



Recycling in the Garden

Most of us are keen to help save the environment and one small way to do this is by re-using waste products around the home. Garden recycling is a great way to help the environment while saving money and sparking the imagination. There are many ways to recycle in the garden - from creating unique garden art from everyday household items to re-using materials for compost and mulch. Before you throw anything away consider whether it can be re-used. If it can be recycled but you don't want it yourself, please consider giving it to a charity or someone else who can recycle it.

One simple and easy way to help the environment is to recycle your plastic pots. Stoneman's has a Recycling Pot Bank near the entrance to our carpark, so if you can't re-use your plastic pots you can drop them off at our Pot Bank, or if you are in need of some pots - please feel free to help yourself.

One of the most popular ways to garden recycle is by reusing old objects or junk as garden art. Nearly any object has the potential to be transformed for another purpose in the garden or elsewhere and with a little creativity, you can turn an otherwise useless item into a one-of-a-kind piece of art and create a truly unique garden.

There are several benefits to garden recycling, not the least of which is saving the environment by helping to keep rubbish out of landfill. Before you throw anything out, why not consider the potential of items such as old bed frames, bikes or gates for re-use as interesting trellises, or how about using old tyre rims as flower containers or vegie pots - the possibilities are endless.

From simple household items to rubbish tip castaways or nanna's antiques - would-be sculptures, art pieces and other interesting potential garden focal points are all around us. There's a place for everything in the garden. Fountains, ponds, and other water features can be made easily from found objects. You can transform almost anything imaginable into a container by simply adding a few drainage holes. From tubs, baskets, boots and even toys, when it comes to garden recycling, the possibilities are endless.



To make sure items for garden recycling harmonize within their new setting however, it helps to consider how each fits into their surroundings beforehand.

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Wildlife sanctuaries can also be included in garden recycling. Turn an old mailbox into a birdhouse. Dishes can be turned into birdbaths. With a quick addition of a few extra pieces of wood to reduce the size of the opening, an old apple box can be placed in a tree to make a fantastic possum house or an old tub could make a great frog pond.

Get the kids involved. Recycling can be great fun and there's no better way to teach the next generation to be great stewards of the earth.



Remember the 3 R's: **Reduce, Reuse** and **Recycle**.

Enrich your garden & the earth by recycling



Organic waste makes up approximately 50% of household waste and 30% of all the waste that we throw away. Instead of wasting this valuable resource we should be recycling it into rich fertilizers and feed it back into the earth. By doing so we would also reduce the use of resources of our Councils who currently collect & dispose of this waste into landfill.

When organic waste is placed in landfill it becomes harmful to the environment as it breaks down and releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas, & contributes to landfill leachate that can impact on the environment.

Environmental benefits of organic recycling

Composting and/or worm farming organic materials at home, or placing your garden prunings out for council collection for recycling can achieve major environmental benefits. Some of these are:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from landfill
- Reduced leachate available for production in landfills, which can impact on groundwater quality
- Conserves limited landfill space available to metropolitan and regional centres and townships.

The use of compost in gardening, landscaping, horticulture and in agriculture can:

- Reduce the amount of watering required
- Reduce the amount of synthetic fertilisers needed
- Improve the structure, fertility and health of soils
- Help to repair soils suffering from poor management



Some simple ways you can re-use your organic waste are:

- * Pine needles can be raked and reused in the garden as mulch. This is especially good for acidic plants and is the ideal mulch for strawberries & blueberries.
- * You can produce your own compost, which helps create healthy soil, by re-using grass clippings, leaves, garden waste, newspaper, and kitchen scraps. Unwanted weed seeds can contaminate a compost system, so it's a good idea to place them in a plastic bag, tie it up and leave in the sun. This will effectively cook the seeds so they won't re-germinate, a process called solarisation.
- * Re-use egg cartons for seed trays - when your seedlings are ready to be planted out, you can just pop them straight in, tray and all, as it will break down and add nutrients to the soil as well.
- * Save on water and eliminate runoff by reusing large containers as rain barrels & you can then use this rainwater to water your garden.



At Stoneman's we sell a range of compost bins and worm farms to help you get started re-using your organic waste. We even sell the worms for your farm if you need them.

Come on in and talk to our friendly knowledgeable staff.



More recycling ideas:

- * Re-use plastic bags to line terracotta pots, which are porous and drain quickly. Lining the pot before planting will help retain water
- * **Old soft drink cans:** By filling the bottom third of a container with slightly bent/crushed soft drink cans, you can use less potting soil when planting. This will give you a lighter pot when finished and costs less per pot. The cans allow space at the bottom of the pot for drainage, so there is no need to keep a supply of gravel for this purpose either.
- * **Empty plastic soft drink bottles:** These make a great drip watering system for hard to water plants - especially those situated in areas where water run-off is a problem. Leave the cap on the bottle, pierce a couple of holes in the shoulder of the bottle and cut off the bottom. Bury the top of the bottle alongside the plant that needs watering. Fill the bottle and let the water slowly seep out at root level and the water run off problem is solved. You can either put the bottles in the garden on watering day or just leave them behind the plants and out of sight.
- * **Broken flower pots:** If a pot still has one side that is good, these make cute additions to the garden. Bury the broken part and plant inside the "cave" that is created. These broken pots are a good way to highlight particular plants or to tuck in little bits of tiny ground cover or pretty petunias.

- * **Broken garden tools:** You can stick the handle end in the ground, leaving the shovel or rake head visible. You can then train a vine up the handle or use the new "stake" to tie up a plant.
- * **Waxed cardboard milk cartons:** They won't break down in the compost so use them next time you plant a seedling. Just cut a hole in the bottom, put it over the top of the plant to provide instant protection against wind, sun, frost and rabbits.
- * **Opaque plastic milk bottles:** prevent too much sunlight getting through and cooking cuttings, and they're well ventilated, too. Place them over your seedlings and cuttings and they will root really well.
**Make sure you cut off the little plastic rings at the top of the bottle neck as they have a nasty habit of getting into waterways and strangling wildlife.
- * **Old take-away food containers:** use these for storing seed. When the time comes to sow them, you can use margarine containers as seed punnets. Just put a few holes in the bottom for drainage.
- * **Polystyrene boxes:** are widely used in the fruit and vegetable industry but unfortunately they're only used once and then thrown away. Pick these up from your local fruit shop, put eight holes in the bottom and fill with potting mix; they're magic for growing plants. They're wonderful for small growing fruit and vegies, and they provide frost and heat protection. The only things you can't grow in these is large fruit trees as the roots will grow right through the bottom.
- * **Plastic knives:** make fantastic plant markers - just grab your permanent marker & away you go.
- * **Old panty hose:** Cut the legs off and use them to tie up tomatoes & other plants. These are ideal because they stretch a bit so the plants aren't held rigidly to the trellis.
- * **Shower curtains:** are very handy for transplanting mature plants. Spread the shower curtain out next to the plant that is going to be moved or be divided. Pile all the dirt that you dig up onto the shower curtain. To save your back you can use it like a skid to move the plant from place to place, eliminating the need to pick it up at all. When you're finished you can pick up the edges and send the dirt directly where you want it back in the garden. There's no dirt on the lawn and the project is finished without having to shovel all the dirt back again.
- * **Clear plastic clam shell** type containers used to package doughnuts & muffins can be re-used as mini greenhouses by poking a drainage hole in the bottom, filling with potting soil and planting seeds in them. Once done, close the top and you have an instant mini greenhouse. If it gets too warm, simply open the lid. When the plants get large enough, you can transplant them to the garden, rinse out the makeshift greenhouse and store it away for next year.



Just as with garden art, there can be a myriad of uses when garden recycling.

We'll make your garden grow!