



**JAMAICA ENVIRONMENT TRUST**

**EARTH HOUSE**

11 Waterloo Road, Kingston 10, Jamaica  
Phone : (876) 960-3693 • Fax: (876) 926-0212  
E.mail: jamentrust@cwjamaica.com • Website: www.jamentrust.org

*The Jamaica Environment Trust would like to thank the  
UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme for providing funding for this publication.*



**EARTH HOUSE**  
11 Waterloo Road  
Kingston 10, Jamaica



# Earth Facts

FROM THE JAMAICA ENVIRONMENT TRUST

## WHY RECYCLING IS IMPORTANT



### Earth Facts QUICKFACTS



The recycling symbol, also known as the Mobius Loop, can be found on products that are recyclable. The chasing arrows indicate the three steps of recycling:

1. Collecting and processing material;
2. Manufacture using recovered materials; and
3. "Closing the loop" – Purchasing products containing recycled content. Without this third step, the recycling symbol is incomplete.

SOURCE: [www.epa.gov/garbage/faq.htm](http://www.epa.gov/garbage/faq.htm)

### WHAT IS RECYCLING?

Recycling means taking waste materials and reprocessing them into a usable product or resource. Many types of materials can be recycled such as glass, cardboard, paper, steel, aluminium and certain plastics. Recycling offers a host of environmental, economic, and social benefits. As a result, the recycling of materials is now a growing industry in many parts of the world.

# WHY RECYCLE?

Every sector of our society contributes to Jamaica's solid waste problems. In fact, it is estimated that Jamaica produces approximately 900,000 tonnes of solid waste annually. We can all recycle more of our waste. Recycling:

- Keeps waste out of existing waste disposal facilities, extending their lives.
- Reduces the demand for energy and the need for raw materials used in the manufacture of new goods.
- Reduces air and water pollution that may be caused during the manufacture of new products.
- Reduces risks to our health and the environment from improper disposal of some hazardous wastes, such as used oil.



## RECYCLING FACT BY MATERIAL TYPE

<b>GLASS</b>	Most bottles and jars contain at least 25% recycled glass. Glass never wears out and it can be recycled forever.
<b>OIL</b>	It is easier and cheaper to recycle used oil than to make new oil from crude. One gallon of used oil can produce the same amount of motor oil as 42 gallons of crude oil, while requiring about one-third of the energy.
<b>PAPER</b>	Recycling a stack of newspapers about six feet tall saves the life of one tree over 30 feet tall. Recycling approximately one ton of newspaper saves 17 trees.
<b>PLASTIC</b>	Plastics are made from petroleum - a limited non-renewable (and ever more expensive) resource.
<b>ALUMINIUM</b>	A recycled six-pack of aluminium cans could save enough energy to drive a car five miles.
<b>STEEL</b>	Making tin cans from recycled steel takes only a quarter of the energy needed to make them from new steel, and creates a quarter of the water and air pollution caused by making cans from new steel.

(Modified from <http://www.bringrecycling.org/benefits.html>)

## Earth Facts QUICKFACTS

Approximately 98% of Jamaica's waste stream could be recycled or composted (see Table 1)

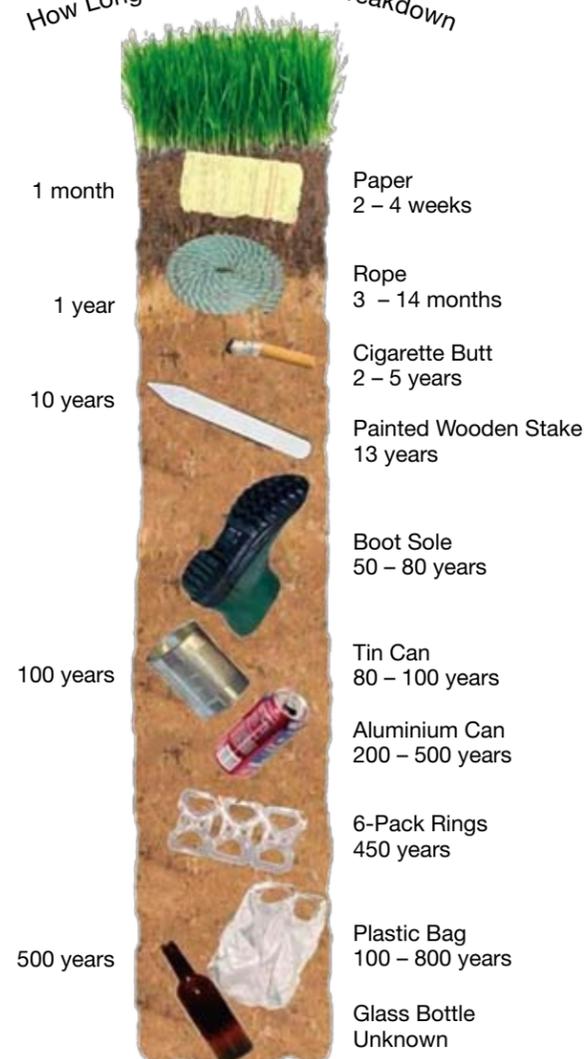
TABLE 1. Percentage composition of Jamaica's waste stream

WASTE FRACTIONS	WASTE COLLECTED (Percentage)
Compostables	69.0
Paper	5.9
Plastics	13.9
Glass	2.4
Cardboard	3.7
Wood/Board	0.3
Metal/Tin	2.3
Textiles	2.3
Hazardous	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(National Solid Waste Management Authority Waste Characterization Study, 2006)

## GARBAGE TIMELINE

How Long Does It Take To Breakdown



SOURCE: [network.earthday.net/profiles/blog/lists](http://network.earthday.net/profiles/blog/lists)

# PLASTIC RECYCLING IN JAMAICA

Plastics make up almost 14% of Jamaica's waste stream. We have all seen the effects of carelessly discarded plastic waste on dirty beaches and roads, and in blocked drains and gullies.

Plastics are the most common waste material that is collected for recycling in Jamaica, particularly those stamped with the Plastic Identification Code (a number inside three chasing arrows):

- **NUMBER 1** – polyethylene terephthalate (PETE), examples include soda and water bottles and
- **NUMBER 2** – high-density polyethylene (HDPE) examples are juice, shampoo and laundry detergent containers.

Selected recycling companies collect, sort, and cut these plastics into small pieces called "flakes", which are later baled and exported. The reprocessing of the "flakes" into a new product or material is done overseas.

## WHAT ARE MY PETE AND HDPE PLASTICS RECYCLED INTO?

PETE can be used to make fiberfill for winter coats, sleeping bags and life jackets. It can also be used to make carpets, beanbags, rope, car bumpers, tennis ball felt, combs, cassette tapes, sails for boats, furniture and, other plastic bottles.

HDPE can be used to make trays, piping, plastic lumber and rope.



## 3 EASY STEPS TO RECYCLING YOUR PETE AND HDPE

- STEP 1** Call a recycling center to determine what type of plastics they recycle and where to take it.
- STEP 2** Rinse and sort plastic containers by number.
- STEP 3** Drop off your plastics at your desired recycling center.

## REFERENCES

- About.com: Environmental Issues. How to recycle different types of plastics. <http://environment.about.com/od/earthtalkcolumns/a/recycleplastics.htm>. (accessed 16/6/2008)
- National Solid Waste Management Authority. 2006. The waste characterization and generation report: Riverton Wasteshed.
- Passaic County N.J. Office of Natural Resource Programmes. Lets talk about recycling. <http://www.passaiccountynj.org/Departments/naturalresources/recproco.htm> (accessed 4/6/2008)



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

1. **REDUCE** the amount of waste you produce. When you send less solid waste to the waste disposal facilities, you help protect our environment.
2. **REUSE** Avoid disposable products. Purchase products that can be used over and over again. Start using sturdy canvas shopping bags, reuse plastic bags, coffee tins, margarine containers and glass jars. Eliminate the use of products such as paper plates and disposable razors, too.
3. **RECYCLE** everything that is recyclable! It is important to know what items can be recycled in your community.
4. **REJECT** products with packaging that is excessive or not recyclable. You can refuse to purchase products that are harmful to the environment.
5. **REACT** by talking to store managers and writing letters to manufacturers and legislators.

Share what you know. If you notice solid waste problems in your neighbourhood, write to your Member of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the National Solid Waste Management Authority and strive to get a recycling program started in your community.

The Harmony Foundation of Canada. 1990. Practical action for the environment, home and family guide.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Frequent questions about recycling and waste management. <http://www.epa.gov/garbage/faq.htm>. (accessed 11/6/2008).