

The Plastics Problem – It's good to know we're "Good 2 Go"!

We live in a disposable society. Just about everything we touch is packaged in or made from plastic. From the manufacturing process to disposal, traditional plastics pollute the environment not just for us but for our children and our children's children. Made exclusively from fossil fuels, traditional plastics contribute to climate change and leave behind a toxic legacy that never goes away. From the cradle to the grave; plastic is forever.



Traditional plastic packaging. Toxic waste from the cradle to the grave.

What can we do to change this? For the people of an island nation the answer is simple. We refuse to buy it. There is little that we, alone, can do about product packaging but every grocery store in the Caribbean stocks “disposable” plastic plates, cups and cutlery. These toxic items are even given to us when we buy take out food here...along with Styrofoam, which is made from? Yes, you guessed it. Plastic! All wrapped up in a plastic bag.

There is an alternative for every one of these toxic plastic products. We can be encouraged to carry reusable shopping bags, reuse empty grocery boxes and/or return to using paper grocery sacks. But what about those Styrofoam food containers and the plastic cups, cutlery and plates for that family trip to the beach this weekend and the “to go” cup that my cocktail is served in at my favorite beach bar?

Introducing polylactic acid, or PLA.

Bioplastics are a new alternative to traditional plastics and suitable in many applications for which traditional plastics are currently used. They are manufactured from PLA a biodegradable biopolymer. The sole US manufacturer, NatureWorks Llc, uses low grade corn grown locally to the site of the NatureWorks plant but any source of glucose will do. Currently, 2.5kg of corn are required to manufacture 1kg of NatureWorks PLA. The balance of 1.5kg is mostly water and the remainder is used in the manufacture of animal feedstocks. Effectively there is no waste from the manufacturing process. NatureWorks PLA is manufactured using a process that reduces greenhouse emissions by 80 – 90% when compared to traditional plastics manufacturing. NatureWorks Llc uses 62 – 68% fewer fossil fuel resources than manufacturers of the traditional plastic that it replaces. To do this, NatureWorks Llc uses wind power to provide the electricity used in its manufacturing processes.

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In addition to the positive impact made by NatureWorks Llc on the use of non renewable resources and on emissions, there are important considerations regarding the end of life of the products made from PLA. NatureWorks PLA is fully biocompostable in as little as 45 days in a commercial composting facility. It is also 100% recyclable.

Here in the Caribbean we do not have commercial composting facilities, at this time, nor do we have recycling as an option for plastic but this should not dissuade us from taking the biocompostable route. On the contrary, according to an article in Scientific American, even PLA products buried in landfill sites sequester carbon with a positive impact on climate change whilst burning biocompostable products that are made from annually renewable resources releases no harmful toxins into the environment. The carbon released is only that absorbed by the plant material from which it is made. It remains important, when promoting the use of PLA and other alternatives to traditional plastic, to emphasize that all products should be disposed of correctly, either by composting, recycling or in a landfill site.

When PLA resin and other biocompostables do eventually degrade they release only water and as much carbon as was produced by the plant material from which they were manufactured. Biocompostables contain no harmful toxins that can leach into soil or water unlike traditional plastics which NEVER biodegrade but rather photodegrade into plastic chips when exposed to sunlight. These chips may attract and hold elements like PCB and DDT at quantities up to one million times background levels and are eventually reduced to toxic polymers that are now found throughout the marine food chain from planktons to whales.



The island of Barbuda September 2008: Miles and miles of pristine, deserted beach. All along the tide line, little chips of toxic plastic outnumber the seashells by thousands to one.

The challenge now is to make biocompostable plastic alternatives available here in the Caribbean and to raise public awareness to this issue. With the current worldwide push to ban plastic grocery bags, maybe now is the time to get things moving. But why stop with plastic bags?

There are several companies processing biocompostables into a variety of product lines. Of primary concern to **“Good 2 Go”** at this time, are disposable bags, take out containers and the disposable cold cup used by most bars and at all outdoor functions here in the islands. They are also great tools for promoting non-toxic alternatives to plastic. **“Good 2 Go”** supplies bags and cold cups manufactured from NatureWorks PLA that can be custom printed to promote your business and **“Good 2 Go”** has the endorsement of 4 local environmental organizations.

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What better way to project a positive environmental image to your customers?



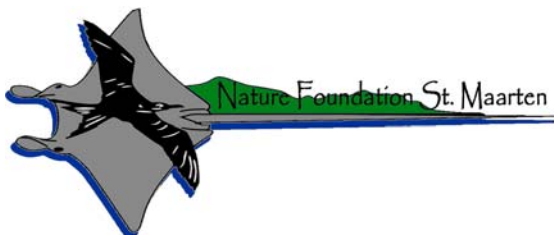
Disposable cold cups all made from NatureWorks PLA resin and all custom printable.

For **“Good 2 Go”** the cold cup is just the beginning. We’re going all the way with water bottles, grocery bags, food containers, plates, cutlery and more. There’s a wide range of alternative solutions out there to **“The Plastics Problem”**! Food and beverage service products made from sugar cane stalks, bamboo, palm fiber and even potato starch are also available. In addition to bars, grocery stores and restaurants; biocompostable bags and food and beverage disposables manufactured from annually renewable resources will be supplied to general retailers, offices, party planners and event organizers throughout the Caribbean.

The possibilities are almost endless and the benefits to the Caribbean significant. Now everybody can make a difference without making major lifestyle changes. Be a supporter of the **“Good 2 Go”** project and take part in an initiative that provides your company or organization with the opportunity to promote a the environmental image that your customers are looking for.

For printing options, prices, order information and delivery times contact Elaine Christopher by email at elaine@good2gosxm.com or by telephone on +599 554 4156.

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