

WASTE REDUCTION TIPS FOR THE GARDEN

Create a reuse garden!

Reuse your old nylons

Tie up your climbing vines: Use your old, torn nylons as plant ties. The nylon will stretch as the plant grows so it will not damage the plant. Cut or tear the nylon into strips and hide the ties in the foliage.

Create drainage for your plants: Fill your nylons up with packing peanuts and line the bottom of your flowerpots with the nylons to increase drainage in your flowerpots. The nylons will keep the soil from leaving the pot, but will allow excess water to drain away. When you re-pot your plant, remove the nylon, rinse it off and use it again!

Protect your ripening fruit: Slip a piece of your old nylons over your unripe fruit to protect it from bugs and other nibbling pests.

Newspaper mulch

Put your periodicals to work! Use your old newspapers to snuff out weeds and prevent weed seeds from germinating. Layer newspapers over the soil up to 25 sheets thick, dampen with water and cover with a mulch to prevent it from blowing away. The newspaper will quickly decompose into compost, but not before it suffocates the weeds and seeds underneath. For best results, mow over or pull out the weeds before adding the newspaper.

Gardening with utensils

Use your old forks and spoons for weeding, separating seedlings and cultivating the soil. A fork is perfect for digging weeds out of tight spaces, like the cracks in a driveway or inside a small flowerpot. A fork is also very helpful to minimize root damage when separating tiny seedlings or matted roots in an overgrown potted plant.

Creative planting pots

Reuse old watering cans, shoes, empty paint or pasta sauce cans, sinks or bath tubs as creative planters for herbs and flowers. Be sure there are holes at the bottom of your creative planter for drainage. If there are no holes, place a flower pot inside to plant your flowers and herbs in.

Paper Grocery Bags

Frost protection: Protect young and sensitive plants from frost by placing a paper bag upside down on top of the tender shoots. The bag will help to insulate the plants from the cold. Remove the bag when the sun comes up.

Compostable seed tray: Cut off the bottom of a grocery bag, leaving a few inches of the sides so that you have a paper bag "tray". Add some potting soil and plant your seedlings in this tray. When the seedlings are ready to be separated, gently pull apart the bag (it will have become moist and will tear easily) to remove the seedlings. If you can, try to leave part of the bag intact around each seedling to minimize disturbance to the small roots. Plant the paper bag with the seedling; the paper bag will naturally decompose in the soil.

Protection for ripening fruit: Place a paper bag over ripening fruit and cinch the bag shut with a string or twisty tie to protect the fruit from pests.

Aluminum pie tins

Before you recycle those disposable aluminum pie tins, you can use them in the garden to ward off pesky birds and other animals. Make a small hole in the edge of the pie tin and hang the pie tin in the garden using some fishing line or string. The flashing light they reflect combined with the noise they make as they bang around will discourage pests. Move them around the garden occasionally, varying their height to keep the pests from getting too used to their presence.

Can collars

You can use your empty soup cans as collars to protect your young plants from cutworms. Remove both the top and the bottom of an empty steel can and place the can over the plant, pushing it into the soil about 1 cm. The can will act as a physical barrier that the cutworm cannot cross. Be careful not to leave the can in place for too long--your plant will out grow the can and become trapped inside. The can may also rust overtime if exposed to dampness.

