

Paper or Plastic? Neither!!!

Think of all the paper and plastic bags you have used while grocery shopping over the past year. A lot, right? Americans use 100 billion plastic shopping bags each year. Plastic bags start as crude oil, natural gas, or other petrochemical derivatives. They don't biodegrade, they photodegrade over hundreds of years, eventually breaking down into smaller, toxic components that contaminate soils, waterways, and enter the food web.

What about paper bags? Though paper bags are easier to recycle and more likely to be recycled, making plastic bags uses less energy and water and creates less air pollution and solid waste. They also take up less landfill space. However, many plastic bags never make it to the landfill, becoming airborne and getting caught in fences, vegetation, trees, getting eaten by animals, clogging gutters, sewers, and waterways. And only a very small percentage (0.6%) of the billions that are produced actually get recycled each year.

So, which is better? Neither! The best alternative is to pack your groceries in reusable cloth bags. They are strong, reliable, hold more than plastic bags, and are good for the environment. Challenge yourself and your friends to reduce and then eliminate the use of paper and plastic bags at the grocery store and all stores at which you shop.

Munnell Run Farm now has heavyweight 100% cotton canvas tote bags for you to purchase! They are 17 inches wide by 18 inches deep and are \$10.00 each. Friends of MRF get 10% off! All revenues from these sales fund the programs and projects at MRF. So, support Mother Earth and Munnell Run Farm at the same time! Go to www.munnellrunfarm.org or call the office to order.

Resources:

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/09/0902_030902_plasticbags.html

<http://www.sierraclub.org/bags/>

<http://www.reusablebags.com/facts.php>

<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/1499>

<http://www.charityguide.org/volunteer/fifteen/plastic-bags.htm>

Other sites to check out:

www.grrn.org (Grassroots Recycling Network)

http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/eliminate_plasticbags/

http://www.ci.westminster.co.us/res/env/land/envland_grocbag.htm

http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/08/10/plastic_bags/

<http://inthefray.org/content/view/2067/161/>

<http://environment.about.com/od/recycling/a/reusablebags.htm>

http://www.daviscoop.com/grocery_bags.html

http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/pressroom/pr_01-22-08.html