

Makers on a Mission



The average household in the United States produces about 4.5 pounds of trash each day. That may not sound like a lot, but multiply that by every person in the U.S. for a year and you get close to *500 billion pounds* of waste! Some of this waste can be reduced or recycled but unfortunately much of it ends up in landfills.

Not only are our landfills quickly running out of space, they also collect and concentrate the chemicals we use and discard, creating a deadly, toxic environmental soup that has a negative impact on wildlife and our water supply. Each week garbage trucks take our trash away and most of us never see it again. Our trash may be out of sight, out of mind, but it's not out of our environment.

One way to keep trash out of the environment is to be choosy about what we purchase. Limiting consumption, reducing items we purchase that are contained in plastic, composting food waste and utilizing reusable bags and water bottles are all positive steps. You can also discover new ways to use items before you discard them. Here are two ways you can be a maker on a mission using recycled materials.

Maker Spotlight

Meet **Melati and Isabel Wijsen**, sisters making an impact by working tirelessly to fight Bali's trash problem. Although commonly referred to as a "paradise island," Bali suffers from plastic pollution. Next to China, it is the second largest source of marine plastic pollution. To combat this problem, these teenagers spearheaded several environmental efforts, including convincing the Balinese government to ban single-use plastics. The sisters also created Mountain Mammals, a group of women who make reusable shopping bags from recycled materials, and regularly organize beach clean ups to encourage people worldwide to take control of their trash problem and have a positive impact on their future. Read more about Melati and Isabel Wijsen here: www.nytimes.com/2020/07/03/world/asia/bali-sisters-plastic-climate-change.html



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Makers on a Mission



Make a Bird Feeder!

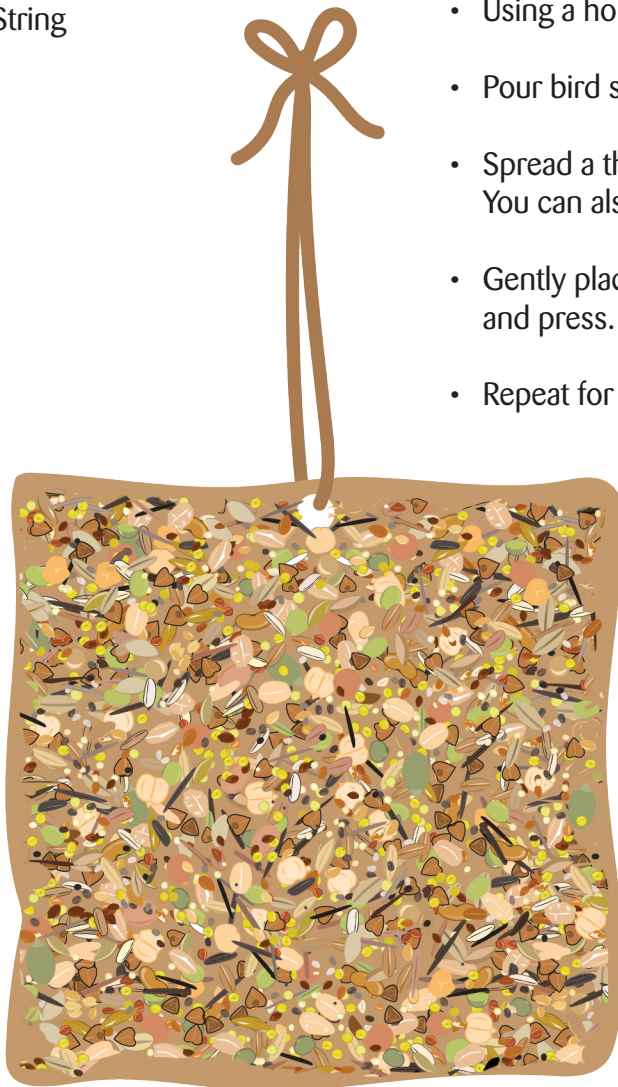
What You'll Need

- Cardboard box
- Scissors
- Peanut butter, honey or Crisco
- Bird seed
- Hole punch
- Baking tray or plate
- String

What You'll Do

Note: this project is best saved for the cooler months as the peanut butter, honey or Crisco can melt in the summer heat.

- Get your box (pizza boxes work great because you cannot recycle them because of the oil that gets on the box!). Cut your box into rectangles, circles, flowers, triangles – whatever shape you want! Each shape should be about 5 inches by 5 inches in size.
- Using a hole punch, create a hole at the top of each shape cutout.
- Pour bird seed onto a baking tray or plate.
- Spread a thin layer of peanut butter onto one side of your shape cutout. You can also use honey or Crisco if you have a nut allergy.
- Gently place the shape peanut butter side down onto the tray of seeds and press. Use your fingers to fill in any holes with loose seeds.
- Repeat for the other side.



- Once all pieces are coated in bird seed, make a little loop with string so that you can hang them on trees.
- Go out into your backyard and hang your creations. Be sure to spend some time observing the types of birds that enjoy your special recycled treat!





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Make Plarn!

Taking your own reusable bags to the store is a great sustainable option, but sometimes getting a plastic bag is unavoidable. Since plastic bags can't be recycled through home recycling programs, why not make some plarn? Plarn is "plastic yarn" made from plastic bags. Once you make the plarn, you can use it to crochet items such as tote bags, baskets, mats and more.

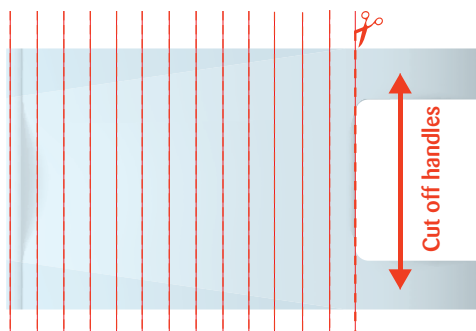
What You'll Need

- Plastic grocery bags
- Cutting mat or towel to protect your tabletop
- Sharp scissors

What You'll Do

1. Lay the plastic bag out on your cutting surface, folding in the sides so it makes a rectangle, making sure to get it as flat as possible.
2. Remove the bag handles by cutting as closely and as evenly along the top as possible. Cut the bottom half-inch of the bag off.
3. Cut horizontally across the bag to create approximately 1-inch strips. This should make plastic rings.
4. Open two strips of the bag. Lay one ring on top of the other.
5. From the top, pull the left loop to the right, and from the bottom, pull the right loop to the left. Pull the ends snug but not so tight that you are stretching or distorting the plastic. This will create a knot and your first length of plarn.
6. Repeat the previous step, looping a new bag onto the two-bag chain you started. Continue looping and knotting a new piece of plastic bag to the end of your chains until you have a length of plarn that you need for your project.

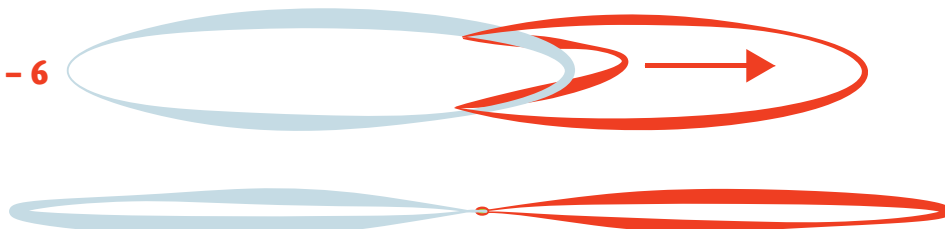
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5 - 6



Now you have plarn that you can use in other crafts so you're ready to get creative and start making. Some projects require a lot of plastic bags, so ask neighbors for their supply if you need extras. That way you're helping your entire community recycle!



Get out your scissors and create!