

Spotlight on Sustainability

July 2019

Provided by Your Ontario County Eco-Heroes

Its Plastic Free July!

What is that? It's a challenge started in Australia focused on the reduction of single use plastic, it has now spread across the globe and people from every continent participate. The point of the challenge is to increase people's awareness of how much single use plastic they use on a regular basis. To accomplish this goal there are a variety of ways people are invited to participate and this year we invite the county employees to participate. Employees participate as a part of their department, at the end the departments who participate will be entered into a drawing for a prize.

How can your department participate?

For the week of the 15th of July pick one way your department will reduce your single use plastic waste then email Alyssa Eveland (Alyssa.Eveland@co.ontario.ny.us) to let us know how your department will be reducing single use plastic. Every department that participates will be entered into a drawing for a prize. What counts as "Single Use Plastic": Single use plastic is any piece of plastic that is used only once before it is thrown away or recycled. Things such as: plastic straws, plastic bags, take away coffee cups, plastic soda and water bottles, etc.

What can your department do? Swap single use items for reusable alternatives such as:

- ceramic or refillable mugs for single use coffee cups
- have a water filter in the fridge instead of using disposable water bottles
- get metal utensils for your break room so no one has to use plastic

These are just examples pick what you think would make the biggest impact by your department and go with that. Don't forget to let the Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste know what you're doing!

Sources: <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/>

Eco Friendly Summer Picnics

Picnics are a huge part of summer but unfortunately they tend to be pretty wasteful events but luckily there are easy ways to make the event more ecofriendly.

- Bring food and drinks that are not wrapped in plastic or packaged in single use plastic containers.
- Bring reusable cutlery, plates and glasses or encourage everyone to bring their own.
- Any food scraps left over can be taken home and composted.
- Consider using bunting to decorate which are more environmentally friendly than balloons, and you can use them again and again.

Are Fireworks ecofriendly?

Fireworks can release a variety of different compounds into the air and surrounding environment. Compounds such as metals like barium or aluminum (which give them the bright colors) and clouds of smoke that affect local air quality in a negative way all result from fireworks. Not saying you need to forgo the celebratory fireworks, go to a larger show in the local area and invite friends and family so that there are less people shooting off fireworks themselves.

Sources: <https://www.sciencefocus.com>, <https://www.ecowatch.com>

**CHOOSE
TO REFUSE**
SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

Want to take on this challenge as an individual? While we cannot enter individuals into this challenge being held by the County you can participate in a variety of ways in the challenge.

- Avoid single use plastic packaging
- Avoid takeaway items such as bags, bottles, straws, and that sort of thing
- Avoid plastic entirely and go plastic free
- Do any of these activities for a day, a week, all of July, or make this the start of a permanent life style change

