



Bluegrass Greensource Waste Free Lunch

BLUEGRASS GREENSOURCE

Packing a waste-free lunch is one way to reduce waste production. Today, many items are packaged for convenience rather than environmental quality, i.e. single-serving bags and individually wrapped packages. According to www.globalstewards.org, half of the 100 billion cans sold in the U.S. last year were landfilled or incinerated and every year and Americans throw away enough paper and plastic cups, forks, and spoons to circle the equator 300 times.

What is a waste-free lunch?

A waste-free lunch serves as an educational tool to help bring awareness to the issue surrounding the over-packaging of products. When planning for such an event, organizers should focus on picking a day to get staff to select reusable lunch containers. This could include having staff bring a lunch from home with reusable packaging or, if you have a cafeteria, using washable trays and silverware. Composting is an option for cafeteria waste. Recyclable items are encouraged.

An example of a waste-free lunch includes:

- Sandwiches and other main dishes, fresh fruits and fresh vegetables, and treats in reusable containers
- Cloth napkins
- Non-disposable forks and spoons
- Reusable drink containers (i.e., hard plastic or aluminum water bottle)
- Reusable lunchboxes

How to get started

Plan a waste-free lunch day. Work with the administrators, custodians and cafeteria staff (if applicable) to arrange for the waste-free lunch materials. A week before the event, post flyers or checklists in common areas with tips on how to pack a waste-free lunch.

Get the message out! Before the waste-free lunch day, educate staff about the event. Utilize your business' green team and the staff newsletter to educate employees about the event and how they can participate.

Hold a waste-free lunch day. Ask staff to bring in a waste-free lunch (or as close to waste-free as possible). If you have one, work with the cafeteria staff to plan a waste-free lunch for employees who didn't pack their own.