

Stratford Community Climate Conversations, Session 5, March 6, 2025
Participant Comments - WASTE with Guest Speaker Emily Skelding

Question 1: Given the challenge of the times, will that change your waste and recycling?

- less wish cycling
- don't want to see any more cloth bags made out of shirts
- compostable grocery store bags for veggies
- driven by government, it's their responsibility
- putting responsibility on producers will spur innovation
- returnable takeout containers are helping
- schedule garbage bi-weekly and recycling weekly
- simplify recycling
- make retailers responsible for their packaging
- only buy five items
- make plastic bags recyclable
- ask yourself if you really need to purchase this?
- change from giving gifts to giving to charity
- a recession is possible, watch waste, be more frugal, eat out less often
- read the book by Seth Klein THE GOOD WAR
- re-read THE DAY THE WORLD STOPPED SHOPPING
- buy milk in returnable glass bottles
- buy un-packaged fruit and vegetables
- buy made, produced in Canada, look at labels more closely
- compost leaves on your property, compost your neighbour's leaves
- support local efforts to collect and re-distribute used clothing
- swapping items when you can instead of buying new
- bring leftover and expired meds to pharmacy for disposal
- use paper to line garbage and compost bins
- use patches on jeans and other clothing
- looking forward to more uniformity with the new recycling system
- many feel they are doing as much as they can with waste, recycling and compost

Question 2: Going back several generations, plastic was not in use, nor was food usually processed and packaged for supermarket shelves. What do you know of that time?

- milk delivery in glass bottles, door-to-door, milk was bottled
- more people employed
- told milk is good for you
- water softener salt in a bag
- compost in our yards
- we were told you could recycle it all but we know now that isn't true
- industry has made it very hard for recycling to work as it should

- baked goods were covered with a towel, not plastic
- left overs covered with a bowl or a saucer over a bowl for storage
- stores offered fewer goods covered in plastic
- picked our own fruits and berries
- preserves and canning were made such as for tomatoes and fruit
- leftover veggies used to make more, e.g., putting bottom of an onion in a glass of water to grow more onions
- our parents got bushel baskets of apples to keep for eating in fall and winter
- certain communities had house to house deliveries of bread, milk, produce (onions might be delivered in braids)
- families had big gardens and preserved their own food
- butchers wrapped their own meat, more bins, paper bags, wax paper, string for bundles
- fish would be in paper
- much more use of glass jars
- reused wax paper for lunches, reused glass, used tupperware
- food availability was dependent on the depression
- canning should come back, we need more education in that area.

Question 3: Can you think of any ways to re-use waste of any kind?

- re-purpose more
- use pickle juice to flavor salads and other foods
- use bits of yarn to make scrap toques
- patch jeans, repair and sew your own clothes
- use hand-me-down clothes among friends and family
- swap and participate in swap events at library, such as accessories puzzles
- pass toys, collected for children and grandchildren, to others
- bags from water softeners can be used to reline garbage containers
- take unused and unneeded items to second hand stores
- follow a Mennonite lifestyle
- re-use jars to buy bulk items at places like the Gentle Rain or Little Green Grocer
- CRP Plastics in Stratford creates new furniture by re-using plastic
- use biochar, burning wood anaerobically, ashes contain nitrogen and can be resold
- return the quart boxes from berries, some farmers will take them back
- compost household waste
- save bubble wrap, maybe have an organization that could collect it and re-use it
- reduce not just reuse
- use sewage to create natural gas from the water treatment plant
- re-used cotton clothing to make quilts
- stop in-built obsolescence technology, it costs more now to fix than to buy new, we need to make appliances that can be repaired and last
- bring back appliance repair shops
- let's start appliance libraries

- share tools with your neighbours, e.g. snowblower, shovels, etc.
- buy items that can be fixed by owner, e.g. cars, instead of fully electronic cars with screens
- mulch leaves and leave them on the lawn and garden

Question 4: Green bins are fairly new to Stratford. How have you found their use? Any recommendations?

- make pick up bi-weekly rather than weekly
- allow compostable bags in green bin
- legislate use in more places, it's voluntary at the moment
- loop more people into it
- provide more education on what can and cannot go in
- let's get a full transition out of the use of styrofoam
- use compressed recycling
- use a biodegradable liner instead of plastic
- green bins have reduced the amount of garbage in landfill
- extend the program to condos
- collectors often leaves messy spill from compost bins on the roads and sidewalks
- could our old blue boxes be turned into composters?
- lids can break off so may not want to use, better construction?
- the collectors are pretty rough on them
- the green bin is working the best out of all the options presented to us
- love the program
- don't use green bin, use countertop composter for at home composting
- helpful to recycle items you can't avoid purchasing which can't be in the blue box
- put items for green bin in the freezer until can be put on the curb
- since using the green bin don't use plastic to line garbage can as items aren't wet
- it is good to be able to reduce waste that you used to put in the garbage can