bamboo straws to the restaurant to use instead. Obviously, these straws can also be used at home. We should Refuse and Reuse because plastic straws cannot be recycled.

Plastic, it’s incredible! It’s all around us. Hard to imagine a world without plastic. It’s such a boon and allows us to do all kinds of things that were hitherto difficult or impossible. But, inevitably, there is a dark side. As easy and inexpensive as it is to produce, so is it difficult and expensive to dispose of once it has ceased to be usable. We can’t just dump it and forget about it; it won’t go away. The message from the Pope is clear, every one of us must be a steward of the earth. Each one of us can and must do our part to protect the world that we live in. Don’t wait until you have no choice, be proactive! In last week’s bulletin there was an introduction to a new feature we’re calling the ‘Green Corner’, in which we plan to provide helpful hints and suggestions that you can incorporate into your daily routines to help us all to be effective stewards of our earth. If you missed last week’s bulletin you can still read our initial thoughts on Climate Change, including a powerful prayer from Pope Francis, on St. Mary’s website. This week we’re scratching the surface of a big issue, the recycling of plastic waste.

### Helpful Hint: Understand Plastic Recycling

You probably know this, but just in case, here’s a quick overview of the labelling of plastic containers.

 PETE	 HDPE	 PVC	 LDPE	 PP	 PS	 OTHER
polyethylene terephthalate	high-density polyethylene	polyvinyl chloride	low-density polyethylene	polypropylene	polystyrene	other plastics, including acrylic, polycarbonate, polyactic fibers, nylon, fiberglass
soft drink bottles, mineral water, fruit juice container, cooking oil	milk jugs, cleaning agents, laundry detergents, bleaching agents, shampoo bottles, washing and shower soaps	trays for sweets, fruit, plastic packing (bubble foil) and food foils to wrap the foodstuff	crushed bottles, shopping bags, highly-resistant sacks and most of the wrappings	furniture, consumers, luggage, toys as well as bumpers, lining and external borders of the cars	toys, hard packing, refrigerator trays, cosmetic bags, costume jewellery, CD cases, vending cups	

Look all around the plastic container for the number in the triangle. If you cannot find one do not recycle it. Also, remember that Just because it has a number does not mean that it can be recycled.

1. Recycle only #1 and #2 – in Burlington county add #5 to that list. All other plastics go into the regular trash.
2. Empty and wash bottles, jars and containers properly. Remnants of “biological matter” is called contamination and will likely cause the batch to be rejected.
3. Never put plastic bags or plastic bottle tops into recycling.
4. If you’re in doubt about whether to recycle an item, put it in the regular trash.

**Burlington County:**

Plastic bottles, jars, & containers for #1, #2 and #5 plastic

**Camden County:**

Plastic bottles and jars for ONLY #1 and #2 plastic

**Special notice: Camden County has recently changed to only accepting #1 and #2 plastic items.** Both counties are urging residents to empty and rinse containers fully before placing them in the curbside recycling containers. The presence of moisture from food and liquid waste in containers has become a problem for single stream recycling as it lowers the quality of cardboard and paper. In addition, both counties remind residents to NEVER put plastic bags in recycling bins. They damage the machinery.

Check county websites for details.

**WHY RECYCLE – TO REUSE - Your Recycled Plastics are used to make new products:** carpeting, backpacks, polar fleece jackets, sleeping bag and ski jacket insulation, plastic lumber, playground equipment, t-shirts, sweaters, sneakers, new bottles, buckets and containers

**WHY RECYCLE – REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT**

You can save 2400 pounds of carbon dioxide per year by recycling just half of your household waste.

Who doesn't like balloons?

We're not talking about Zeppelins or big hot air balloons that can carry you up among the clouds, we're talking about those ordinary everyday balloons that you see at any party or celebration. They're great fun and they enhance any space with brightness and color. They're easily set up and easily taken down. Children love to play with them. Even when they get popped it's no big deal, just find another. Popping balloons can be fun too. So many games to play with balloons. You can also fill balloons with helium and release them to float away into the sky. That's entertaining, beautiful and impressive too. Just good and harmless fun with balloons, right? But wait, what do you do with spent and broken balloons after the party?

Some things to know about balloons:

1. Make sure that they are put into the trash; they are not recyclable.
2. Animals, birds and fish get sick or choke when they try to eat balloon fragments.

3. Small creatures can drown when they get entangled in trailing ribbon or string. It's true of pets, but it's much more of a problem for wild animals; they often die as a result.
4. Animals will eat partially inflated balloons, thinking that they're food. A balloon can clog the digestive tract, leading to starvation and likely to eventual death.
5. Latex balloons are biodegradable, mylar or foil balloons are not.
6. Latex balloons will generally degrade within 6 months but can survive for over 5 years.

Some tips for safeguarding the environment:

1. Keep balloons inside if possible.
2. If balloons are to go home with children, tie them to their wrist or have an adult carry the balloon.
3. Never release a balloon outside. Even with biodegradable balloons, they are a serious risk to wildlife and marine environments.
4. When you plan to dispose of the balloons, deflate the balloons before putting them in the garbage.
5. Spent balloons should be disposed of in a responsible manner, either in a compost heap where they will have the best conditions in which to biodegrade within a few months, or in landfill waste where they will also break down safely.
6. Use natural raffia ribbon because it is compostable, particularly if it has been dyed with natural dyes.

One of the most important things that living trees do for us is to convert Carbon Dioxide into Oxygen, in counterpoint to the way we convert Oxygen into Carbon Dioxide as we breathe. Trees are not the only thing that does that, but they have perhaps been the most significant. The Amazon Rainforest, "the lungs of the Earth" is on fire in so many places today that the G-7 has held a conference to discuss any remedial action that could be taken, a clear indication of the seriousness of the situation. Offers of help have been made to the Brazilian Government, but none have been accepted. The fires rage on.

Current estimates tell us that there are about 3.04 trillion trees on the planet, sounds like a nice big number doesn't it? Also note that the current estimate of the annual human tree harvest is 15 billion, we also plant 5 billion. That's a nominal loss of about 10 billion trees a year but bear in mind that trees can take many years to grow to a significant size. At the rate we're going, there will be no trees left on earth in 300 years.

So, what can we do? Simple answer, plant more trees and shrubs.

**Helpful Hint:** plant a tree now

This fall we can look to see if we can add a tree or shrub.

- Shrubs provide protection around the house.

- Deciduous trees provide shade in the summer and allow the sun's heat to warm our homes in winter.
- Evergreen trees are good wind protectors.
- Trees can reduce cooling costs by 30% in summer and heating bills by 20-50% in the winter.
- Many local nurseries and Lowes and Home Depot are having sales.

Note: For fall planting, it is advised to plant about 3 weeks before a hard frost which essentially means before the mid-October. Check with nurseries in the area to confirm what is appropriate for your particular tree or shrub.

### Rain Forests

The Amazon forest is on fire in so many places. The Amazon has been one of the plus factors to decrease carbon dioxide. Now the Amazon is releasing carbon dioxide as it burns. It is sending smoke into nearby communities which in turn is causing many local residents to be admitted to the hospital because of breathing problems. The world mourns these fires many of which had been deliberately set to open more land to farming and crops. The G-7 had a meeting to discuss the Climate Change issue and the Amazon fires in particular. Many countries have offered to help put out the fires. As of this writing, the Brazilian government has not accepted these offers.

Trees and shrubs are a vital part of the world's hope to control carbon dioxide as they take in carbon dioxide during photosynthesis and release oxygen into the air. What can we do? This fall we can access our property to see if we can add a tree or shrub. Shrubs provide protection around the house. Deciduous trees provide shade in the summer and allow the sun's heat to warm our homes in winter. Evergreen trees are good wind protectors. Check the Arbor Day website for how to judge the best place to plant a new tree or shrub. Many local nurseries and Lowes and Home Depot are having sales. If you want to be mindful of the birds in New Jersey, check out New Jersey's Native Trees Shrubs & Vines That Are Beneficial To Birds by Patricia Sutton. Trees can reduce cooling costs by 30% in summer and heating bills by 20-50% in the winter. For fall planting, it is advised to plant about 3 weeks before a hard frost or before the mid-October. Check with the nurseries to confirm what is appropriate for your tree or shrub.



As we continue with our Care for Creation “make a difference hints”, we will remain in the home

Last week we suggested purchasing appliances that had an ENERGY STAR label, but there many other things that you can do with your household appliances and temperature settings to save energy and protect the environment.



Here are just a few:

<b><u>Appliance</u></b>	<b><u>Care for Creation Hint</u></b>
Refrigerator	Set the temperature in the fresh food compartment to between 35 and 38 degrees.
Refrigerator	Set the temperature in the freezer to exactly Zero degrees
Hot Water Tank	Set the temperature to 120 degrees, that should be quite adequate.
Washer	Use warm water rather than hot to significantly reduce a load's energy use.
Washer	Cold water clearly saves even more energy, but you should use a cold-water detergent to ensure that clothes are properly cleaned.
Washer	Wash full loads. The washer will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the load, but this way you wash more laundry with the same energy.
Washer	Use the high-speed or extended spin cycle to remove as much moisture as possible before drying clothes.
Dryer	When possible hang your clothes outside or use a drying rack.
Dryer	Remember to clean the lint filter after every use and put the lint in the trash, never down the drain.
Dryer	If you do use dryer sheets, scrub your filter once a month, with a toothbrush, to remove firm buildup that reduces air flow and makes the dryer less effective.
Dryer	Use lower heat settings. Even if the drying cycle is longer, you will use less energy and be less likely to over-dry your clothes.
Dryer	Use a cool-down cycle and moisture sensor option if your dryer has one.
Dryer	Consider using wool dryer balls. They help separate clothes and get more air to them, cutting drying time. They also reduce static so you don't need dryer sheets.

**So, what is the usual energy use of standard household appliances?**

The table below will give you a reasonable idea of what to expect (Source: U.S.E.P.A)

<b><u>Appliance</u></b>	<b><u>Energy Usage in Kilowatt Hour (kwh)</u></b>
Dishwasher	206
Refrigerator	596
Clothes Washer	590
Clothes Dryer	769

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