



EMERALD KEEPERS

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For an Emerald Green, Ocean Blue Coronado

MYTH BUSTERS

THE TRUTH ABOUT PLASTICS

PLASTIC MYTH: RECYCLING CAN FIX IT

We can't recycle our way out of our plastic crisis. Too much plastic is being produced, and waste facilities aren't equipped to deal with the quantity or variety of plastics. In fact, only 9% of all the plastic waste ever produced has been recycled.

Even if plastic is properly disposed in the recycling bin, some is lost in the recycling process. Some is turned into lower-value products, a process known as "downcycling." And some is exported to developing nations where it ends up in landfills, incinerated, or dumped into our oceans.

What's the solution?

Reduce, refill, repurpose. Plastic containers are meant to last forever, so reduce what you buy, and then refill or repurpose them as much as possible.

PLASTIC MYTH 2: BIOPLASTICS ARE THE ANSWER

Bioplastics have been promoted as a solution for plastic pollution. On the surface, it seems like a good idea, but dig a little deeper, and it gets a lot murkier.

What are bioplastics? Bioplastics are plastics that are derived from biological substances, such as corn, rather than from petroleum.

Are they compostable? It depends. Because



these cups or cutlery are made from biological sources, they can theoretically return to the soil. However, most bioplastics only break down under very specific circumstances. Your backyard compost is not going to cut it.

Are they recyclable? No. Only plastic made from petroleum is recyclable.

The biggest question to consider when shopping for bioplastics is: How am I disposing of this? EDCO will not take bioplastics. These items will be sent to the landfill, where they behave just like petroleum-based plastics: they don't break down. Choose durable and reusable items instead.

Also, beware of greenwashing. Just because

it says it "compostable" or "biodegradable," doesn't mean that piece of plastic will break down in any situation. These claims are not regulated the same everywhere.

PLASTIC MYTH 3: GOING PLASTIC FREE IS HARD

Reducing the plastic in your life might feel like an impossible task, but it doesn't need to be. Here are some tips to help you get started:

Start small: When it comes to making sustainable changes, we like to emphasize "progress, not perfection." If you are just beginning this journey, start with something manageable, such as bringing your own bags on shopping trips.

Shop wisely: Whenever possible choose products without excessive plastic packaging. Is there a product you need and can't avoid the plastic packaging? Look for a way to reuse that container. There are a number of zero-waste stores in San Diego, which offer everything from personal products to food.

Just say no to single-use plastic: Getting takeout? Skip the utensils. Go for fountain drinks (without plastic straws) instead of bottled. Try to buy produce that isn't wrapped in plastic. You get the idea.

Courtesy of Sailors for the Sea, sailorsforthesea.org



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