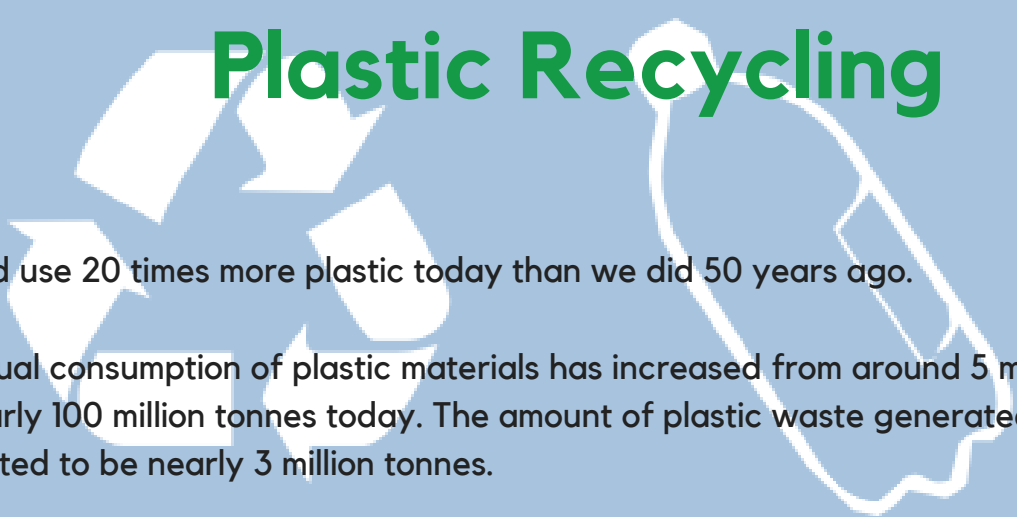




Plastic Recycling



We produce and use 20 times more plastic today than we did 50 years ago.

The world's annual consumption of plastic materials has increased from around 5 million tonnes in the 1950s to nearly 100 million tonnes today. The amount of plastic waste generated annually in the UK is estimated to be nearly 3 million tonnes.

A report on the production of carrier bags made from recycled plastic rather than virgin polythene concluded that the use of recycled plastic results in the following environmental benefits:

1. Reduction of energy consumption by two thirds
2. Production of only a third of the sulphur dioxide and half of the nitrous oxide
3. Reduction of water usage by nearly 90%
4. Reduction of carbon dioxide generation by two and a half times
5. A second study concluded that 1.8 tonnes of oil is saved for every tonne of recycled polythene produced.

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 plastic packaging, being disposed of soon after purchase, the landfill space required by plastic waste is a growing concern.



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