



MONTHLY RECYCLING GUIDE

PHOTO: NICOLAS HORN/UNSPASH

We really want to hear from you! What is your zero waste tip? What do you want us to fact check for you about recycling? What do you wish you understood better about recycling processes? What good news story do you know about in our shire?

Contact us at info@masg.org.au

GLASS

Glass is the oldest and most commonly-used types of sustainable packaging. Mesopotamia is widely credited as the birthplace of glass in about 2500 BC, and historians date the first "recipe" for glass making as early as 658 BC (take 60 parts sand, 180 parts ash from sea plants and five parts chalk) and little has changed about the formula since. The recycling of glass can be traced back to Roman times when they realised it was much simpler and cheaper to recycle it than making it from scratch, needing fewer raw materials and lower temperatures to melt the fragments. This still stands true, with glass being a 100% infinitely recyclable product without losing any of its original properties (unlike paper or plastic).

Glass can be recycled back into a wide range of products such as new glass bottle production, insulation, as a substitute for sand in concrete and on reflective surfaces such as road markings and signs.

There have been stories and reports of stockpiling collected glass in recent years and valid concerns that it's not actually being recycled. This escalated after China's decision to stop accepting recycling from Australia in 2018. After some high profile reports and damning media coverage, State and Federal governments have pledged to tackle this with commitments this year by the Victorian State government to overhaul and invest heavily in the industry and to double glass recycling. We'll watch with interest.

Recycling your glass at kerbside is a pretty straightforward affair:

- While it doesn't need to be spotless, it helps if you've given it a quick rinse. Use your used dishwashing water or pop into the dishwasher if there's room so you're not wasting water.
- In Mount Alexander shire you can keep the lids on (not the case in every shire, check with your council)
- Make sure the glass is recyclable (see [Mythbusting](#))

GLASS RECYCLING - SOME FACTS

- In Australia, we currently recycle about 57% of all glass.
- Not all glass can be recycled (see [Mythbusting](#)).
- Recycled glass can be substituted for up to 95% of raw materials. In Australia, most glass products hold between 40-70% recyclable glass.
- Every tonne of recycled glass saves 1-2 tonnes of the raw materials.
- For every tonne of glass recycled, there is a saving of approximately 225 kg of carbon dioxide.
- It takes approximately one million years for a glass bottle to break down in landfill.
- Recycling glass saves 75% of the energy it takes to make glass from raw materials.

MYTHBUSTING

ALL GLASS CAN BE RECYCLED

Glass is widely accepted as a product that can always be recycled. But did you know there are a few glass items we shouldn't put in the recycle bin?

On the surface level, it's hard to see what the difference is between the glass bottles and jars we buy from the supermarket and the drinking glasses we use everyday; they look pretty much the same. However on a molecular level the glass used is very different and melt at different temperatures when recycled. If the materials used to make these products is introduced into the glass making manufacturing process it can cause defective glass and production problems. Only 5 grams of these products is enough to contaminate 1 tonne of recyclable glass.

WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED?

Glass that originally contained a food, beverage or medicine including **glass bottles** that contained soft drink, milk, sauces, alcohol, vitamins and **jars** that contained jam and condiments.

WHAT CAN'T BE RECYCLED?

As a general rule, if it wasn't used to contain a food or beverage then it cannot be recycled including:

- Wine glasses and other drinking glasses
- Ceramics - plates, bowls, mugs etc.
- Oven-proof glass/Pyrex
- Window & windscreen glass
- Mirrors
- Lightbulbs
- Crystal
- Microwave turntables
- Perfume bottles
- Decorative glass items

WHAT CAN I DO WITH THESE ITEMS?

- Donate to charity, freecycle or sell if appropriate
- Take to a Waste Transfer Centre
- Place in your rubbish bin (see below if items are broken)

WHAT TO DO WITH NON-RECYCLABLE BROKEN GLASS

- Seal glass in a box or wrap it in several sheets of newspaper
- Tape up any cracked glass such as mirrors, dinner plates, or drinking glasses to prevent it shattering
- Break down larger glass objects
- Clearly label the package which gives the handler a heads up there's glass inside and place in your rubbish bin



By 2027, glass will no longer be accepted in the current commingled recycling stream. As part of the Recycling Victoria reform plan, glass will either be collected in a separate glass bin or will be dropped off at purpose-built collection points. This is already taking place in some shires. Visit vic.gov.au/Standardising-household-recycling-across-Victoria

BEYOND RECYCLING ZERO WASTE TIPS

this month ZERO WASTE SEEDLING POTS

We touched on these in July's Zero Waste Tips but as Spring has most definitely sprung since then, we thought we'd go into more detail of this fun and functional way to get your seedlings off to a flying start. Seed pots allow you start your seeds early, either indoors or in a greenhouse so they're more established when it's time to get them outdoors. Traditionally seed pots are made with plastic and are often treated as a single-use product which the world can definitely do without. By making seeds pots out of old newspaper or cardboard tubes such as toilet rolls, you can avoid using plastic, re-use something and plant them directly into the soil when ready, avoiding disturbing and damaging the delicate seedling roots. Plus they're fun to make!



Easy tutorial here: tinyurl.com/origamipots



Easy tutorial here: tinyurl.com/toiletrollpots

Find out more about our shire's recycling at: www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Recycling_and_waste_guide
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