



SSAFE CASE STUDY REPORT

Plastic-Free July

Chapter: Wake Robin

Location: Shelburne, VT

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Summary: Throughout the month of July 2024, we used several methods to encourage residents to reduce their use of single-use plastic products. This project can be implemented by one or two residents.

Objective: To increase awareness of the single-use plastic problem and of strategies to reduce the purchase and use of single-use plastics.

Project Location and Applicability: Wake Robin is a non-profit continuing care community serving approximately 320 residents living independently and 80 residents in residential or nursing home care. This project would be applicable to any campus that has effective ways to frequently communicate information to residents in oral and written form.

Methodology: Two residents met twice to discuss ideas for project implementation, share resources, and prepare a comprehensive tip list that was tailored to Wake Robin, including products available in our own gift shop and nearby stores. During a weekly community meeting, a resident stimulated interest by announcing the project and showing a video available at <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/>; and she posted an engaging notice on a stand outside the dining room. Throughout July, the resident periodically posted tips on the Wake Robin internal listserv. At the end of July, she placed printed lists of all the tips in a basket across from the resident mail boxes for residents to pick up if they wished.

Funding Needed (Amount, Sources): For paper, copying only.

Involvement or Support of Community Administration: Administration provided the stand for the notice outside the dining room.



Senior Stewards Acting for the Environment

Key Challenges: None.

Outcome (Results): Residents continue to raise questions about and express interest in reducing plastic use. We have no method to measure the outcome but would welcome suggestions.

Lessons Learned: Residents liked the bits of humor that had been added into the tips. Everything worked as planned. We need to find a way to evaluate the program.

Next Steps or Follow Up: We plan to expand the effort next July.

Resources: The Plastic Free July website provided graphics and the video that was shown at the community meeting for all residents. Most tips came from internet resources that had been reviewed over time but not documented. There are many online resources with lists, but lists needed to be combined to make a more comprehensive list tailored to the community.

2024 Plastic-Free July tips used at Wake Robin attached





2024 Plastic Free July Tips

Tip #1

Today is the first day of the Plastic Free July Challenge. Here is the first day's tip, which keeps us close to home. Support the Wake Robin Gift Shop by shopping for plastic free goods in the shop. Featured are bar hand soap, cv shampoo and conditioner bars that are not in plastic pump bottles or wrapped in plastic.

Tip #2

Buy beverages in glass bottles or cans, not plastic. In fact, look for glass bottles and jars or metal cans whatever you're buying. If you purchase something in a glass jar (like peanut butter), wash it and use it for storage. Milk is available in returnable glass bottles at Shelburne Market.

Tip #3

Buy powder laundry detergent in boxes, not liquid in plastic bottles, or plastic sheets or pods. Farm Craft VT has individual laundry cubes in a bag.

Tip #4

Use cloth bags or mesh bags at the super market for loose produce like vegetables and fruit. Better yet, go to a Farmers Market to buy fresh fruit and veggies using your cloth bags.

Tip #5

If you want to see an example of single use plastic, just look at the multiple rolls of toilet paper wrapped together in plastic. That is single use plastic! Avoid that plastic by buying single rolls of toilet paper wrapped in paper. You can find Scott and Seventh Generation single roll toilet paper at Shelburne Market.

Tip #6

Buy eggs in paper cartons, not plastic. Likewise, look for paper or cardboard packaging whatever you buy.

Tip #7

Are you as totally surprised as I am to learn there is plastic in many tea bags? Many tea bags are made with nylon or polyethylene terephthalate (PET) which are not biodegradable and can release harmful microplastics when exposed to heat. These microplastics can end up in your drink, and studies show they may pose a risk to human health. An option is to buy loose leaf tea available in a ceramic, glass or stainless steel infuser or tea ball - these are cheap and easy to find online, if you can't pick one up at a home goods or kitchen store locally.

Tip # 8

Why not have creemees in cones, rather than in a plastic cup/container? Cones are very helpful in reducing the number of creemee containers. So, the next time when you feel like having a creemee, grab a creemee cone instead of a plastic creemeee container.

Tip # 9

Here's one that is a little harder but makes a big difference. Buy bread packaged in paper bags instead of buying bread in plastic packaging. You can find bread in paper bags at farmers markets, Shelburne Market and City Market, among others. Backdoor Bread is a great local baker who sells bread in brown paper bags: backdoorbread.com. At home, you can store the bread in an airtight tin or an aluminum container. I wrap mine in aluminum foil, which is recyclable when clean and rolled into a ball at least 2" in diameter.

Tip #10

Buy peanut butter in glass jars that are recyclable. I've been told you can reuse the jars to kill beetles. Just put soapy water in the jars and brush the beetles into the jars to die. I was also told if you put some gin or vodka in the jar, the beetles die faster - and happier?