

Too Much Packaging!

Brenda Greenough

I am a woman in my fifties who has decided to go back to school. To make this financially possible, I have taken in three students from a nearby college. These guys have been teaching me about recycling and composting, separating garbage into paper, plastic, and organics.

I am learning a lot about this process, much of which I don't like. It seems to me in watching these boys, that because they recycle "garbage" they have lost site of the bigger picture. I have more garbage in different coloured coded bags now than I did when I was raising six kids. What has changed? Why is there so much packaging for me to deal with? Shouldn't the responsibility belong to the manufacturer? Why do I have to sort their garbage?

Apparently if I do it wrong the garbage collectors will leave that bag on the curb and I will receive a warning. What do I do with it now? Why should I be penalized for dealing with someone else's waste? I don't want it but I have no choice. I shouldn't have to go through layers of packaging to get to the product in the first place. These

young people in my home seem to believe that if it's recyclable then it's OK, yet they take two long hot showers a day. I have been told by my teachers that my campus has decreased its garbage output immensely since putting in recycling stations. Does this mean it has increased its recycling output immensely? I'm still not sure what the difference is.

Let's try to REDUCE and REUSE. We should RECYCLE as a last resort. I believe the problem lies with the corporations. They are the ones who should be penalized for over packaging. If I put my corn flakes box in the wrong bag, take it up with Kellogg's. I am definitely getting an education!



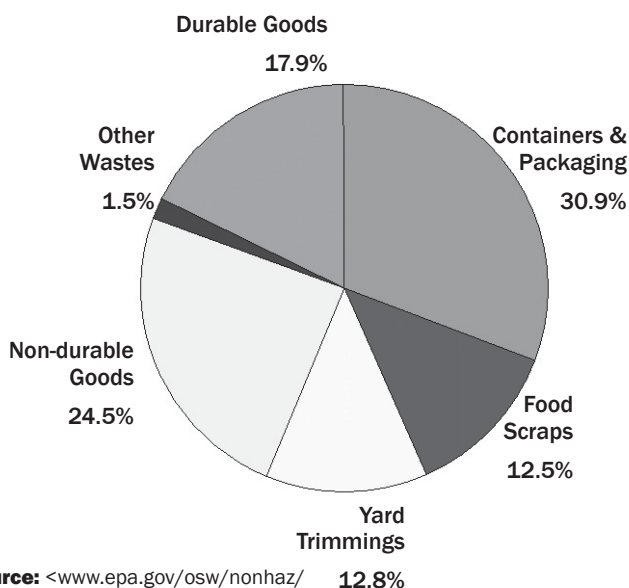
Brenda Greenough is a nurse's aide whose love of learning has taken her back to school. At age 50, she is a student in Nova Scotia, Canada, where she will complete her high school diploma and study to be a Licensed Practical Nurse.

Figuring out Trash!

Study the pie chart on the right. Is there anything you find surprising? Which wedges of the pie chart could we reduce?

What's in your trash? Make a circle graph. Show the types of things that make up your trash.

Vocabulary note: *durable goods* are items that last a long time, like a necklace or a refrigerator. *Nondurable goods* are things you use once or a few times, like a disposable diaper or a container of shampoo.



Source: <www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/msw07-rpt.pdf>