

## Help Create a More Sustainable Maine

The average Maine family of four wastes about \$1,600 worth of food each year, contributing to more than 96 billion pounds of spoiled food Americans toss annually. What a waste—for your budget and for our environment. Producing food that gets tossed wastes water, land, and other natural resources, and burdens Maine's landfills with materials that spew climate-changing methane gas. Cut back on food and other waste such as plastic bags and food containers, including polystyrene, that take centuries to break down. NRCM's Sustainable Maine project focuses on solutions to wasteful habits that threaten the future of our environment. Learn more about this project at [nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org).



## Natural Resources Council of Maine

### Protecting the Nature of Maine

Since 1959, people who love Maine have trusted the Natural Resources Council of Maine, the state's most effective member-supported nonprofit working for Maine's environment. We harness the power of science, the law, and more than 20,000 supporters across Maine and beyond to protect our air, waters, and forests.

When you become a member, your support helps NRCM

- Stop corporate lobbyists from polluting and spoiling our state;
- Watchdog agencies to make sure existing laws protecting the health of our people and environment are followed; and
- Fight for new laws to safeguard Maine's land, water, and air, now and for generations to come.

For more information about the Natural Resources Council of Maine or to become a member, contact us at

Natural Resources Council of Maine  
3 Wade Street, Augusta, ME 04330  
(800) 287-2345 • [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org)

Visit us online at [nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org)

## Reduce Your Use



### Tips for Reducing Your Footprint on the Environment

## More Money-Saving Tips to Protect Maine's Environment

Visit our website, email [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org), or call (800) 287-2345 to request these brochures:

*Bright Ideas: Tips for energy savings at home, the office, and on the road*

*Clean and Healthy Housekeeping: Toxics-free solutions for your home, yard, and garden*



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## REDUCE FOOD WASTE

### Be a Smarter Shopper

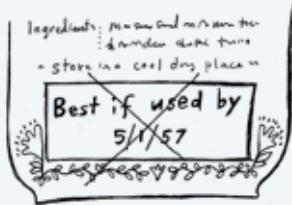
- Freeze portions of larger quantity items so it won't spoil before you eat it all.
- Don't be suckered by sales. If you don't need it, don't buy it.
- If it doesn't require an extra trip, shop more often and buy less each time so it doesn't have time to spoil.
- Plan meals in advance and stick to your shopping list.
- Have a snack before leaving the house—shopping on an empty stomach can make any food seem too good not to buy.



## REDUCE WHAT YOU WASTE

### Break Wasteful Habits

- Pack a waste-free lunch for your child in a reusable lunchbox. Same for your office lunch.
- Bring your own reusable utensils to restaurants that use disposable ones.
- Keep thirsty cloths in easy reach—hide paper towels, or don't buy them at all.
- Keep track of leftovers (including those you freeze) by writing on the container the date you made the food. Organize your fridge by date and use older leftovers first.
- Wash aluminum foil and sandwich or freezer bags—often, these can be reused many times.
- Put pasta sauce and jam jars to use storing and transporting homemade soups and other liquids, or for holding homemade granola, grains, and other bulk items.
- Pay attention to food labels—the expiration date is not the “best used by” date.
- Work with your local school to reduce food waste. It'll save money on food purchase *and* waste disposal costs.



### Avoid Disposable Plastic

Plastic takes hundreds of years to break down, leaving toxic chemicals in the environment. Even a little plastic can cause big problems for wildlife and people. Simple changes can help you avoid using it.

- Switch to reusable bags. Mainers throw away tens of millions of single-use shopping bags every year, which end up in landfills, litter streets, and pollute lakes, streams, and coastal waters.
- Keep a stash of reusable bags in the car.
- Don't buy gadgets, groceries, or other products packaged in or made from plastic.
- Say no to plastic straws. Keep a few stainless steel ones on hand at home, at the office, and in the car.
- Use a reusable water bottle and skip bottled water.
- Shun coffee machines that use single-serve plastic packaging; these result in hundreds of millions of pounds of plastic dumped into landfills each year. Try a pour-over coffee maker instead—they use no electricity and allow you to make the exact amount you want.
- Skip single-serve creamers; bring cream to the office in a quantity that will last the week.



### Say No to Expanded Polystyrene

Polystyrene, a petroleum-based plastic best known by the brand Styrofoam, is not accepted in local recycling programs. It ends up in landfills or burned in incinerators, or litters roadsides and waters where it poses a threat to wildlife. It can last in the environment hundreds of years.

- When dining out, bring your own “doggy bag” for leftovers.
- Keep a reusable travel mug in your car for take-out beverages.
- If reusable plates and utensils aren't feasible, choose paper plates made from recycled paper.



## NRCM Sustainable Maine Community Toolkits

A growing number of Maine communities are taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint. NRCM is helping by creating Sustainable Maine Community Toolkits. Each is a how-to for passing local ordinances that help communities reduce trash—and the costs of dealing with it—while protecting Maine's environment. You'll find tools, research, tips, and more at [nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org). Our project staff can provide hands-on assistance, too. Contact us at [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org). Here are just a few of our toolkits, and we add new ones often, so check back, and sign up for our email list.

✂ **Cigarette Litter Prevention Toolkit** Simple, proven solutions to keep nonbiodegradable cigarette litter off streets and out of waterways.

✂ **Composting Toolkit** Composting is an effective tool for eliminating wastefulness. Also good for schools!

✂ **Foam Container Toolkit** Ban single-use containers like coffee cups and take-out boxes, and use safer, recyclable alternatives.

✂ **Pay-As-You-Throw Toolkit** “PAYT” creates an equitable way to reduce household waste and save towns money.

✂ **Reusable Bag Toolkit** Help create bans and fees to discourage the use of single-use disposable plastic and paper carryout bags.

