We are still accepting traditional sponsorships, registrations for individual/team shooters, and raffle donations for our annual 4-H Sporting Clays Tournament Fundraiser. We need your help to reach our $25,000 goal. Proceeds from this event go towards scholarships and trip awards for South Carolina 4-H youth. Because of previous year’s success, we are able to send youth to National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, GA and National 4-H Conference in Washington D.C. Please join us at the NWTF Palmetto Shooting Complex on Friday, June 1, 2018, in Edgefield, SC. If you have any questions about the event or how you can help, please contact Lori Frager at lfrager@clemson.edu or (864) 656-3848. THANK YOU!!!
Plarn for the Planet

Objective: To foster stewardship attitudes/awareness and develop basic crafting skills through an environmentally friendly service project.

Age Range: all ages (everyone can contribute regardless of knitting or crocheting ability).

Hands-on Activity: Upcycle disposable, plastic grocery bags into helpful sleeping mats for homeless or disadvantaged persons.

Life Skills: HEAD – wise use of resources, service learning, learning to learn; HEART – sharing, cooperation, concern for others; HANDS – contribution to group effort, responsible citizenship, community service volunteering; HEALTH – self-responsibility, character.

Introduction

We (humans) produce trash and waste everyday. In the United States, plastics made up about 13% of the waste stream, which added up to 33 million tons of plastic waste in 2014. Plastics take energy to produce and require a long time to decompose in a landfill (around 400 years!). So, using the 3 Rs is especially important. The 3 Rs of the environment are: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. In 2013, only 9.5% of plastics were recycled. One barrier to recycling is not knowing what can be recycled. In 1988, the Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) developed a system of identification codes for plastic. Plastics are stamped with a label by their manufacturer that indicates what type of resin was used to make it, thus dictating how it can potentially be recycled. Not all plastics can be recycled. Most communities have recycling centers that collect a variety of plastic types and can advise you on the best methods. Also, most grocery stores offer collection sites for recycling disposable plastic bags. (Watch a video here!)

When it comes to plastic grocery bags, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages consumers to:

- Reduce the number of bags they use,
- Reduce the number of bags they throw away after one use,
- Reuse bags, and
- Recycle bags when they can no longer be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPI Resin Identification Code</th>
<th>Polymeric Material Abbreviation (name)</th>
<th>Example of Plastic Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate)</td>
<td>Soft drink bottles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HDPE (High-density Polyethylene)</td>
<td>Milk jugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PVC (polyvinyl chloride)</td>
<td>Cling film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LDPE (Low-density Polyethylene)</td>
<td>Frozen food bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PP (Polypropylene)</td>
<td>Yogurt container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PS (Polystyrene)</td>
<td>CD cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>OTHER (mixed plastic polymers)</td>
<td>Baby bottles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Plastic identification coding system.
Activity Instructions

Review of the 3 Rs, discuss the SPI Resin Identification Coding System, and identify what the codes for several plastic items in and around the club meeting are.

- How many different codes did you find?
- What is the most common code?
- What SPI Resin identification code can be found on a plastic grocery bag?
- Besides recycling, what are some other ways you can reduce or reuse some of these plastics?

In this activity, youth will reuse plastic grocery bags by “upcycling” them into sleeping mats for homeless people. This can be done across several meetings, as it will take a while to assemble. Step one is to make plarn (a.k.a. plastic yarn) from disposable plastic grocery bags. Step two is crocheting or knitting plarn into sleeping mats (3’ wide x 6’ long) as if it were thick, chucky yarn. Plarn provides support and is a good insulator.

Reflective questions

- What did you like about this activity?
- Can you see yourself reducing, reusing, or recycling more items at home or school?
- What is something you can share with someone else about what you learned today?

Conclusion

Although crafting is not always considered a marketable skill, it makes valuable contributions to society and research shows it can relieve anxiety and stress. Youth can gain skills, promote healthy life choices, and expand their awareness of environmental and societal needs through this activity.

Resources: