

Backyard Actions for a Cleaner Chesapeake Bay

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Source: <http://www.iwantmarylandsbest.com/>

There is a series of five fact sheets which highlight various conservation measures—best management practices—that farmers use to produce healthy crops and protect water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Homeowners can apply these same conservation measures to home, lawn, and garden projects. Working together, we can make a difference for the Bay. Available fact sheets are: *Conserve Water, Try Composting, Control Soil Erosion and Rainwater Runoff, Try Pesticide Alternatives and Use Fertilizers Wisely.*

Visit the website www.iwantmarylandsbest.com to read valuable tips for your backyard or call the University of Maryland Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC) at 800-342-2507 to receive the brochures by mail. The HGIC website, www.hgic.umd.edu, is an invaluable resource for homeowners and gardeners.

Recycle More

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The solid waste services offered by the Town of La Plata are one of the highest rated services by our citizens. Our sanitation staff provides timely and responsive service for an essential municipal service. Since the early 1990s the Town has also offered recycling services, which are currently provided by contract with Waste Management. The Town's recycling day is Wednesday.

Recycling was started as a means to be environmentally responsible, as well as a means to reduce the cost of providing solid waste services. When we recycle paper, metal and plastic, these materials are reused and reduce the amount of materials going into the Charles County Landfill, which is good for the environment and extends the life of the Landfill. Part of the cost of providing solid waste service is the tipping fee the Town pays for each ton of material brought to be dumped in the Landfill, so the more solid waste that is diverted away from the Landfill also saves money for the ratepayers and the Town.

The Town Citizen Survey showed that just 68% of La Plata residents recycle. Nearly one third of survey respondents state they do not recycle. It is a Town Council Service Priority to encourage more of our community to recycle, and to encourage more material be recycled, or not even enter our waste stream. If you have not yet started recycling, please utilize the recycling service offered by the Town. You may get a recycling bin by contacting Town Hall. If you are already recycling, please increase the amount of material you are recycling and also reduce the amount of waste you produce.

Recycling can mean more than bringing your paper, plastic and metal items out for curbside pickup; recycling also includes minimizing waste by:

- Buying products made from recycled materials
- Reducing the amount of items we buy

- Reusing what we can and sharing with others

Here are a few tips that will help you cut down on waste:

Purchase paper and other items for your home and office that are made with post-consumer recycled content and packaged in recyclable materials.

- Buy in bulk when possible - to reduce the amount of packaging that gets thrown away.
- Choose products with less packaging.

Buy large recyclable containers of beverages instead of individual serving-size containers. Also, drink more tap water.

- Bring your own reusable bags when you go shopping.
- Donate old clothing to thrift stores, homeless shelters and other community organizations.
- Donate old blankets and towels to animal shelters.
- Use a ceramic mug for beverages rather than using disposable paper, plastic, or foam cups.

Use the back side of paper when printing from your computer - or always print two-sided.

- Compost fruit, vegetable, and yard waste in your backyard.

Leave short grass clippings on your lawn to decompose. The clippings are a natural organic fertilizer and return valuable nutrients and moisture to the soil.

