

Plastics



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Plastic bags are a scourge on the environment. They do enormous damage to the land and oceans and urgent action is required to reduce their use. ? Plastic bags is no trifle matter They may look harmless and feel small and light but consider the numbers. According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), plastic bags are the second most common type of litter ??“ with cigarette butts being the first.

Plastics can take years to break down ??“ if they break down at all. CNN reported that 90 per cent of plastic bags in the US are NOT RECYCLED! That is utterly shocking. Plastic bags can wreak havoc on the environment. In the oceans, plastics kill marine life and devastate reefs. 100, 000 turtles and marine mammals are killed each year by plastics.

Action on plastic bags is urgent A significant reduction or phasing out of plastic bags is in order. Sometimes, it takes a dramatic wake-up call to put the issue into the spotlight. Large quantities of plastics in the waterways contributed to severe flooding in Bangladesh in the late 1990s and as a result, a total ban was imposed on plastic bags. Mexico City is the second major metropolitan area in the Western Hemisphere to ban plastic bags. In 2007, San Francisco passed an ordinance that gave supermarkets six months to phase out plastic bags. Voluntary efforts not working Eco-friendly individuals and.

.. Packaging represents the largest single sector of plastics use in the world today. Benefits of plastics-Boon The considerable growth in plastic use is due to the beneficial properties of plastics. These include: 1. Extreme versatility and ability to be tailored to meet very specific technical needs. 2.

Lighter weight than competing materials, reducing fuel consumption during transportation. 3. Extreme durability. 4. Resistance to chemicals, water and impact. 5. Good safety and hygiene properties for food packaging. 6.

Excellent thermal and electrical insulation properties. 7. Relatively inexpensive to produce. Plastics makes up around 7% of the average household dustbin. Effects of plastic-Curse. Plastics production also involves the use of potentially harmful chemicals, which are added as stabilisers or colorants. Many of these have not undergone environmental risk assessment and their impact on human health and the environment is currently uncertain.

An example of this is phthalates, which are used in the manufacture of PVC. PVC has in the past been used in toys for young children and there has been concern that phthalates may be released when these toys are sucked (come into contact with saliva). Risk assessments of the effects of phthalates on the environment are currently being carried out.

The disposal of plastics products also contributes significantly to their environmental impact. Because most plastics are non-degradable, they take a long time to break down, possibly up to hundreds of years – although no-one knows for certain as plastics haven't existed for long enough – when they are landfilled. With more and more plastics products, particularly plastics packaging, being disposed of soon after their purchase, the landfill space required by plastics waste is a growing concern. Plastic waste, such as plastic bags, often becomes litter. For example, nearly 57% of litter found on beaches in 2003 was plastic. Recycling plastic -Advantages. Conservation of

non-renewable fossil fuels – Plastic production uses 8% of the world's oil production, 4% as feedstock and 4% during manufacture.

Reduced consumption of energy. Reduced amounts of solid waste going to landfill. Reduced emissions of carbon-dioxide (CO₂), nitrogen-oxide (NO) and sulphur-dioxide (SO₂).