



Reducing Waste, Buying Less



Tons of plastic is thrown into landfills - where much of it is burned rather than recycled or reused, or it ends up in streams and rivers where it leaches chemicals into the water and kills aquatic organisms. Let's not contribute to the problem.

CHALLENGE: Can you go low (or even zero) waste this Halloween?

Do you know how much you throw away in a single day, week, or month? Have you ever measured it? So much of what we use nowadays is packaged in disposable materials, single use plastics are everywhere - plastic straws, forks, spoons... and we often use them without giving it much thought. While there are certain circumstances in which it is necessary to throw an item away after one use - namely medical/health situations, there are countless activities that **don't** require the use of disposable, non-biodegradable materials. Continuing to use thin plastic water bottles rather than reusable ones, reaching for plasticware instead of bamboo or metal utensils, simply **is not sustainable**. If we continue extracting (taking) resources from the earth faster than they can be regenerated, and disposing of the materials we do take into a landfills where the materials cannot be repurposed or reused, we will deplete the environment, and cause harm to humans and other animals in the process. What happens to the products you use when you're done using them? Where do they go?





Halloween is going to look different this year than before because of COVID, but let's make it different in a good way. Think about solutions you can come up with to decrease the amount of waste you produce on Halloween - from wrappers, from costumes, from gasoline. Perhaps, like the children in the images, you can make an eco-friendly costume out of natural materials or recyclable items rather than purchasing a mostly-plastic costume from the store. Or if you decide to buy a costume, at least donate it for another child to use next year (instead of throwing it away).

Perhaps, instead of trick-or-treating house to house, exposing yourself and others to countless germs, you can bake pumpkin bread or another treat at home, eliminating the incredible amount of waste from the wrappers around every little bite of candy.

CRAFT: Make a Corn Husk Doll/Action Figure

Another way we can decrease the amount of waste we produce/contribute to the landfill, is in the toys we play with. Dolls and action figures from the store might look cool and be fun for a while, but if they're made of plastic they are ultimately harmful for the environment. Plastic production causes pollution, and makes people sick with asthma, cancer, and other diseases, and the transportation and disposal of plastics are harmful as well. Instead, try making your own

You will need:

- ❖ ~7-8 pieces of corn husk (per doll), soaked in warm water & pliable
- ❖ String, yarn, or thin strips of husk and corn silk
- ❖ Paper Towels

[Click here](#) for a short how-to video on how to make a corn husk doll/action figure. Be sure to NOT draw a face on the person; historically, indigenous (or Native American) people did not draw faces on their corn husk people because we tend to place value judgements on how "pretty" something or someone appears, and by leaving the face blank, we can imagine the person to be different people, with different moods, at different times, and with less judgement.



Parents/guardians, check out [this more detailed video](#) to help your child understand how to make the corn husk doll/action figure and see additional tips for how to make them more eco-friendly (such as using corn silk for hair, and thin strips of husk to tie - rather than dyed yarn).

Did you know?

This year, we will have a full moon on Halloween!



Thanks for joining me for this week's Home Explorer activities from the Umpqua Watersheds Education Program. There will be new lessons, projects, crafts (and more) posted weekly!

With smiles :)
~ Miss Ryan

