



THE GARDEN CLUB of AMERICA

THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA POSITION PAPER

The Garden Club of America supports independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulation of responsible public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Garden Club of America recognizes that effective waste management is vital to our health and well-being. The United States produces more waste than any other country in the world, using over 380 billion plastic bags and wraps yearly, requiring 12 million barrels of oil to create.¹ According to the EPA, Americans generate about 251 million tons of solid waste a year; 53.8% of waste in the USA is buried in landfills, 34.5% is recycled and 11.7% is combusted.² Landfills produce methane and other toxic gases, their seepage causes water and air pollution. Incineration reduces the volume of solid waste by 20 to 30 percent, but also contributes to pollution.

The Garden Club of America encourages reusing, recycling and composting. Further, the GCA supports federal, state and local legislation and policy to address the following:

Responsible Waste Management

- Encourage measures at the state and federal level that support responsible waste management practices
- Teach personal waste reduction practices, including wise consumer choices, recognition of excess and unrecyclable packaging, and disposal options for toxic substances
- Reduce solid and liquid waste pollution by the reduction and proper disposal of toxic and hazardous waste
- Encourage responsible design for manufacture, resource extraction and proper disposal of electronic and other waste
- Promote non-toxic alternatives to herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, and toxic household chemicals and avoid the use of systemic insecticides
- Support responsible food purchase, use and food waste reduction in our communities
- Promote the proper disposal of pharmaceuticals
- Promote the reuse of materials, appliances, furniture and building materials
- Support community waste reduction, re-use, recycling and composting initiatives
- Promote legislation requiring manufacturers to identify and properly dispose of the chemicals used in their products
- Limit one-use plastics and single use disposable bags through community education and legislation
- Support innovative solid waste management systems
- Safeguard our oceans against the inundation of plastic waste
- Research reduced water use options of sewage for commercial and residential facilities
- Protect America's drinking water by insuring that landfills are properly lined and do not leak into groundwater
- Ensure that water treatment services are operating safely and meeting community health and ecological guidelines
- Support rehabilitation of aging water treatment systems
- Change building regulations to encourage use of greywater
- Encourage water efficiency in residential, commercial, leisure and agricultural applications

¹ <https://blog.epa.gov/blog/tag/plastic-bags/>

² https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/2012_msw_fs.pdf

The purpose of The Garden Club of America is to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to share the advantages of association by means of educational meetings, conferences, correspondence and publications, and to restore, improve and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.