

# Straw Information

By Tammie Grim

The average person throws away approximately 5,400 lbs of garbage annually. Just by using a reusable and safe Tupperware tumbler, along with a safe reusable straw, you will save an enormous amount of waste and natural resources.

One way that we can stop wasting plastic and our natural resources is to stop using plastic straws. Most people who are somewhat conscience of our environment will reuse a glass or cup but they still use new straws. By just changing this one habit, you will save tons of garbage from going into our landfills. There are 2 things that are visible to the naked eye from space: one is the Great Wall of China....the other one is the Fresh Kills Land Fill in New Jersey. It covers over 2200 acres and is taller than the Statue of Liberty! Over 30% of the garbage that sits in this landfill is plastic that will never decompose! It is a horrifying thought that this will be here forever, and also that this is the final resting place of the rubble from 9/11.

Plastic straws are made of Polypropylene, which is # 5 plastic made from Petroleum Bi-products. Because they are not stamped with a #5, they CAN NOT be recycled. They also are NOT biodegradable.

A straw is one of the most energy intensive plastic products on the face of the planet. If you think about the time and natural resources that are consumed just to make one straw and get it to you, it is just incredible that they are even legal!

The oil must be located, drilled for, then shipped usually by ship and then semi-truck to the refinery where it is processed some more, and then shipped off again in a truck. When it gets to the factory where the straws are made, it is processed some more, using more electricity and energy. Then, the straw itself is wrapped in another piece of plastic, put into plastic packaging with other straws, put into boxes, and again...is loaded onto another semi truck.

The straw is sent to a warehouse or distribution point where it will be loaded onto another truck to take it to the store or restaurant, where you will ultimately order something to drink, and without even thinking, unwrap the straw, use it for 10 or 15 minutes, and then throw it away without hesitation.

It's such a little thing that you would not think it would make such a drastic difference, but when you consider that McDonald's claims to serve over 60 million people per day globally, that is at least 60 million straws from McDonald's alone that will wind up in our landfills, along with the wrappers! Combine that with the millions of other restaurants, our schools, hospitals, and even our homes that use straws, it is a very real problem that could be so easily resolved simply by not using disposable plastic straws.