

REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS - WHY DON'T PEOPLE USE THEM?

Here are some of the reasons shoppers give us for why they don't use reusable bags when grocery shopping in the Bow Valley. We have also listed the ideas we hear about and see people doing to avoid using plastic bags. Please do your best to join your neighbours in the Bow Valley to **REDUCE THE USE** of Plastic Bags.

We Reuse Plastic Bags

Reusing plastic bags is OK if you use them over and over again and as long as the bags remain clean. Remember that using a plastic bag for garbage is not reuse – it's simply another short step on the plastic's one-way path to a landfill.

It's OK, We Recycle Plastic Bags

Recycling is a good way to go if there is no alternative but Reduce and Reuse are always better resource conservation choices in an efficient economy. Remember in the Bow Valley only grocery store bags can be recycled and only at the stores where you received them.

We Need Plastic Bags for Garbage

Are you using all of your plastic bags as garbage bags? If you are bagging your fruits and veggies as well, you can use those for garbage. However, people are telling us that once they start recycling they need significantly fewer bags for garbage because recyclables do not need to be in bags. **80%** of household waste is recyclable. Combine recycling with using at least one reusable shopping bag per week and you can help to reduce the use of plastic bags.

Plastic Bags are Clean, Reusable Bags Get Too Dirty

Reusable shopping bags do become soiled and need washing the same way our dish cloths, clothing and even the fresh produce in the grocery bag should be cleaned. Plastic grocery bags should also be clean or they will not be accepted for recycling by the store. People who switch to reusable bags tell us that they eventually find the value in having durable bags that can be washed easily and regularly. Follow these reusable bag tips:

- ✓ Reusable bags should be washed regularly.
- ✓ Collect reusable bags that can easily be washed in your regular laundry.
- ✓ Use smaller plastic bags or wraps to isolate your meat and other messy groceries to reduce the risk of contamination.
- ✓ Consider designating specific reusable bags in your collection for meats or other messy groceries so that you know which ones need more frequent washing.
- ✓ Like socks, have enough reusable bags so you can have some in the laundry hamper and some clean ones ready to use.



I'm Visiting On Vacation and Do Not Have Reusable Bags

The growing concern for problems associated with excessive use of plastic bags is worldwide. Many countries have now placed controls on plastic bag manufacturing or distribution. We can always bring at least one handy reusable bag with us when we travel. They do not take up much space in our luggage and have many uses, as more regions begin to discourage single use plastic bags. Be Prepared!

Washing Reusable Bags Consumes More Water

You don't have to do a special wash load for your bags any more than you wash each pair of jeans separately. Add your reusable shopping bags to one of your regular laundry loads.

I Forgot My Reusable Bags at Home

After a while it becomes a rewarding habit to get your reusable bags back in the car, backpack or stroller pouches after a shopping trip. Most people find that eventually they have enough bags that there are always a few empty ones in the car anyway. We seem to have quickly developed the habit of taking our wallets and cell phones, so leave a few bags by the door and make them part of your routine.

I Left Them in the Car

Not a problem, go back and get them. After you make yourself do that a few times you will find your memory gets better! Or follow these tips:

- ✓ The groceries fit in the cart while you were shopping so simply use the shopping cart to get them out to your car while using one or two plastic bags for difficult to handle items. You can bag items in the parking lot if you still find you need to bag.
- ✓ To help you remember, keep a bag or two visible - in your purse, on your keychain or in the car door pocket.
- ✓ Write "bring bags" on your shopping list.

Reusable Bags Are "Too Small" or "Too Big"

There are lots of different sizes of reusable bags or you can make your own bag in a size that works for you. Just like single-use bags, reusable bags need to be packed with care. **Remember** to help your grocery cashier with filling your reusable bags. Grocery stores support reusable bags but the diversity of bags available often makes packing less convenient for checkout staff.

