

HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND OTHER CATEGORIES

Counting the bins

One person's dustbin is not the same as another's. Depending on which continent you live on, on your life style, financial resources, and so on, your trash will be different. On average, European households produce roughly one kilogramme of waste per person per day; in a number of developed countries this average is even higher. In emerging countries, particularly rural areas with limited contact with the western world almost all domestic waste can still be composted. In rich countries it is almost the exact opposite. The amount of compost-ready waste is dropping and now only accounts for a third of household waste. In France packaging represents half the total waste and is steadily increasing. Not only do we overpack goods, but also we increasingly tend to consume them in individual portions, which obviously results in more packaging. Buying coffee in individual pods, for instance, demands ten times more packaging than a 250 gram pack.

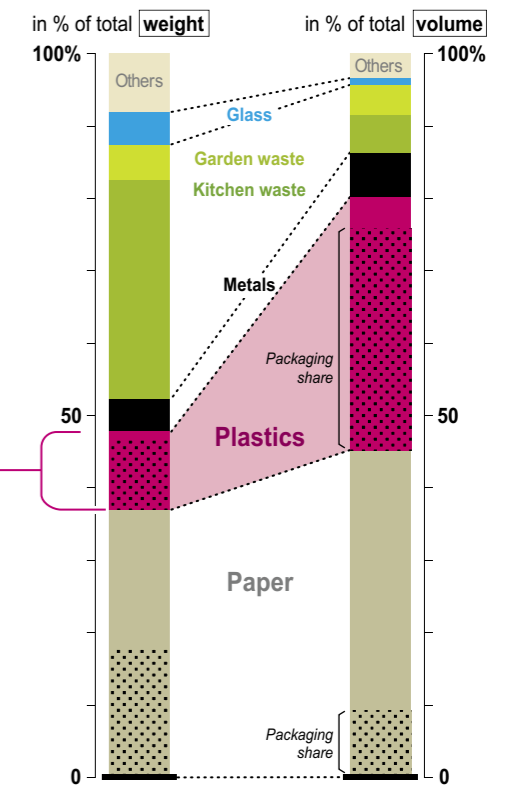
Compost from waste food (from works cafeterias, vegetables from markets, garden cuttings, etc.) is valuable. Once it has decomposed it enriches the earth. It seems clear enough we should not wreck nature with the contents of our bins, why then should we continue leaving nature in our bins?

Escalating e-waste

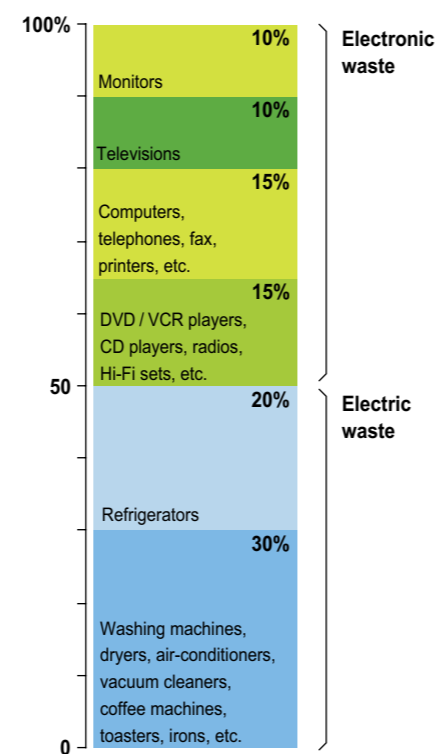
A growing share of municipal waste contains electronic or electric products. E-waste is one of the fastest growing waste streams and makes up approximately 4 per cent of municipal waste in the European Union. In the US, between 14 and 20 million PC's become obsolete every year. The picture is similar all over the world and e-waste is increasing steadily. In 2004 some 183 million computers were purchased worldwide, an 11.6 per cent increase from the previous year. In 2005 over 825 million mobile phones were produced, compared to 707 million in 2004. On average people in developed countries only keep a computer for two years and mobile phones last even less time. The rising tide of e-waste also includes notebook computers and similar handheld devices, televisions, radios, DVD and video players, etc. So there is little likelihood of it stopping in the immediate future. In Europe e-waste is increasing by 3 to 5 per cent annually, almost three times faster than the total waste flow. As for developing countries they are expected to have tripled their e-waste output by 2010. For the planet as a whole e-waste currently represents 5 per cent of all solid municipal waste.

ON THE WEB
 A simple and practical guide to household waste management:
www.purdue.edu/dp/envirosoft/housewaste/src/dispose.htm
e-waste:
www.ewaste.ch

Japanese household waste composition (Neyagawa case study)



What is e-waste?

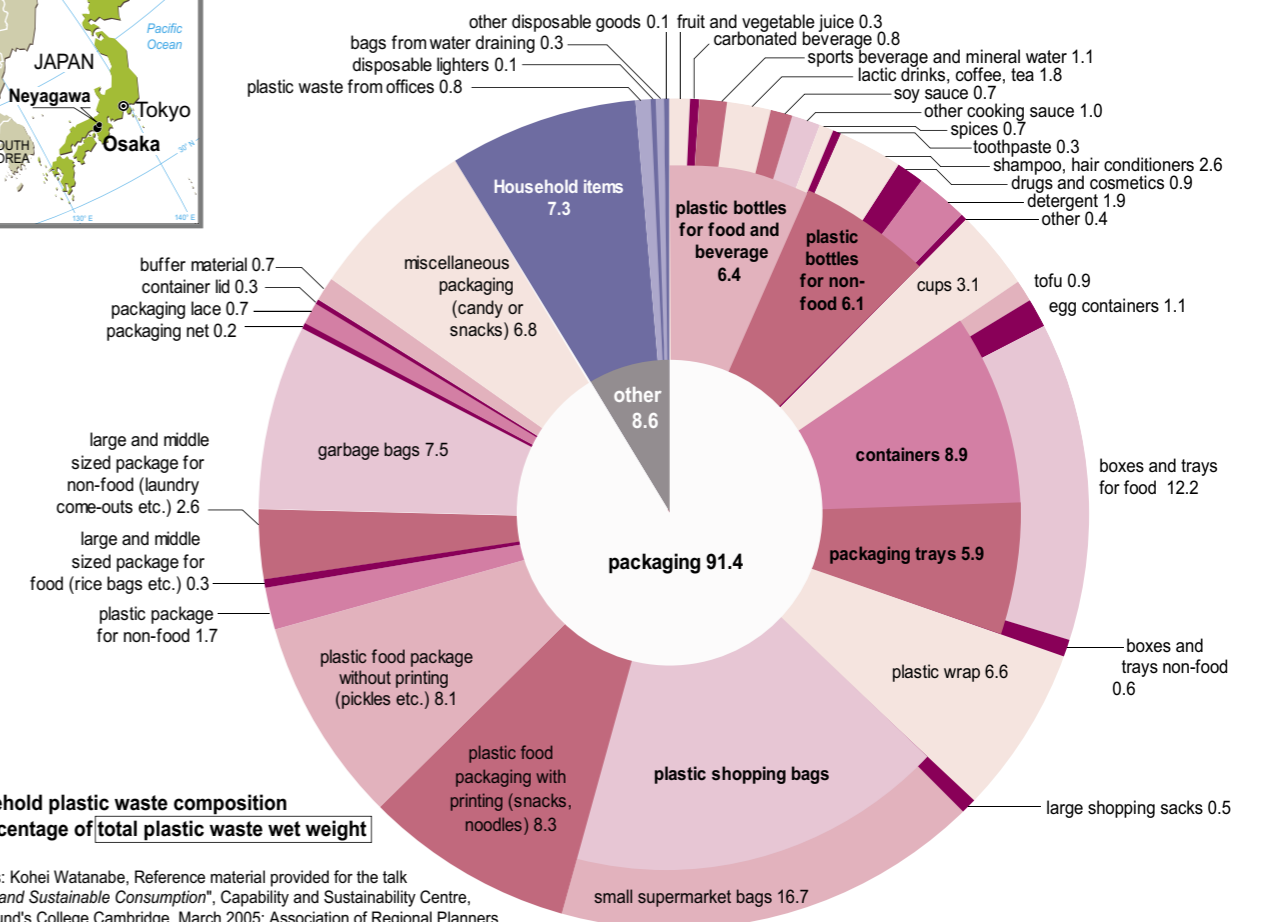


Additional categories: lighting equipment (fluorescent tubes); toys, sports and recreational equipment; electric and electronic tools (drills, sewing machines, lawn mowers, etc); surveillance and control equipment; medical instruments; automatic ticket machines.

Source : EMPA Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research (definition according to the European Union WEEE Directive).



The plastic share of a Japanese garbage bin (Osaka case study)



Household plastic waste composition in percentage of total plastic waste wet weight

Sources: Kohei Watanabe, Reference material provided for the talk "Waste and Sustainable Consumption", Capability and Sustainability Centre, St Edmund's College Cambridge, March 2005; Association of Regional Planners and Architects, Detailed Sorting and Measuring of Household Waste, Kyoto 1998.

See also page 14.