

Green at Home: Tips and Tricks

Recycling:

For information on recycling in D.C., click [here](#). Always make sure your items are clean and empty before you recycle! Plastic bags, wraps, and film of any color, size or shape are no longer accepted in D.C.'s single stream recycling. To find out where you can drop off your plastic film recycling visit plasticfilmrecycling.org.

Don't live in D.C.? See the below list of links to local government recycling information:

- [Arlington County](#)
- [City of Alexandria](#)
- [Fairfax County](#)
- [Montgomery County](#)
- [Prince George's County](#)

Composting:

Composting is a great way to keep food waste out of landfills thereby reducing methane emissions! For a helpful background on compost and its benefits, we recommend the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) article found [here](#). Advice on what you can and cannot compost can be found [here](#). We will focus on the different ways you can compost.

Composting to Keep:

Outdoor Compost

1. Select a dry, shady spot near a water source for your compost pile or bin.
2. Add brown and green materials as they are collected, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded.
3. Moisten dry materials as they are added.
4. Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under 10 inches of compost material.
5. Optional: Cover top of compost with a tarp to keep it moist. When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. This usually takes anywhere between two months to two years. (epa.gov)

Indoor Compost

If you do not have space for an outdoor compost pile, you can compost materials indoors using a special type of bin, which you can buy at a local hardware store, gardening supplies store, or make yourself. Remember to tend your pile and keep track of what you throw in. A properly managed compost bin will not attract pests or rodents and will not smell bad. Your compost should be ready in two to five weeks. (epa.gov)

Composting to Give Away:

If you do not have the need for soil, or the space to compost, you can bring your compostable items to a collection site or have them picked up from your home.

- Many D.C. farmers' markets have collection days! For more information about food waste drop-off in D.C., please visit the Department of Public Works website [here](#).
- Compost Crew is a locally owned food scrap recycling business that offers clean and convenient composting services to thousands of businesses, organizations, and residential customers throughout the DMV area. There are fees associated with Compost Crews services. To learn more click [here](#)!

Sustainable Shopping:

Art and fashion are both vital avenues of self-expression in regards to beliefs and emotions surrounding social and political movements, including climate and environmental impact. However, art involves toxic materials and since the arrival of the 'fast fashion' phenomenon, clothing and materiality has become more disposable than ever and created more material waste in our landfills and CO2 emissions than recognized.

By choosing to donate or purchase clothing, creative materials or everyday items from thrift stores, creative reuse centers and consignment shops, you're helping to minimize landfill waste and encouraging "slow fashion" and a "circular economic" cycle which reintroduces longevity standards in industries and helps our planet. You can check out how the fashion industry is helping lead these new standards [here](#) or [here](#). If you're curious about toxic art mediums and their alternatives, click [here](#).

Creative Reuse Centers:

Creative Reuse Centers collect discarded materials from the public that can be reused and given new life. Many centers resell these items to the public for a bargain or donate them to community members and organizations in their local area. To find your local Creative Reuse Center click [here](#).

- [Scrap B'More](#) (Baltimore)
- [UpCycle Creative Reuse](#) (Alexandria, VA)
- [Scrap RVA](#) (Richmond, Alexandria)

Everyday Items:

Give a tired item a new home in your kitchen, living or dining room. You can always count on your local thrift store for basic wares and vintage furnishings. Listed below are thrift stores that can be found in multiple locations throughout the DMV area.

- Goodwill
- Value Village
- Second Chance
- Savers

Clothing:

Whether you are looking for that special vintage find, work wear that does not break your wallet or on-trend piece, thrift stores and consignment shops can bring something unique to your closet. It always takes a moment of trial-and-error before you find the stores that match your interests, but here is a list of stores in the DMV to get you started.

Everyday:

- [Frugalista](#)
- [Uptown Cheapskate](#)
- [Prime Thrift](#)
- [Thred Up](#) (online)
- [Poshmark](#) (online)

Work wear and [Luxury](#):

- [Meeps](#)
- [Ella Rue](#)
- [Foundry By Freeman](#)
- [Current Boutique](#)

Gentle Reminder: Please be conscious of overbuying; thrift stores and consignment shops exist as an accessible resource in communities.

Home Reuse Tips:

Glass bottles/containers:

Reuse your wine bottles, or other glass bottles, and fill with water and leave in the fridge for cold water any time.

Homemade Cleaners:

Homemade cleaners work just as effectively as store bought, help reduce use of harmful manufactured chemicals in the home and are cost-effective. For advice on how to make any of the cleaners mentioned below, click [here](#).

- Scented all-purpose cleaner
- Kitchen cleaner and deodorizer
- DIY glass cleaner
- Homemade brass cleaner
- Natural heavy-duty scrub
- DIY grease cleaner
- Last resort clothing stain remover
- Natural marble cleaner

Regrow produce at home:

You will be surprised by how many produce scraps can be regrown at home with the minimalist of materials. The best part; you get to save money on groceries! To get the full guide on how to grow the vegetables and herbs below, check out [here](#) or [here](#).

- *Green onions, spring onions, leeks, lemongrass, fennel*
 - How to regrow:
 - **Use the root ends:** To regrow these veggies, you will want to use the bottom white ends.
 - **Place in water:** Add the root ends to a small glass filled with water, but do not fully submerge. Place near direct sunlight and give them fresh water daily.
 - **Harvest:** In three to five days, you should start to see growth. Snip off what you need when fully grown, eat, then repeat. Pro tip: Let lemongrass grow to at least one foot tall first before cutting.
- *Celery, cabbage, bok choy and lettuce*
 - How to regrow:
 - **Place in water:** Fill a shallow bowl with water and add the root (bottom part of the stalk or core). Make sure that the top of your stalk or core is above the water line. Place near direct sunlight.
 - **Spritz with water often:** Encourage growth by spritzing the top with water several times a week. Make sure to replace the water every few days. In about a week, new leaves will start to sprout.
 - **Plant:** Fill a pot with soil and plant the root so that only the leaves are exposed. In about five months, the plant will be ready to harvest.
- *Basil*
 - How to regrow:
 - **Trim the leaves:** Remove extra basil leaves so that you have about four inches of stem.

- **Place in water:** Fill a glass jar with water and add the stem, making sure that the leaves are above the water line. Change the water every few days and place near direct sunlight. It can take several weeks, but eventually roots will sprout.
 - **Plant:** Fill a pot with soil and add the plant, making sure to cover the roots. Place near sunlight and pick the leaves whenever you please.
- *Potatoes*
 - How to grow:
 - **Select** two pieces of potato with eyes on each side (indentations where roots emerge) to regrow. Leave the potato halves out at room temperature until they are completely dried out.
 - **Plant** the pieces a few inches deep (eyes facing up) in potting soil and add a couple inches of water. Potatoes need about an inch or two of water per week during the growing process.
 - **Harvest:** In about a month, you can begin harvesting the potatoes by feeling around in the soil and pulling up potatoes when you want them.
- *Onions*
 - How to grow:
 - **Cut off** the root end of your onion, including at least an inch above the root.
 - **Plant** the onion bottom (roots down) in potting soil, evenly water the soil, and place the pot near a sunny windowsill.
 - **Keep the soil moist** with routine watering. You will soon see green sprouts poking out, which will grow tall and develop a new onion bulb under the soil.