

School Resource Kit



Waste Reduction Week

Semaine canadienne de réduction des déchets

National Sponsor / Commanditaire national



Congratulations and Welcome to the Waste Reduction Week!

By participating in Waste Reduction Week in Canada, the third week of October, you are about to embark on an exciting campaign of waste reduction that has become an annual event involving thousands of Canadians from across the country. Through the theme **Too Good to Waste**, WRW aims to inform and engage Canadians about wasteful practices and their environmental and social ramifications. But, exactly how can we protect our environment by conserving resources, reusing materials and recycling?

This kit provides you with information and tips on the 3Rs - reducing, reusing and recycling; as well as educational and promotional materials and activities to use as a guide for your WRW initiatives. We hope that you will use this kit to learn more about the importance of reducing waste and how you can play an important role in contributing to waste-free living.

The Waste Reduction Week in Canada Steering Committee would like to thank you for doing your part to carry on the tradition of WRW and safeguarding the environment. Use these resources and contacts to assist your community, school or business to make every week Waste Reduction Week!



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Introduction to Waste Reduction Week in Canada

What is waste?

Historically, the definition of waste according to Webster's 1913 Dictionary was: "lying unused; unproductive; worthless; valueless; refuse; rejected". Today, the Oxford English Dictionary defines waste as: "eliminated or discarded as no longer useful or required".

A waste not want not proverb:

"If you use a commodity or resource carefully and without extravagance you will never be in need".

This proverb reiterates the theme for WRW in Canada, "Too Good to Waste". So let's start thinking of items that we would otherwise discard as: "resources that we conserve, reuse or recycle to protect our environment".



What can I do?

Everything! Start practicing the 3Rs in everyday life. Whether you are at home, at school or at work, think about how you can reduce, reuse or recycle your waste to turn it into a resource. All of us have an important role to play in reducing waste. Individuals at home, school or work, governments in the way they create regulations and by-laws, purchase goods and promote sustainability and business when they create goods or provide services.

Why waste reduction?

If we can reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the first instance, we are conserving resources and limiting the need to reuse or recycle. Canadians produce more than 31 million tonnes of waste annually¹, that's 2.7kgs per person per day. In perspective, that's the same volume of waste being generated as piling up 31 million average family cars. Nearly 40% of this waste is generated at home with the remainder coming from commercial, industrial, construction and demolition sources. Of the waste we are generating, we are diverting less than 25%. Most of our waste is buried in landfills. For waste to decompose in a healthy environment, such as your compost pile, it requires air and water. These are not present deep in the landfill, and as the waste slowly decomposes and reacts with what is around it, it can produce a leachate which may end up in our groundwater system, not to mention creating greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide. In properly managed landfills, leachate is collected and treated along with greenhouse gases. According to Environment Canada², landfill sites account for 38% of Canada's total methane emissions. It is up to each of us as individuals, communities, schools or businesses to consider what we are throwing away and the environmental impact this is causing. We need to look for alternatives that will promote waste reduction and help to protect our environment.

1. Statistics Canada, Environment Accounts and Statistics Division
2. Environment Canada www.ns.ec.gc.ca

Too Good to Waste!

Reduce

Reducing the amount of waste produced in the first place, is by far the most efficient way of conserving resources and protecting our environment. We are all responsible for the waste we produce, so think, what do you throw away each day? When you avoid making waste in the first place, you don't have to worry about reusing it or recycling it later.

At work or school:

- Reduce paper use by using both sides
- Pack your lunch in reusable containers
- Rent items that are not used very often
- Purchase products with recycled content

When shopping:

- Reduce waste by avoiding over packaged or unnecessary disposable items
- Avoid food packaged in individual servings - where feasible and safe, buy in bulk
- Buy drinks in refillable containers where available
- Use your own cloth bags

As a community encourage your neighbours and friends to do the same.

As a business reduce the amount of packaging you require for your products or the amount of materials used to make your product.

Reuse

Reusing items give the resources they were originally made from another life, while reducing pollution and conserving the energy that comes with the manufacturing process or recycling the items.

- Donate things to or purchase household items and clothing from charity shops or have a yard sale. You will be amazed - one person's trash is another's treasure!
- Purchase durable products that can be repaired and reused.
- Reuse jars and containers for storage.



- As a business, see if there is a material exchange program available in your area. These programs match people and businesses that have materials suitable for reuse.
- Donate used computers, printers, etc to schools, churches or other charity organizations.
- When shopping consider buying used items. There are many "used" stores that offer refurbished items that work as good as new.

Recycle

Recycling and purchasing products made with recycled materials is the next way we can conserve resources. If we can't reduce waste by avoiding it, and it can't be reused, can we recycle it? 17 million Canadians (nearly 2/3 of us) have access to recycling³.

- Recycle in the garden by composting organics such as food scraps, leaves and yard trimmings.
- At work, separate items for recycling - this can save your business money in disposal costs.
- At school, consider setting up a recycling program.
- At home, use the recycling services provided by your municipality or take end-of-life items back to where they were purchased or other take-back centers.
- When shopping consider the material that the item is made from and packaged in. Have the resources already had a previous life? Are these resources renewable? How much of it is made up of recycled content? And only purchase materials which can be recycled again.

3. Environment Canada www.ns.ec.gc.ca

Waste Reduction Week in Canada



Semaine canadienne de réduction des déchets

(Name of School)

hereby recognizes

Waste Reduction Week in Canada

As a school, we are committed to conserving resources, protecting the environment and educating our students.

We recognize the generation of solid waste and the needless waste of water and energy resources as global environmental problems and endeavor to take the lead in our community toward environmental sustainability.

We have declared _____ Waste Reduction Week in
Date

School

Signed

Date

Name and Position

knowledge

How Waste Aware is Your School?

I know that it is important for my school to practice waste reduction, but where do I start?

Schools can generate a lot of waste. A recent study estimated that public high schools generate 16 kilograms of waste per student per week, and with approximately 5 million elementary and high school students in Canada, that's 80,000 tonnes of garbage a week! How many students attend your school? How close do you think your students are to the estimated 16 kilograms per week? What can you and your students do to lessen your impact on the environment?



School is the perfect place to practice waste reduction. Students who learn about waste in their classrooms or run their own composting or recycling programs will be able to teach their families about how to minimize waste. This kit is great starting point for any educator who wants their school to reduce the amount of waste they are producing as well as provide students with valuable curriculum based lessons that can become habits of a lifetime.

Here are some questions to start you thinking about how your school is making an effort in dealing with the waste issue and conservation of resources:



Does your school encourage waste reduction and reuse practices?



Does your school recycle paper, cardboard and other materials?



Has your school ever carried out a waste assessment?



Has your school considered preparing a waste policy and subsequent education strategy?



How does your school involve the whole community in environmental programs?



How is waste collected, stored and transported at your school?



What is the cost to your school of waste disposal for a year?

Register

Register your school activities and events for WRW in Canada on the website at www.wrwcanada.com.

View resources, download a kit and get more ideas on what else you can do to contribute to the success of Waste Reduction Week in Canada. When you register, you can request a free information package including a promotional poster.

evaluation

Conduct a Waste Assessment

Look at your garbage

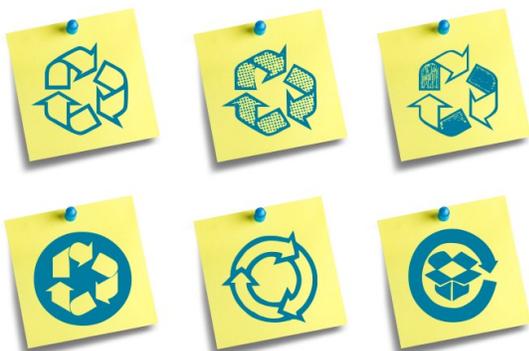
By taking a closer look at the garbage your school produces, you'll quickly learn what types of recycling initiatives could be most effective. Use this activity as a way to involve students. Have each classroom look at their own garbage as well as cafeteria, hallway and other public area garbage cans. Quantify the amount of waste that is being generated by using a tool such as the waste assessment sheet on the next page.

Before the Assessment...consider:

- Existing waste reduction and disposal activities, including recycling and waste separation activities and methods of waste collection currently employed
- Whether or not waste generation increases or decreases at certain times of the year
- If waste flow has a daily/weekly pattern
- What types of waste are generated and where it is generated

Also ensure:

- The selection or appointment of an assessment coordinator
- Support from the school community and approval from the Principal
- Availability of staff or parent volunteers to help with the assessment
- A plan that indicates a clearly identified area
- Selection of representative samples - consider factors such as sources of waste and seasonal variations
- The samples are appropriately collected and labeled for identification purposes
- Adequate time for the assessment. Depending on the detail of the assessment and the size of the study area the assessment may take several days to complete
- Safety! If it is necessary to handle waste make sure to take the necessary precautions, such as wearing gloves and other appropriate safety equipment



Key points to keep in mind when examining your waste:

- **Reduce** - did we need to use this item? Is there a more durable alternative that wouldn't end up in the garbage?
- **Reuse** - was this item used to its full extent? Could it be replaced with a reusable alternative? Are there others (e.g. employees, organizations) that have a use for it?
- **Recycle** - if the item has reached its end-of-life, it can't be reduced or reused, then is it recyclable?

Basic equipment for Assessment:

- Scale for weighing garbage
- Gloves for each assessor
- Tarp or plastic sheet for sorting garbage
- Containers or extra bags for sorting and weighing sorted materials
- Copies of the worksheets

During the Assessment:

- Collect samples and be sure to label samples with important information, such as the location from which the sample was taken
- Use a different worksheet for each location
- Sort materials from each bag into categories and weigh each category
- Enter data into worksheets

After the Assessment:

- Analyze the assessment data and make recommendations to formulate a Waste Reduction Action Plan

Sample Waste Assessment Form

Date: _____

Sample Location: _____

Waste Assessment Sheet

Material	Weight of Each Sample				Recyclable	Reusable	Compostable	Total Weight
	1	2	3	4	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
Cardboard								
Newsprint								
Non-recyclable paper								
Compostable waste								
Scrap tires								
Paint								
Glass containers								
Beverage containers								
Wood								
Textiles								
Low-density polyethylene plastic								
High-density polyethylene plastic								
Other plastics								

Example of a completed form:

Material	Quantity	Notes
Used Paper	5 cubic metres	Mostly generated in photocopy room
Soft plastics	2 garbage bags	Mostly from lunches—ziplock bags, etc
Food Waste	38 kilograms	Lots of compostable organics
Old/broken computer monitors	9 units	Currently stockpiled in storeroom
<p><i>Add new materials to your list as you come across them. You can group them into general categories, such as 'beverage containers' or you can be specific—"pop cans." The more detail you include the longer the assessment will take, but the more information you will have to work with.</i></p> <p><i>These are a few examples of ways to measure your waste. During your assessment try to use the same unit of measurement throughout so you can easily compare the different materials.</i></p> <p><i>Make notes to keep track of important points you notice during the assessment, such as where the material was generated or if it was still useable.</i></p>		

action

Create a Waste Reduction Action Plan

Formulate a Plan

Using the information gathered, decide where you can make the largest impact on reducing your waste.

- Could your cafeteria switch from disposable to reusable dishes and cutlery? What about composting of food waste?
- Are your lawn trimmings composted? Is there an opportunity to start a composting program in your school? What about placing a vermicomposter in classrooms as a student project?
- Have recycling stations been set up around the school? Are they placed near garbage receptacles and in high-traffic areas? Examine current disposal bills and set specific goals, such as zero recyclable paper in the garbage.

Whatever you plans are, write them down! This way everyone will know the goals you have set out to achieve. You can use the following template as a guide.



Things to keep in mind when creating your action plan:

- The amount of material in waste stream
- The potential for diversion
- Implementation costs, savings, revenue and ease
- Resource requirements (staff, space, equipment, training etc.)
- Financial savings, payback periods and quantities of waste reduced.

Sample Action Plan

Material	Printer paper	Cleaning products
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit documents online • Print double sided • Distribute electronic memos • Purchase with post-consumer recycled content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch to biodegradable cleaners with EcoLogo certification • Purchase concentrated products in bulk • Switch to reusable rags and cleaning supplies • Properly dispose of existing toxic supplies
Target	Reduce the amount of paper usage by 5 reams per week	Reduce waste from disposable containers and other supplies
Costs/Savings	<p>Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading equipment to print double sided • Paper with recycled content <p>Savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less paper will need to be purchased 	<p>Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposing of existing toxic products • Increased cost for eco-friendly products • New cleaning equipment <p>Savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less waste disposal costs • Less toxic products in the work environment
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New printer for front office • Staff time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time—researching and purchasing new products
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office manager—purchasing, organizing, implementation • All staff—on-going implementation 	Office manager and janitorial staff will organize and implement new products
Start/Completion Dates	Start—Sept 10 Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing—Nov 22 • Upgrade equipment—Jan 7 • Overall reduction—Feb 4 	Start—Sept 24 Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing—Nov 22 • Upgrading equipment—Jan 7 • Disposal of old products—Feb 4 • Complete implementation—Mar 1

three important Rs

Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!

Most of us are familiar with the 3Rs of waste reduction - reduce, reuse, and recycle.

These three principles are presented in the order in which they have the greatest impact on waste reduction. Here are some ways to implement each of these in your school.

Reduce

Have teachers speak with students about the importance of waste reduction and responsible purchasing.

- Plan an outing to a local store or shopping centre to discuss product choices and packaging of items.
- Make changes in your cafeteria to limit the number of disposables available.
- Always photocopy double sided.
- Use the chalkboard/whiteboard as often as possible to reduce paper use.
- Ensure that handouts make the most efficient use of a sheet of paper.
- Purchase mugs for use instead of styrofoam cups.
- Replace paper towels with cloth where appropriate.
- Cancel unnecessary subscriptions.



Reuse

- Have a litterless lunch day where students who bring a litterless lunch receive a predetermined prize or recognition.
- Design an exchange program for your students—include a swap box for items that are no longer wanted but still usable.
- Arrange a community yard sale day and invite students and parents to sell, or trade items they no longer use.
- Facilitate sale or exchange of unwanted school uniforms.
- Have a reusable paper bin and use single sided discards for draft printing or scrap paper.
- Look for uses in arts and crafts.

Recycle

Implement a school wide recycling collection program:

- Ensure that your recycler can take all types of materials you generate. Materials you may be interested in having collected are paper, plastic, food waste or beverage containers
- Arrange for recycling bins and make sure they look different than your garbage bins to avoid confusion and cross-contamination
- Clearly mark your containers with signs and labels, many recycling companies can provide these or you can make your own. Laminate them to ensure they won't get ruined through wear and tear
- Arrange for the bins to be collected, emptied or taken to a drop-off location. Use paper and stationery manufactured with recycled content. This will help to close-the-loop on recycling.

buying green

Investigate Environmental Purchasing

Your school is likely to already have a purchasing policy, but does it address the environmental impact your purchasing decisions can make? Many corporations, organizations and schools are now adopting purchasing policies that take the environment into consideration. Not only will this reinforce your commitment to environmentally sound practices, but it also supports markets for the recyclable materials you collect in your school program. Companies will only recycle a material if there's someone willing to buy the recycled end product.

It's also important for your students to recognize that the choices they make everyday about the products and services they purchase make an impact on the environment. Below is a list of things to look for when purchasing recycled content or environmentally friendly products. Try to coordinate your purchases with other schools within your school division to maximize cost savings.

Your school's Purchasing Policy may include the following elements:

- A general preference for recycled products
- A price preference, whereby your business is willing to pay a higher price (such as 5% or 10% more) for recycled paper or recycled products
- A set-aside goal where a certain percentage of all purchases must have recycled content.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development provides useful information, resources and best practices for green procurement as well as a certified office products database. The website can be found at: www.iisd.org

Green purchasing doesn't only affect your school—students have huge spending power. If students have a better idea of how their purchasing decisions can affect the environment, it might change the way they spend their money. For a great video resource on the power of purchasing to make change see *The Story of Change* at: www.storyofstuff.com/movies-all/story-of-change/

What is a Green Product?

A green product is one that is less harmful than the next best alternative, having characteristics including, but not limited to, the following:

- Is recyclable - local facilities exist that are capable of recycling the product at the end of its useful life
- Is biodegradable
- Contains recycled material—post-consumer recycled content
- Has minimal packaging and/or the manufacturer will take-back the packaging
- Is reusable or contains reusable parts
- Has minimal content of and use of toxic substances in production
- Produces fewer and/or less polluting by-products during manufacturing, distribution, use and/or disposal
- Produces the minimal amount of toxic substances during use or at disposal
- Makes efficient use of resources - a product that uses energy, fuel or water more efficiently or that uses less paper, ink or other resources
- Is durable - has a long economically useful life and/or can be economically repaired or upgraded

green events

Classroom Activities for Waste Reduction Week

This is an excellent opportunity to introduce your students to the importance of resource conservation or to build on knowledge they have acquired in previous years. All of the ideas and activities listed in this kit so far, can be implemented either in a classroom setting or throughout the school. These are just to start you thinking, use your imagination and come up with your own...junk wars, dress-up days, litterless lunch challenges, design a calico bag to fundraise, Soap Box Derby...

Recycling Challenge

The goal of this activity is to see which teams can collect the most recycling over a set period of time. Split your students into teams and have each team give themselves a name. Give each team a recycling bin and ask them to decorate it. You may also want to get your students to create posters to promote recycling and/or their team. The recycling challenge can last for any period of time, but if it lasts for more than a week, you may want to tally the amount of recycling collected at the end of each week and then send the material for recycling. The team that collects the most recycling at the end of the challenge wins a predetermined prize.

Measure your Ecological Footprint

An ecological footprint survey measures the area of renewable and non-renewable ecologically productive land required to support the resource demands and absorb the waste of a given individual or population. In Canada, the average ecological footprint is 8.8 hectares of land, however at present population levels the Earth only has 1.89 hectares of productive land per person. Many organizations have developed their own version of the ecological footprint survey. Have your students complete one or several, compare their results and discuss the factors that contribute to their footprint.



Get support from teachers, students, janitorial staff

Tell everyone what you hope to accomplish with your program. Include all staff and students in the design of the program and make sure the instructions are clear. Once it is up and running, provide regular updates on your successes. Name the program; you could make this a contest for your students.

Promote your program

Use your school newsletter or other internal communications to let people know about the program. Have a school-wide assembly to discuss the importance of waste reduction. You can even challenge other schools and quantify and report on your successes and results. Post prominent reminders in high traffic areas.

Get help - form a club

Hold regular meetings with interested students, staff and parents. Organize them into teams to assist in educating their peers on the importance of your program and how to use it.



Plant a Native Garden

Native plants have evolved in your area for thousands of years and are adapted to the geography, climate and animal populations of the region. They do not require the application of fertilizers, pesticides or necessitate watering. They act to attract beneficial insects to prey on pests. Native plants provide habitat for animals and are a food source for birds, butterflies and browsing mammals. Native plants are an important part of your local ecosystem, but in many areas they have increasingly been replaced in developments by lawns or non-native plants. These new plants require watering and often the application of fertilizers or pesticides to allow them to grown in an unfamiliar habitat. As a classroom or school, adopt a local flowerbed and plant local species. Many municipalities have green street programs that encourage residents to tend a local flowerbed or garden. Contact your municipality for more information on this.

Recycling Jeopardy

The goal of this activity is to see which team can remember the most facts about recycling. Using the facts and stats listed earlier in this kit, create Jeopardy-type questions for your students. Draw a grid on the chalkboard, assigning categories and numerical values to the questions. Easier questions should have a lower numerical value than harder questions. Split the students up into three or four teams. Have the students pick a category and then ask the questions. Teams 'buzz in' when they think they know the answer. They receive points if they get the questions right and lose points if they get the questions wrong. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins a pre-determined prize.

Hold a WRW Assembly

Encourage students to come up with ideas to express how they feel about the amount of waste they produce at school and present these through an assembly. This can involve the whole school with each class presenting via a different medium, or a class presentation by dividing up the students. Make sure the school community is invited or get them involved through their own presentations. Here are some ideas to get the creative juices flowing:

- Hold a fashion show where students design the clothing from materials that would have ended up as waste.
- Have a karaoke competition to encourage students to produce and perform a song about waste.
- Write and perform a play or short skits about waste reduction. Have the students design the costumes and sets from recycled materials.
- Hold an art exhibition featuring works made by the students either from recycled materials or about the waste reduction theme.

Planning Your Waste Reduction Week Activities

Kits have been designed specifically for municipalities, schools and businesses. They are full of information, resources and ideas to help you plan your WRW activities. For the individual, resources are available online including such tools as shopping guides, instructions to build a home composter, energy conservation advice and even a survey to measure your ecological footprint. There are also a number of steps you can take when planning your WRW activities and events to ensure your time and resources are spent effectively.

STEP 1: Proclaim Waste Reduction Week

- Local governments have been asked to declare the third week of October as Waste Reduction Week. Has the week been declared in your area? If not, encourage your Mayor and council to do so.
- You can also proclaim WRW in your school, organization or place of business to raise the profile both internally and to those people you deal with day-to-day.

STEP 2: Set objectives

- Identify the waste issues you want to address and the specific actions you want people to take.
- Set the objectives you want to meet, ensuring that they are measurable and achievable.

STEP 3: Develop partnerships

- Determine what help you will need to meet your objectives and identify organizations and people that can assist you.
- Partnerships help you share financial/human resources, provide a larger pool of knowledge, skills and contacts and raise the profile of your event.
- Potential partners may include local businesses, schools, manufacturers, government or environmental groups.

STEP 4: Become informed

- Learn about existing programs in your local area and design your activities to build on them.
- Gather information as specific as possible to your community and use this to measure the success of your activities.

STEP 5: Target your audience

Decide who you want to target or motivate to help you identify potential motivators and barriers. Is it staff, local government, students, management, neighbours or some other group?

STEP 6: Use an approach that will encourage longer term behavioral change

- Quantify your results in environmental impact as well as economic savings.
- Challenge your audience to meet or beat a challenge or initiatives taken by another group or competitor.
- Build on people's motivations for reducing waste and provide information on the larger scale impact of participating - personalize your communication to make it vivid.
- Raise the profile of your activities through the media and offer discounts, prizes or financial incentives to participants.
- Obtain a commitment from people to participate as most will then be more likely to follow through.
- Use word-of-mouth as a form of free advertising, this also fosters a sense of ownership.

STEP 7: Measure achievement and remember to say Thank You

- Your measure of success will be determined by the objectives you set. Measure your achievements directly and ensure that all who participate in your activities or events are given feedback on the success of their efforts.
- Thank everyone who helped you make your WRW activities and events happen. People who feel appreciated will be more willing to participate again.



References and Resources

References

1. Statistics Canada, Environment Accounts and Statistics Division

2-3. Environment Canada:
www.ns.ec.gc.ca

Recycling Council of Ontario:
www.rco.on.ca

Natural Resources Canada
Recycling Technology
Newsletter, 2000

Reynolds Metal Company:
www.alcoa.com

Earth Care:
www.earthcarecanada.com/earthcare_program/earthcare_lessons.asp

Destination Conservation:
www.dcpplanet.ca

American Recycler:
www.americanrecycler.com/novo3/aluminum.html

Greater Vancouver Regional District -
Just the Facts:
www.rcbc.bc.ca/education/additional-resources/recycling-factsheets

Classroom Activities:

www.wrwcanda.com/schools

brgov.com/dept/recycle/classroom.htm

www.cln.org/themes/recycle.html

www.ecokids.ca

pub.earthday.ca

General Environmental Information

www.ec.gc.ca

www.thegreenpages.ca

earthtrends.wri.org

www.rprogress.org

Resources

Recycling Processes: Just the Facts Series

Plastic:

www.rcbc.bc.ca/files/u3/add_facts-plastics.pdf

Glass:

www.rcbc.bc.ca/files/u3/add_facts-glass.pdf

Aluminum:

www.rcbc.bc.ca/files/u3/add_facts-aluminum.pdf

Cardboard:

www.rcbc.bc.ca/files/u3/aa_facts-cardboard.pdf

Newspaper:

www.rcbc.bc.ca/files/u3/add_facts-newspaper.pdf

Composting:

www.rcbc.bc.ca/files/u3/add_facts-composting.pdf

Grasscycling:

www.rcbc.bc.ca/files/u3/add_facts-grasscycling.pdf

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The information presented in this Waste Reduction Week kit has been drawn extensively from many different organizations, publications and websites. We wish to say thanks to all the individuals who have provided time and advice in the writing of this publication.

The National Steering Committee would like to thank you for your commitment to Waste Reduction Week in Canada.

Le comité directeur de la Semaine canadienne de réduction des déchets vous remercie de votre engagement.



Thank you for Participating in Waste Reduction Week in Canada

www.wrwcanda.com

