

# RECYCLING AND THE COLOURED BINS

By Sue Crombie

In our last edition before Christmas we published Rita's amusing poem about the coloured bins. These bins were the source of many jokes when they first arrived, but we all realise there is a serious side to the whole subject of waste and recycling for which every one of us has responsibility. In order for the system to work well we must all understand what eventually happens to all the rubbish we discard. For some time many of us had become used to taking paper, cans and bottles to the various re-cycling points around the area, but there was no convenient facility for plastics. All Local Authorities have to provide householders with separate recycling collections for paper, card, glass, metals and plastics by the end of 2013, and separate food waste collections by 2015. This is why the Council has introduced plastic recycling as part of the rural recycling scheme, and has equipped every household in our area with the coloured bins.

## What type of plastics can be put in the purple bin?

There are 7 main types of plastic used within the packaging industry, however Moray Council only recycle two types, PET 1 and HDPE 2.

You can recycle all plastic bottles with the following recycling triangle on them:



The sign is normally located either on the label or on the bottom of the bottle. All carbonated soft drinks, fruit juice and water tend to be in PET 1 type bottles, the plastic milk bottles (and their caps) are HDPE 2 type. It is okay to leave labels and the caps on the bottles.

Fruit punnets made from PET1 are acceptable, but check carefully as many are of a different plastic. Some plastic fruit containers are made from recycled PET 1, and have 'R-PET 1' written on them. These can also be put into the purple bin.

**Handy Tip:** To save space in your bin, please loosen the cap, squash the bottle, then tighten the cap to stop the bottle reforming into its original shape. There is no need to remove the 'tamper ring' on some bottles as they are dealt with at the sorting and stage.

**Caution:** Not all clear plastic bottles are made from PET 1 so check carefully for the symbol.

**Please DO NOT** recycle margarine tubs, yoghurt pots, plastic food trays, cling film, plastic carrier bags, plastic packaging, plastic toys. These are not PET 1 or HDPE 2, and are classed as contamination and have to be removed before the plastic bottles can be sent for recycling. Most of these items also have the recycling triangle with either 'PP' or '5' in it; however they are more difficult to recycle and are not yet dealt with by the system being used by Moray Council.

**Plastic carrier bags** which come from supermarkets can be returned for recycling. Both Asda and Tesco are very helpful and will take any supermarket carrier bag. If you have groceries delivered by either of these companies you can give the bags to the driver to take away for you.

If you have quantity of plastic bags and must put them in your green bin, it is best to put them all inside one bag, then tie the handles of that one together to stop them all falling out. The nets in which some fruit is packed are hard to avoid but, again you can put them into the green bin. If you have several tie them together or put them into a bag and tie that.

Waste plastics can be very dangerous for wildlife, so it is good to know that the operators of the landfill site are doing their best to minimise any dangers. The site at Dallachy is always being worked, so there isn't a lot of wildlife and the workface is totally covered at the end of each day, limiting access for the wildlife. Birds are controlled by falconer with his falcons thus limiting the chance of birds and small animals being trapped in the waste.

## What type of cans can be put in the purple bin?

You can recycle all types of food and drinks cans, both aluminium and steel. This also includes aerosol cans such as deodorants, shaving foams, air fresheners and de-icing cans. You can also recycle aluminium food trays, clean aluminium foil, metal sweet and biscuit tins. Once again, you do not have to remove any labels, just any plastic caps or lids found on aerosols.

**Handy Tip:** Why not rinse your food cans and trays out after washing dishes, this will save any residual food dirtying your bin or causing any smells.

## What happens to the plastics and cans?

The mixed plastic and cans collected from rural domestic properties are initially stored at Moycroft Waste Transfer Station in Elgin, along with all the other recycling materials. Once there is enough for a load, they are transported down to Oran Environmental Solutions located down at Grangemouth, where the cans are separated from the plastics. The different types of plastic are then segregated for recycling. Plastic is granulated and re-used either for making new bottles or other plastic items such as garden furniture.

The cans are also segregated and the aluminium cans are re-used for making new cans, with the steel cans being recycled within the steel industry.

Glass is similarly sorted and crushed for various purposes and, as with plastics, there is no need to remove the 'tamper rings' as they are removed during the sorting and crushing process

## What else can we do?

Take care to limit the amount of waste we produce. Take your own bag when you go shopping. Refuse the extra plastic bag when asked if you need a bag. Buy only the amount of food you know will be consumed in your household. Be cautious about 'buy one get one free' and other such offers: will you really use it all? Compost vegetable peelings etc. if you have a garden to save yourself some money on fertiliser.

I have a terrific garden frame which is made from recycled plastic and looks like good quality timber with the advantage of not needing maintenance. The polycarbonate 'lid' shattered in last winter's frosts, but has been replaced by a sheet of polycarbonate which was discarded by someone else. Recycle and re-use! I have also seen fence posts which are made from re-cycled plastics.

My daughter has a nice 'fleece' jacket labelled, "This jacket is a load of old rubbish" - it is made from re-cycled plastic bottles!

*Ed note: with grateful thanks to Ally Gordon, Moray Council Monitoring Officer (recycling) for his help in answering questions and providing information for this article.*