

What we can do to reduce litter in our community

The handling or disposal of litter is an important environmental issue. Most people identify litter as a major environmental problem and yet people still litter. Carelessly discarded garbage affects every member of society: it causes harm to people and animals, damages our waterways, costs us money and suggests that we do not care for our environment. Fortunately, we can all do something to help prevent and reduce litter.

What we can do?

There are a number of simple ways to help prevent littering:

1. Use garbage cans properly if provided. Make sure your waste goes in the garbage can, not beside it;
2. Take your litter home when visiting parks and gardens. Wind and animals scavenging in garbage cans can often lead to littering in our parks;
3. Pick up garbage, do not flush it away; Sweep paved areas and pick up all the garbage, rather than hosing it down into gutters and drains. All the garbage in gutters works its way into the waterways;
4. Pack a garbage free lunch with reusable plastic containers and water bottles rather than bags and drink boxes. Never sweep grass, leaves or any other waste into gutters as they degrade to form a rich nutrient source for algal blooms. Never hose paths as it will only wash your waste into the drainage system;
5. Wash cars on the grass, never on the road or hard paths where it will wash detergents into the drainage system;
6. Always dispose of unwanted chemicals responsibly; never pour them into gutters or drains, as, paints, thinners, pharmaceutical drugs, and garden pesticides and herbicides are poisonous to wildlife. Your local government department can advise you of the best way to dispose of these.
7. Prevent oil from leaking from your car as it gets into the drainage system and eventually ends up in the river or sea;
8. Use a reusable cloth bag when you are shopping, or choose cardboard boxes instead of plastic bags whenever possible.
9. Use washing detergents, which contain no phosphates, to prevent excessive amounts of these entering the drainage system. Also avoid excessive use of chemical fertilizers as runoff from these into the waterways cause the overgrowth of algae;
10. Never pour waste fats and oils down the sink, but rather throw them out with other household garbage. Always take a pick-up-bag when walking your dog. Don't leave its droppings in the gutter or on the footpath as they

will wash into the drainage system and contaminate the water. Always place waste in the most appropriate place. If there are no garbage cans, take it home with you. Don't bury it in the ground or sand, as it will soon be uncovered by animals, or peoples' feet.

11.It is best to reuse and recycle, never litter.

Remember, the power is yours!