

Mary Forte

Please improve/clarify residential recycling information. I have a PhD and there are many items I am unsure what to do with. I recycle 99% of what can be recycled and use the city compost pickup. PLEASE IMPROVE THE MESSAGING ON DO'S AND DON'T FOR CITY RECYCLING:

1. Can berry containers be recycled? If so, which ones - show examples!
2. To what extent do labels on cardboard need to be removed for recycling? I spend a great deal of time cutting them off since many don't peel. Can coated cardboard be recycled?
3. Can small juice containers (with the peel back foil lid) be recycled? Assisted living staff in Brainerd never do.
4. Should cardboard boxes be cut up and tossed in recycling city home bins or tied with jute & left larger?
5. Make milk and juice cartons recyclable across the state and let people know in better messaging. I do so in Mpls but not Brainerd where my father lives.
6. Plastic plant containers (e.g. Gertens). Call ALL of them be recycled or only the small white ones? Larger black ones that fit a standard perennial? WHY aren't growers and the State of MN required to let users of plastic know whether each and every item is recyclable? Can the plastic plant trays that carry about 12 small starters from Gertens be recycled?
7. What to do with small metal items- screws, U-shaped sod stakes, nails, etc?
8. Clarify what to do with LIGHT BULBS! Which go where? We were told to recycle them but how and where? Show pictures!
9. What to do with batteries? The U of MN only has rechargeable battery recycling. SO many folks are tossing them in the trash. They used to be recycled from bins at the library. I take them to Bloomington.
10. IMPROVE YOUR MESSAGING. I'd prefer an 8 x 11 sheet of pictures of what IS recyclable. We all know about bottles and cans - images of the iffy items that have gone unnamed for years would be helpful.
11. Label ALL recycling containers NO PLASTIC BAGS and what that really means (dump single, rinsed items only inside this bin).
12. Make plastic bag recycling easier and more available and ban them or increase the fee to 25c/bag. 5 cents means nothing.
13. Centrally-locate most/all small item recycling. It's VERY confusing (batteries, plastic bags, cardboard, cans/bottles, light bulbs- all different places?)
14. Provide links to decent compost bag vendors or sellers. The trial bag from Mpls was too wimpy to hold anything. I get mine online- thicker and larger
15. Make recycling COOL. You need some ad for young people- they are big offenders. Start a grade school campaign. The other big offenders are arrogant middle aged folks and seniors who lack the clear, simple directions how to do so.

Businesses/nursing homes/senior apartments/assisted living/academics:

1. Charge a fee for single use styrofoam. My 100 yr old father gets every breakfast delivered in a styrofoam box. On top of far less recycling in Brainerd (vs Mpls), it is entirely preventable waste.
2. Mandate that shipping companies use stickers that can be recycled (on cardboard boxes) or removable on plastic bags. It is difficult to remove 5-6 labels from plastic bag shipping containers to recycle the bags at the grocery store. I end up cutting them off. Many people would not bother.
3. Stop plastic utensil use - what is an alternate? Or make those items recyclable and clearly labeled

in restaurant recycling/trash areas. Food places assume we all "know" what goes where. We don't. Make businesses post signs with examples.

My garage is littered with many recyclable items that I either have to break down (boxes) or wonder what to do with it (besides Bloomington recycling where I have gone several times). My concerns are mostly for home and small items where the messaging has been and continues to be grossly incomplete on what to do with non-can, non-bottle items. And businesses and academic centers that seem to think it's up to homeowners, not them

Thanks for considering-