



recycling challenge

You've read about the massive waste problem in Australia in the magazine. So, what are you going to do about it?

ABC Gardening Australia magazine is challenging readers to reduce waste. Use this form to record your waste and waste reduction strategies. Monitor how much you put into your garbage bin each week, think about what you are throwing out and recycle what you can. Work out ways to reduce your garbage to cut both its volume and weight. Then, implement your strategy. Continue to monitor your garbage statistics to see what effect your strategy is having on your overall household waste disposal.

Plus, we'd love to hear your story about reducing waste. Write to Recycling Challenge, ABC Gardening Australia magazine, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria, NSW 2015 or email ga@newsmagazines.com.au

Garbage survey form

Nominate a family member to monitor what goes in the garbage and what goes into recycling or green waste.



YOUR DETAILS

Garbage monitor's name _____

Number of people in your household _____

Garbage bin size (litres) _____

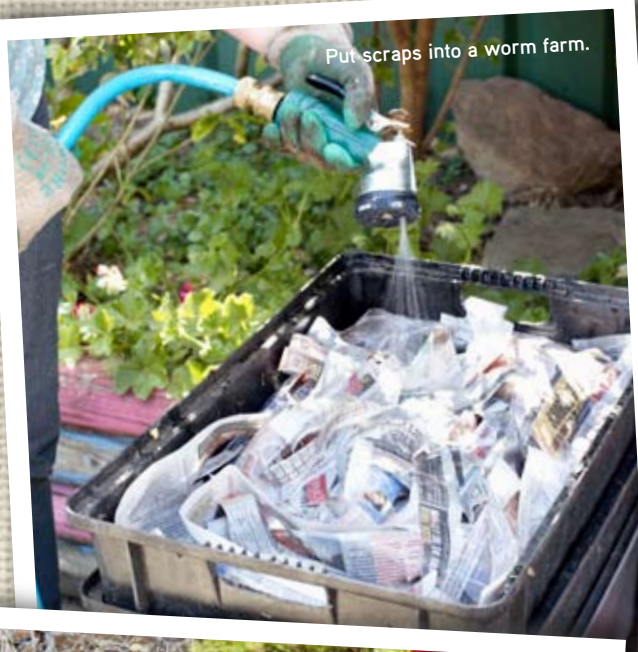
Frequency of garbage collection (weekly, fortnightly) _____

Date you joined the challenge _____

Week	Weight* (kg)	Volume** (litres)
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____
7	_____	_____
8	_____	_____
9	_____	_____
10	_____	_____
11	_____	_____
12	_____	_____

* To calculate the weight, use scales to weigh each bag of garbage then tally it up for the week. If you are weighing in grams, total it up to kilograms. It may be easier to weigh yourself holding the garbage bag on the scales and then subtract your own weight.

** To calculate the volume of your garbage, estimate the percentage of the bin you fill. So, if you have a 240L bin that's half full your volume is 120L.



Put scraps into a worm farm.



Make weed tea.



Compost food waste.

Strategies to reduce the amount of waste in your garbage bin

- 1 Composting** Most food waste (excluding meat) can be composted. Start a compost heap or bury food scraps in a trench in your garden. Home composting can divert 300kg/pa of household material from the waste stream.
- 2 Worm farm** Worms eat small amounts of food scraps every day. Blend the scraps in a blender or roughly chop them to make them more easily digested for the worms.
- 3 Garden waste** Return all garden prunings, leafy weeds and green waste to your garden as mulch or compost. Make weed tea out of weeds that can't go straight in the compost by steeping them in a large bucket of water for a week (cover the bucket for safety and to stop mosquitoes breeding).
- 4 Buy less** A large percentage of food we buy is thrown out. If practical, buy smaller amounts and use them up before you shop again. Spend time while shopping thinking about what meals you'll be cooking over the coming days and only buy what's needed.
- 5 Love leftovers** Freeze leftovers for future meals (date and label contents) or eat them for breakfast or lunch the next day. If you don't like leftovers, include them in your pets' meals if it is safe for them (feed your pet after you eat). Don't just put leftovers in the fridge to throw them away uneaten on garbage night.
- 6 Make preserves, soups and jams** Don't throw away your uneaten fresh vegetables. Instead, make pickles, preserves, stocks or soups. Uneaten fruit can also be made into stewed fruits, juices or jams.
- 7 Check your fridge's efficiency** If food items are going bad in your fridge before their use by date, check that your fridge is cold enough (3–5°C is the recommended temperature for most food items) and the door seal is operating correctly. Replacing the door seal may improve the overall efficiency of your fridge.
- 8 Look for recyclable packaging** Packaging makes up a large volume of our waste. Look for products that come in packaging you can recycle or reuse.
- 9 Careful recycling** Only put clean recyclable material into your recycling bin to avoid contamination or your recycling may end up as landfill undoing all the work you've done to cut your waste. Thoroughly wash out tins and plastic containers and remove lids. Don't put recycling into plastic bags. If you are unsure whether a product is able to be recycled, check with the manufacturer or put it in your household waste.
- 10 Check green waste** If you have a green waste bin, make sure you only use it for green waste. Don't contaminate it with plastic, rope or garden ties.