

# PLASTIC FREE JULY @ THE FARMERS MARKET



## ARE YOU READY TO JOIN THE CHALLENGE?

Each summer, the Plastic Free July® campaign encourages millions around the globe to be a part of the solution to plastic pollution. So to celebrate, Clean Fairfax has teamed up with Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Farmers Markets for a plastic-free challenge! Read on (and scan the QR code below) for more information about the PFJ campaign, plastic pollution fast facts, & tips for living more sustainably!



## Plastic Fast Facts

### 33 billion pounds of plastic

enter the marine environment every single year. Today, there's an estimated 75—199 million tons of plastic waste in our oceans.

### 91% of plastic

isn't recycled at all. Single-use plastics are especially hard to recycle & often aren't accepted by recycling centers.

### 5-6%.

The recycling rate in the U.S. in 2021. The majority of plastic ends up in landfills, is incinerated, or otherwise burned in "advanced" and "chemical" recycling facilities.

### plastic is fossil fuel.

Over 99% of plastic is made from petrochemicals sourced from fossil fuels like oil, coal, and gas.

### 44% of plastic

is used for packaging, which is often meant for single use. In fact, 40% of plastic is thrown away within 1 month of use or purchase.

### 15 minutes.

The average "working life" of a plastic bag.

### 500 million plastic straws

are used per day in the U.S. alone.

## EPS Foam Facts

Often called "Styrofoam" (which is a trademarked name for a Dow Chemical Co. foam product), the more accurate name for the generic white foam in disposable cups, plates, clamshell containers, and packing peanuts is "Expanded Polystyrene."

### 30 million tons

of polystyrene (EPS) foam are produced globally each year.

### 500-1,000+ years.

How long it may take for EPS material to truly biodegrade in the environment.

### EPS health risks.

Several acutely toxic and carcinogenic chemicals are used in the manufacturing process of EPS foam (e.g., benzene, styrene & pentane). At high temperatures, some of these may leach into EPS containers' contents.

### "the perfect pollutant."

EPS breaks up but does not break down. It is buoyant, lightweight & degrades into small pieces which threaten wildlife when consumed and may leach chemicals into soil and water. Currently, there are no viable recycling streams for EPS.



## The Resource Rainbow: Re-Thinking the 3Rs

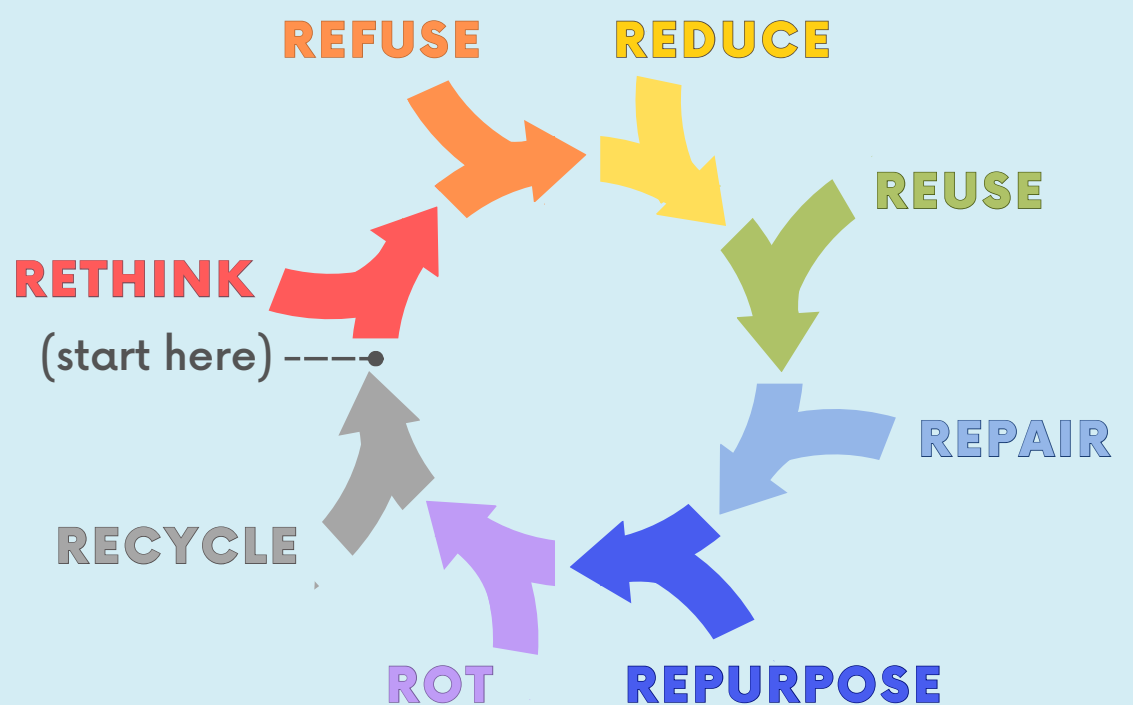
### IT'S TIME TO BREAK UP WITH PLASTIC

The best solution to our plastic pollution crisis is to make less plastic to begin with.

It's true that plastic has become ubiquitous in our daily lives, attracting consumers with its convenience and the feel-good promise of "recycling." But unfortunately, plastic recycling is not as robust as it's made out to be. Well-intentioned "wish-cycling," new "bioplastics" and "advanced" technologies (i.e., chemical recycling, conversion, pyrolysis) promising to tackle our plastic waste are all contributing more to our pollution crisis.

### RETHINKING THE SYSTEM

This Plastic Free July, we challenge you to rethink your relationship with plastic products and waste in general. Explore where plastic pollution comes from (HINT: it's not "litterbugs!"), why it's so damaging to human and environmental health, what kind of changes you can make, and policies that can help reduce plastic pollution at its source.



We also challenge you rethink what you know about the 3Rs of "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" and adopt a more circular approach (HINT: there are many more Rs before Recycle!). How can we extend the lifespan of products we already have? And how can we shift our thinking away from material waste and towards resource recovery?



Learn More! Scan the QR code or visit:  
CleanFairfax.org  
FairfaxCounty.gov/Parks/FarmersMarkets

