

THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES

Solutions, old and new

All-natural fibers. Canvas, jute, hemp, etc. are strong, long-lasting, and come from renewable sources.

Brown paper bags. They cost more up-front than plastic bags, but have none of the after-costs. Paper bags come from renewable sources, are biodegradable, re-useable, and recyclable. They contain no toxic chemicals.

Using our heads, and our hands. Our first tools, our hands, are the most renewable resource ever invented for carrying things.

Boxes. Stores have a constant influx of cardboard packing boxes. We save our grocers' time and effort when we take our purchases home in these boxes.

Waxed paper, paper bags, cloth napkins. These materials can be used to wrap our snacks and lunches without destroying birds, animals, and sea life.

Truly bio-degradable synthetics. Today, cellophane, corn starch-based compounds, and other benign products are being used, but they still often contain plastic. Please use the above alternatives instead!

Prepared by Green Sangha, a spiritual
community dedicated to environmental action.
www.greensangha.org (510) 532-6574

WHY I DON'T USE PLASTIC BAGS

Cheap up-front, costly in the end

Not bio-degradable. Plastic is food for no one. It never completely breaks down.

Litter. Even when thrown into the garbage, plastic bags easily blow away. These bags are unsightly, distracting on highways, and clog storm sewer systems.

Can't recycle. Plastic can only "down-cycle" – making at most one stop on the way to landfill or litter.

Toxic. Plastic particles get into our food and air. Many types of plastic have been associated with increased incidence of cancer and other disorders.

Kills wildlife. Sea turtles and marine mammals ingest plastic bags thinking they're food.

Choking the ocean. Plastic debris is everywhere on our beaches and in the ocean. In a recent surface trawl of the Pacific, six pounds of plastic were found for every pound of zooplankton.

Green Sangha collaborates with a number of civic and non-profit organizations to stem the tide of plastic pollution, including Californians Against Waste (CAW), Earth Resource, and Good Earth Natural Foods. For more information on the costs of plastic, go to www.cawrecycles.org or call CAW (916) 443-5422.