

## Recycling, Vermiculture, and Composting

Text from Georgia Wildlife Federation

### RECYCLING

Recycling is an easy way to take an active role in caring for our world. Many city and county governments offer curbside recycling programs or recycling centers. Call your local sanitation department to see how easy recycling can be in your area.

Recycled Plastics: are made into detergent bottles, pipes, pails, carpets, rulers, benches, pallets, and even clothing. Producing new plastic from recycled material uses only 2/3 of the energy required to manufacture it from virgin raw materials.

Recycled Glass: is made into new glass jars, bottles, and other glass products such as fiberglass insulation. Producing glass from virgin materials requires 30% more energy than producing it from crushed, used glass. Recycling one ton of glass saves the equivalent of ten gallons of oil.

Recycled Paper: is made into newspaper, paper towels, notebook paper and other paper products, as well as insulation, boxes, gypsum wallboard, and even kitty litter. Producing recycled paper requires about 60% of the energy used to make paper from virgin wood pulp. Recycling 1 ton of paper saves 17 mature trees, 7,000 gallons of water, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, 2 barrels of oil, and 4,100 kilowatt-hours of electricity – enough energy to power the average American home for five months.

### VERMICULTURE (worm composting system)

Everything we eat (and most things we use) once grew from the earth. Unfortunately, many of these organic materials eventually end up in the landfill where nutrients cannot be cycled back into the ecosystem.

Why send your table scraps and other organic waste to the landfill when you can feed them to the worms? Worms process these materials and turn them into wonderful compost. Worm compost can hold 80% of its weight in water and is nutrient-rich, making it a great addition to your garden. Use recycled paper and food scraps to house and feed the worms.

### COMPOSTING

Compost is organic material that can be used as a soil amendment or medium to grow plants. It is created by piling organic wastes (e.g., yard trimmings, food wastes) in proper ratios and allowing the materials to naturally decompose. The compost is ready when it looks like rich, crumbly earth and you can no longer recognize the original materials.

If you follow just a few guidelines, compost will not smell or attract varmints. Its cost is less than buying packaged fertilizers and soil enhancers, and you will save the time it takes to bag and curb your yard trimmings. Best of all, you will have a wonderful supply of nutrient-rich material to add to your garden or landscape.

