

Reduce Reuse Recycle – Groceries and Food

Grocery shopping can be a challenge when trying to reduce waste. Aisles are full of extra packaging and buying items without the packaging can be more expensive. It is important though to vote with your dollar.

As summer comes, we will be able to buy much more local food from our farmer's market and directly from local farmers and makers. This is the very best way to cut down on plastic waste particularly. Most of our local producers will package things in reusable containers or even prefer it if you provide them with a container to fill up. Local food also has a much lower carbon footprint.

Even in the winter you can save on packaging by purchasing from local producers. Almost all local meat comes wrapped in brown paper instead of Styrofoam and plastic. Local eggs usually reuse the same egg cartons over and over and they are usually made of cardboard.

Do it yourself recipes are everywhere and this is a great way to save on packaging. Making your own laundry soap, lotions, bread, condiments can be very easy and simple and can vastly reduce packaging. A good example is growing your own alfalfa or other sprouts. Sprouts always come in a plastic clamshell type container. It is easy to buy sprouting lids that are placed on a mason jar and voila, one less plastic container.

Canning your own vegetables, salsas, flavoured vinegars, pickles, and other produce saves a lot of cans and is a fun project to do in the summer. It is especially fun to do a specialty item and then trade with your friends so you have a variety. It is also healthier.

The main way to reduce waste is to make a commitment to not buy things with extra packaging whenever possible. So, while wandering through the aisles, ask these questions. Can I buy this somewhere without the packaging? Can I buy it in glass or tin instead of plastic? Can I refill my container instead of buying the product in another package? Can I easily make it myself?

You can make a difference. Demand that our stores offer options of food without packaging, especially produce. Let store managers know how disappointed you are that you can only buy cauliflower wrapped in plastic. Shop at stores that use less packaging or more ecofriendly packaging.

Remember that your dollar is your vote. If you mostly buy items with less packaging and let people know that is intentional, sooner or later these types of items will be more available.

Please feel free to email me at Golden@wildsight.ca to give me feedback on this article and share your ideas and questions regarding Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.