



Recycling

As worldwide energy and raw material consumption rise, so does the amount of waste. Presently in Europe, every person produces 1 kg of waste per day (US: 2 kg), which mainly accumulates in landfills.



Worldwide, waste is dumped in landfills or incinerated, polluting the air, soil and underground water. Even after incineration, 25% solid residue remains as concentrated dangerous substances. Sometimes part of it is reused, but even then most of it is dumped.

This pollution risk could be partly avoided as in industrialized countries, 20-60% of household waste has the potential to be recycled or composted.

What can you do?

Go on a “waste diet”: recycle or compost everything you can! Giving your waste a second life saves raw materials, water, energy and avoids pollution:

- Making a PET plastic bottle from recycled material uses 60% less energy than making a new one.
- Producing an aluminium can from recycled material takes only 5% of the energy it would take to produce it from bauxite (raw material) and saves over 250 g of GHG emissions. For a tin can, 60% of energy is saved.
- Recycling 1 ton of paper can save 50% of energy, about 18 trees and reduce air pollution by 75%.
- 10 kg of compostable waste can produce 6 kg of gardening compost or 10 to 15 m³ of biogas.

Regions of the world

Recycled paper in % of paper consumption (2002):

Germany: 72 Iceland: 30
Japan: 65

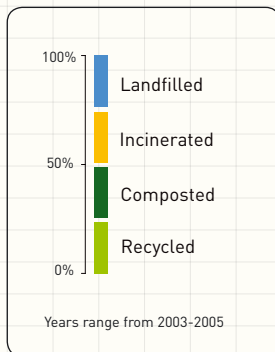
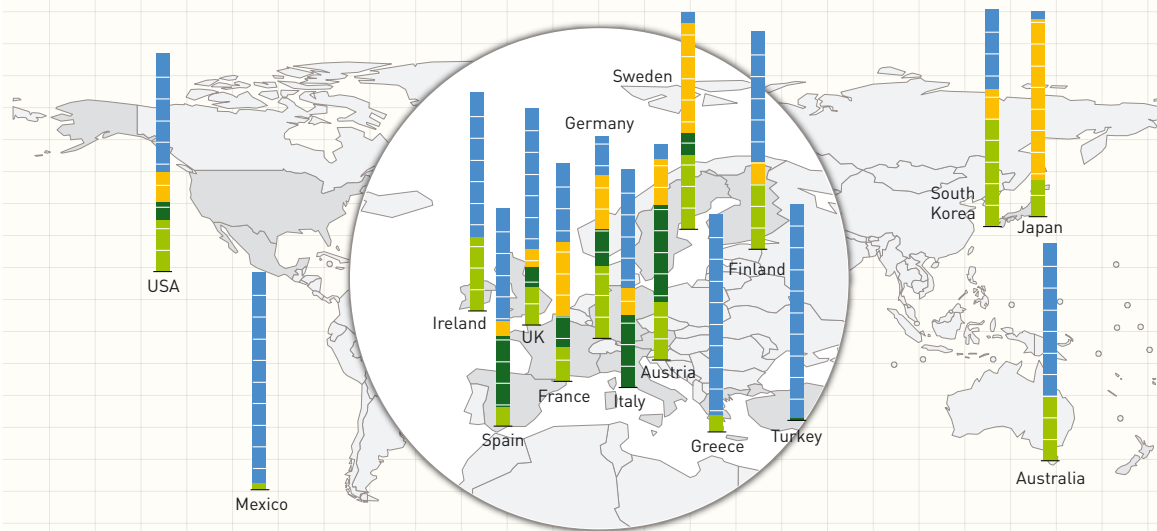
Did you know?

Textiles can be made from recycled PET bottles. For example, 25 two-litre PET bottles yield enough material to produce a medium-sized fleece jacket.



Appendix

How do different countries dispose of their waste?



Source:
OECD Environmental Data Compendium 2006/07

Figure taken from UNEP, GEO Data Portal Posters, Waste Management and Recycling:
http://geodata.grid.unep.ch/images/waste_management.png