



# LIFE ON THE BAY

A STEWARDSHIP GUIDE FOR  
EASTERN GEORGIAN BAY  
AND INLAND LAKES



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



GEORGIAN BAY  
BIOSPHERE  
MNIDOO GAMII

# Worksheet #8 – Waste Reduction

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Use this worksheet to learn about how you can reduce your household waste.

## Why Should You Be Concerned?

- The millions of tonnes of garbage produced in our communities every year quickly fill up existing landfill sites. It is difficult to find new landfill sites as no one wants to live near one.
- If a municipal landfill site is full and a new location cannot be obtained, residents must pay more to have their waste transported elsewhere. Not only does this option cost more, but the transportation necessary creates additional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Recycling saves natural resources, energy, and water by using already manufactured materials rather than new raw materials.
- When organic matter is sent to landfills instead of being composted, methane gas, a powerful GHG, is produced because there is no oxygen to support decomposition. In one year, the organic waste from four people in a landfill will release more GHG than a car!
- Durable products may initially be more expensive, but are generally a better investment in the long run and stay out of landfill sites longer. Leachate from landfill sites may contaminate groundwater.
- Open burning of garbage releases a large number of pollutants. Burning of garbage at home is one of the largest known sources of dioxins and furans in Ontario.
- Some people throw medications into the garbage or flush them down the toilet or sink. This has a harmful effect on the environment since chemicals in the drugs leach into soil and drinking water.

## What Can You Do?

1. Consider how you can generate less waste. If you are a seasonal resident, please remember that good recycling practices should continue even while you are on vacation.
2. Recycle effectively. Your local municipality will have lists of which items can be recycled in your community and how you should prepare them for recycling (i.e. rinse, bundle, sort).
3. Inform yourself of initiatives and companies that are redesigning products, packaging, and manufacturing processes to reduce waste. Support them through your purchasing power.
4. Compost food and yard waste.
5. Use refillable and reusable containers and products as much as possible. Purchase durable products that last longer before needing to be replaced.
6. Watch for hazardous waste disposal days in your community. Encourage your local municipality to have them and support recycling programs. Many items such as paint, batteries, and printer ink cartridges can be returned to the place of purchase for proper disposal or recycling.
7. Return your unused and expired medications to your pharmacist for safe disposal.

## Waste Reduction: How Do You Rate?

Topic	Best <b>4</b>	Good <b>3</b>	Fair <b>2</b>	Poor <b>1</b>	Your Rating
<b>WASTE REDUCTION</b>					
<b>1. Purchases</b>	Instead of buying new items are frequently borrowed, rented, or shared.  Purchase used items.	Purchase or use only what you need and avoid accumulating unused products.	Purchase more than is necessary.  Recycle as much as possible, including donating items.	Purchase more than is necessary.  Throw unwanted items into your regular household garage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Preference given to items that are durable, reusable, and/or recyclable and can be recycled locally.	Preference given to items that are durable, reusable, and/or recyclable and can be recycled locally.	Disposable or single-serving items are purchased even when alternatives are available.	Frequently purchase disposable, or single-serving items (e.g. plastic straws and cutlery, coffee cups).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Take-out or disposable containers are seldom used.		Minimal effort made to recycle or reuse.	No effort to recycle or reuse.	
	Frequently choose items that have no packaging.	Choose items that have minimal packaging.	Choose items with packaging that is recyclable in your municipality.	No consideration given to product packaging.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Exclusively use reusable tote bags.	Always re-use carry-out grocery bags or tote bags.		Plastic carry-out bags are accepted and then discarded.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Products</b>	Choose products made from recycled, reclaimed, or environmentally friendly materials as often as able to.			Never consider if products are made from recycled, reclaimed, or environmentally friendly materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effort is given to repair items and appliances to increase their longevity whenever possible.			Broken or damaged items are thrown into regular household garbage immediately.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Topic	Best <b>4</b>	Good <b>3</b>	Fair <b>2</b>	Poor <b>1</b>	Your Rating
<b>WASTE DIVERSION</b>					
<b>3. Re-using and recycling</b>	Reduce the number of items you use.	Reuse as many items as possible.	Recycle as many items as possible.	Little or no attempt is made to reduce the volume of items in the garbage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Both sides of a sheet of paper are used, and all paper is recycled.	Both sides of a sheet of paper are used, or all paper is recycled.	Most paper is recycled and all paper purchased contains some recycled content.	Paper is not recycled.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Check with your municipality to learn what items are recyclable and how they should be prepared for recycling. Comply with recycling practices in your community.		Most recyclable items are recycled.	Little or no attempt made to participate in local recycling programs.  <i>*Waste is burned / a burn barrel is used.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Hazardous materials</b>	All hazardous materials are disposed of properly (e.g. paint, light bulbs, batteries).			<i>*Hazardous wastes are put into regular garbage.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Organic waste</b>	Food scraps are properly composted regularly, on-site.		Food scraps are composted occasionally.	Food scraps are thrown in regular household garbage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Home compost is in a proper site (sunny, well drained) and well looked after (stirred weekly, adequate moisture).	A home compost exists in a proper site but isn't well looked after.	A home compost exists but is in a poor site and is neglected.	No home compost.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yard waste (fallen leaves, grass clippings, etc.) are left in place to compost naturally as much as possible.	Yard waste (fallen leaves, grass clippings, etc.) are composted at home.		Yard waste (fallen leaves, grass clippings, etc.) are deposited in the garbage or landfill.	<input type="checkbox"/>

*\*These conditions may violate provincial legislation or municipal bylaws.*

# Helpful Hints

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- Items that bear the EcoLogo symbol have been independently certified to meet strict environmental standards that reflect their entire life cycle – from manufacturing to disposal.
- Use your purchasing power to help minimize waste – buy fewer items, select used items or products made from recycled materials, and shop locally to help cut down on emissions from consumer goods.
- To reduce packaging, buy in bulk (more product for less packaging) or purchase concentrated products.
- Microplastics and microfibers are serious issues in waterways. You can easily reduce the volume of these pollutants that leave your house by installing simple traps on your washing machine and dryer. Learn more about microplastic reduction, including trap effectiveness, at [www.georgianbayforever.org](http://www.georgianbayforever.org).
- When composting in bear country, remember that most backyard composter models are not fully bearproof. Unmanaged compost will produce a smell that will attract bears. With proper care, a compost unit will not smell badly. Proper care includes ensuring a mix of brown and green materials and aeration through stirring. Never add meat, fish, dairy, oil, cooked food, or large amounts of fruit. Ensure you have a clear sightline as you walk toward your composter.

## Get Started Composting!

**Location:** Make sure it is convenient, receives some sun, and is 2 ft from structures in a well-drained spot.

**Decide on a pile or bin:** You can start a simple pile in your backyard or purchase a bin for it. A bin may discourage animals from investigating.

**Load it up:** Composting works by mixing two types of wastes: green (nitrogen) and brown (carbon). Fill your compost with 60% browns and 40% greens. Add brown leaves to help balance carbon and nitrogen.

**Add water:** The microbes need some moisture to survive. It should be as damp as a wrung-out sponge.

**Turn your pile:** Once a week, use a shovel to turn your compost, break up clumps and infuse oxygen into the mix.

**Time:** Finished compost can take six months to a year to produce. Speedup the process by chopping materials into smaller pieces, turn it regularly, ensure a mix of greens and browns, and keep it moist.

# Resource List

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## Government

- Contact your local municipality to learn about waste disposal in your region.
- Environmental Labels and Claims  
[www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/Oca-bc.nsf/eng/ca02523.html](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/Oca-bc.nsf/eng/ca02523.html)

## Conservation & Stewardship

- Great Lakes Trash and Open Burning Website  
[www.openburning.org](http://www.openburning.org)

## Waste Reduction & Diversion

- Composting 101 & List of Compostable Materials  
[www.gbbr.ca/gardens](http://www.gbbr.ca/gardens)
- Compost Council of Canada  
[www.compost.org](http://www.compost.org)
- Zero Waste Canada  
[www.zerowastecanada.ca](http://www.zerowastecanada.ca)



# Action Plan Worksheet #8

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## Waste Reduction

Any ratings of 1 or 2 indicate areas where your management of household waste needs some changes to reduce the potential for environmental damage. Use the information from the worksheet and the resource list to help analyze your potential problems and decide what you can do to solve or control them. Remember, this is YOUR action plan. It must suit you and your property.

Topic Number	Workshop Theme	My Rating	Short-term Action	Long-term Action
1-a	Purchases	2	Research which items are recycled locally. Purchase reusable travel mugs, shopping bags, water bottle, etc.	Reduce waste produced by your household. Make informed decisions when purchasing packaged items and ensure materials are recycled.

# Thank You Miigwech

The Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere (GBB) is a community-based organization that builds capacity for regional sustainability in eastern Georgian Bay.

The GBB is a non-profit registered Canadian charity governed by a Board of Directors.

For more information, please visit:

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