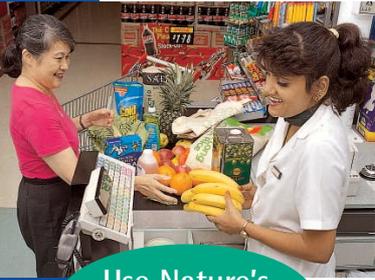


Smart Shopping and Smart Cleaning



Use Nature's packaging!



Buy in bulk and save money!



Use reusable cloth shopping bags.

Blacktown City Council provides comprehensive waste management services to all residences in the Blacktown Local Government Area. The main focus of these activities is to provide efficient and effective disposal and recycling services. As a community, however, we are facing the fact that landfill space is rapidly decreasing and being filled with garbage that is often toxic. One part that we can all play in conserving resources and protecting our environment is to become smart shoppers and smart cleaners.

To stop paying for garbage, stop buying over-packaged groceries.

Helpful hints while shopping

Here are some suggestions that will help to reduce the amounts of garbage we purchase and bring into our homes.

Save money by re-using containers for storage.

- **Use Nature's packaging:** Fruits already come with protective packaging. They don't need to be collected in a small plastic bag, only to then be placed in a larger plastic bag at the checkout. And does that lettuce or cabbage really need to be stuffed into that clear plastic bag to survive the 15 minute trip home? We can reduce the amount of garbage we bring into our homes by using only one bag for carrying.
- **Avoid using plastic bags:** Australians throw away over 6 billion plastic bags each year. Instead, bring your own cloth bags to the supermarket or use a cardboard box. It's easy once you get into the habit – especially if you keep your cloth bags handy in the car for those quick trips to the shops.
- **Buy in bulk:** Many grocery items are available in small sizes. If you do the sums, they are always more expensive than larger items and do not last as long at home. Where possible, buy in bulk to avoid excessive use of containers – especially groceries with a long life eg. rice, olive oil, jam, sugar etc.
- **Buy grocery items with packaging that can be re-used or recycled:** Many cleaning products now have refill packs available which allow us to re-use the original container. Always check containers for the three-arrow-recycle symbol. Plastic with a "1" or "2" symbol is most easily recycled, in addition to metal tins, aluminium cans, paperboard cartons and cardboard.
- Avoid purchasing disposable plates, cups and cutlery for picnics, BBQ's and parties, especially those made of polystyrene. Hard plastic utensils are able to be re-used time and again and are very robust.
- Avoid purchasing paper towels for kitchen cleaning. Instead use a sponge that can clean up many spills before it needs throwing away.
- When appropriate, use products you already have on hand to do household chores.
- At work, see if "recharged" cartridges for laser printers, copiers, and fax machines are available. They not only reduce waste, but can also save money.
- Consider using low-energy fluorescent light bulbs rather than incandescent bulbs. They will last longer, which means fewer bulbs are thrown out, and can cost less to replace over time.

The household toxic avenger

Another issue that often escapes our attention is the amount of toxic and hazardous products that we use in our homes and then throw out into landfills. The average household has 18 different cleaners for the kitchen, laundry and bathroom. Research has shown that only six cleaning products are needed at a maximum (only four if you don't have a dish washer!)

There are many products available that use natural materials as their base, rather than petro-chemicals or other hazardous substances. Here are some suggestions that will help to reduce the amounts of toxic substances we bring into our homes.

- Use one all-purpose cleaner. Avoid purchasing separate products to clean different surfaces (eg. oven cleaner, tile cleaner, fridge cleaner, surface cleaner etc.) when a good all-purpose cleaner will do the job.
- Buy "natural" cleaning products. Where possible avoid harsh chemicals that present a hazard to family members. Give the "natural" based products a go and compare how they perform.
- Some older style washing products work just as well as modern ones but can be cheaper and less toxic.



Some older style washing products work just as well as modern ones but can be cheaper and less toxic.

Alternative cleaning products – save money by cleaning with less toxic products

Did you know?

Blacktown City residents can save money by practicing waste minimisation. A reduction in fees for domestic waste services is available to property owners who choose to reduce the amount of their domestic household waste and use a smaller size of wheelie bin. Call Council's Information Centre on **9839 6000** for more information.

Drain cleaner	Use a plunger or plumber's snake.
Oven cleaner	Clean spills as soon as the oven cools using steel wool and baking soda; for tough stains, add salt (do not use this method in self-cleaning or continuous-cleaning ovens).
Glass cleaner	Mix 1 tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice in 1 quart of water. Spray on and use newspaper to wipe dry.
Toilet bowl cleaner	Use a toilet brush and baking soda or vinegar. (This will clean but not disinfect.)
Furniture polish	Mix 1 teaspoon of lemon juice in 1 pint of mineral or vegetable oil, and wipe furniture.
Rug deodorizer	Deodorize dry carpets by sprinkling liberally with baking soda. Wait at least 15 minutes and vacuum. Repeat if necessary.
Plant sprays	Wipe leaves with mild soap and water; rinse.
Mothballs	Use cedar chips, lavender flowers, rosemary, mint, or white peppercorns.
Flea and tick products	Put brewers' yeast or garlic in pet food; sprinkle fennel, rue, rosemary, or eucalyptus seeds or leaves around animal sleeping areas.