

# Mother Earth is Asking us for Help!

## *Single-Use Plastics*



### What's the Issue?

The billions upon billions of items of plastic waste choking our oceans, lakes, and rivers and piling up on land is more than unsightly and harmful to plants and wildlife. Plastic pollution is very real and **single-use plastics** have a large impact.

### Fact sheet: Single use plastics

1. In 2016, world plastics production totaled around 335 million metric tons. Roughly half of annual plastic production are destined for single-use products.
2. Humans buy about 1,000,000 plastic bottles per minute in total. Only about 23% of plastic bottles are recycled within the U.S.
3. Americans purchase about 50 billion water bottles per year, averaging about 13 bottles per month for every person in the U.S.! That means that by using a reusable water bottle, you could save an average of 156 plastic bottles annually.
4. It is estimated that 4 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide annually. Only 1% of plastic bags are returned for recycling. Americans throw away 100 billion plastic bags annually. That's about 307 bags per person! All that waste can be eliminated by switching to reusable shopping bags.
5. Half a million straws are used in the world every day. Refusing straws is becoming a trending practice!
6. 500 billion disposable cups are consumed every year. Americans alone throw away 25 billion Styrofoam coffee cups every year. Styrofoam cannot be completely recycled. Most of the Styrofoam disposed of today will still be present in landfills 500 years from now.
7. The main cause for the increase in plastic production is plastic packaging. Plastic packaging was 42% of all nonfiber plastic produced in 2015 and it also makes up 52% of plastics thrown away.
8. Single-use plastics frequently do not make it to a landfill or are recycled. A full 32% of the 78 million tons of plastic packaging produced annually is left to flow into our oceans—the equivalent of pouring one garbage truck of plastic into the ocean every minute. This is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050. This could mean that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans. Choosing to buy products with less packaging or no packaging altogether makes a big difference.
9. Even when single-use plastics are sent to landfills (there are 3,091 active landfills in the U.S. alone), they aren't harmless. Landfill liners can leak harmful pollutants into the watershed and plastics on the tops of landfills can be carried away by the wind. The best way to curb single-use plastic pollution is to reduce your personal plastic consumption! (<https://www.earthday.org/2018/03/29/fact-sheet-single-use-plastics/>)



### Acting on our Corporate Stand, What can we do to help?

- ✚ To learn more about the threat and impact of plastic pollution and get tips to reduce your plastic consumption, download [Plastic Pollution Primer and Toolkit](#).
- ✚ To get motivated LISTEN AND SING:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHNpR2Iiddk&feature=youtu.be>
- ✚ Intriguing and interesting choice <https://nexttribe.com/single-use-plastic/> Could you try it?