

Plastic Pot Recycling Pilot Project for Richmond

Thank you for partnering with your local independent garden center to recycle plastic nursery pots and containers. Each year more than 300 million pounds of plastics go to our nation's landfills. We have surveyed most of the recycling centers in the greater Richmond area and have found none that collect garden pots. However, much of this plastic can be recycled into new garden and nursery containers or other plastic items. We just need to collect it! With your assistance we can start reducing the amount of garden and nursery pot plastics that goes to the landfill.

This Richmond pilot project is the beginning of a statewide initiative to redirect plastic garden and nursery containers and pots from landfills to recycling facilities. Furthermore, we will be sending these pots to a recycler that will be using them to create new nursery products. See the resin code on the bottom of the pot. All plastics with the same code can be grouped together, regardless of pot size, color or style. Miscellaneous nursery plastics that are not identifiable can be co-mingled and recycled separate from the numbered plastics. So, bring all your garden pots to the garden center. **Note: This program can only collect nursery plastics. Take your consumer plastics to your local recycling center.**

Group containers by the resin code on the bottom of the pot. The primary plastics used for garden and nursery containers bear the following symbols: #2 for high density polyethylene (HDPE), #5 for polypropylene (PP) and #6 for polystyrene (PS).



Look for opportunities at this garden center and other collection sites for specific drop-off programs throughout the growing season. For this to work most efficiently please do the following with your waste nursery containers:

- Separate the plastics according to the type of plastic.
- Knock out all loose dirt.
- Remove all metal wire from hanging planters.
- Nest the pots or trays together as tightly as possible.
- At the garden center, stack your pots with those of the same resin code. (Someone at your local garden center will likely help you with this step.)

For updated information on participating garden centers where you can recycle your gardening containers, visit <http://www.bse.vt.edu/green/Plastics/overview.htm>

Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Virginia Green Industry Council, and the Virginia Master Gardener Association are working together to promote and implement this new program. You can also help by identifying other local independent garden centers and encouraging them to participate in this program in the future. Direct them to Dr. Joyce Latimer at 540-231-5451. You can also contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office with further questions or needs for assistance.